

Book Reviews

doubt, Christian Science has been responsible for the interest in what is often called 'spiritual healing,' to which this book bears witness. Those who wish an easy approach to the history of the matter can hardly do better than procure this book.

But Catholics may find themselves not always in agreement with the writer's attitude. Alluding to the case of Miss Dorothy Kerin, now residing in the writer's family, he says: 'The present writer may be excused for believing that she has been raised up as a striking witness, among many others, to Our Lord's approval of the Catholic revival amongst us. (p. 145).

We should for ever despair of any reunion with our separated brethren if the matter of religious truth and falsehood or of ecclesiastical orders was settled by the alleged *spiritual healing* of a private individual.

V.McN.

SOME METHODS OF TEACHING RELIGION. By John T. McMahon, M.A., Ph.D., Inspector of Religious Instruction, Archdiocese of Perth, West Australia. (Burns, Oates and Washbourne, Ltd.; 7/6.)

We should like to see this valuable and fascinating book in the hands of all Catholic teachers. The fruit of practical experience and patient research, it is written with such remarkable lucidity and charm that the dry bones of pedagogy live indeed.

Dr. McMahon passes in review several of the more modern methods of religious instruction (among them the *Sower* scheme) which have done so much to revivify the teaching of religion, not only in England, but abroad.

The traditional Catechetical method is thoughtfully examined, and there is a valuable discussion on the vexed question of memorising. Too true is it, alas, that (slow of understanding and haunted, we suppose, by the bogey of examinations) 'Catechists have erred in neglecting to prepare the Catechism before having it memorised by the pupil' (p. 114). Practical experience demonstrates the wisdom of an opposite course. Bible History can be a 'reference-book for the Catechism' (p. 228).

The second part of the book contains the matured result of Dr. McMahon's own thought and experience, and we find ourselves in grateful, wholehearted agreement with his conclusions and many of his suggestions. 'Teaching to think in

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religion,' he says, on p. 193, 'is the best preparation for life that we can give our youth.' Children learn by doing is a principle that can, in various ways suggested by the author, be adopted in the teaching of religion. The best way to learn about Holy Mass is to go to Mass. A most commendable paragraph on the value of instruction during Mass occurs on pp. 242-3. Excellent suggestions for instructions on the *Mysterium Fidei* are found at the end of the books.

Through the telling of stories about Our Lord we can fill the imagination even of babies so that they will 'busy their minds about Him.'

'Our chief work is to teach Him and so to teach Him that He may fascinate their young hearts and hold them fast for ever' (p.232). To this high and responsible task the teacher should come duly prepared. Not merely must he be skilled in his profession, but he should love and study regularly the sacred Liturgy and the Holy Gospels, 'above all, praying the Holy Spirit to illumine his mind to understand' (p.234). Over and over again we are reminded of Christ's methods as the Divine Teacher. 'The chief thing to remember is that Christ, the Catechist, did not teach His pupils everything. Not a little was left to the silent, slow working of the Holy Ghost' (p. 18).

T.L.

VIA ROMANA. By E. C. Alder. (Crosby Lockwood; 7/6.)

The *via Romana* was for Rosemary Trevor the path of charity. We meet her at school and accompany her through some years of discontent at home and in an Anglican Sisterhood to the doors of the Catholic Church; we enter with her—and her burden—and do not lose her until she has won our sympathy. But we often find it difficult to be patient with her: certainly she was badly brought up (by an over-indulgent father whose widow was hard and narrow) and she was eventually crippled by amateurs and quacks who sought to help her; but had she used the intelligence we are often told she possessed, I think she would have had an easier journey before, and, surely to goodness, after, her submission; if at school she had been acknowledged the prig she undoubtedly was, she might have ceased to be one earlier than a few months before her death; and if she had been smacked as a child there would have been none of this story to be told.

R.R.