

BOOKS AND THEIR WRITERS.

BOOKS on preaching have always an attraction for preachers. The older standard works are well known and their help has been highly valued. The modern sermon differs in many respects from the model of even Victorian days, and there is a natural desire to learn the methods of the more experienced preachers of to-day. There are few books on preaching from which even the most successful may not learn something. When the new books fail to suggest better methods than the old, they frequently convey fresh stimulus and inspiration to renewed efforts.

Scotland has a great preaching tradition. Perhaps nowhere has the pulpit been so powerful. Scottish ministers take their duties in this respect with great seriousness, and a considerable amount of time is devoted not only to preparation, but to the study of all that goes to make effective preaching. Messrs. James Clarke & Co., Ltd., have recently published a course of lectures by the Rev. James Black, M.A., of St. George's United Free Church, Edinburgh (6s. net), under the title, *The Mystery of Preaching*. They were delivered as the Warrack Lectures to the students of the Free Church Colleges in Edinburgh, and at the Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, U.S.A., under "The James Sprunt Foundation." They are full of practical and stimulating advice, and will be read with advantage by preachers young and old.

Why the "Mystery"? The author gives an excellent reason. "Great preaching will always remain a mystery, not least to the preacher himself. It is bound up ultimately in the greater mystery of personality." The effectiveness of preaching always depends on the personality of the preacher, and although Mr. Black humorously suggests that the sub-title of his lectures should be "How to do it, by One who Doesn't Know," their chief value lies in the revelation of his own personality and method. He faces the modern problems. He will not allow that preaching is a spent force. There are greater difficulties than formerly, yet the pulpit may be as powerful to-day as yesterday, if its opportunities are adequately appreciated and fully used. To do this the preacher must "keep near to the big controlling truths." He must preach only what he believes. "The one sure note of power is sincerity." He must preach with interest.

Preaching is "a message plus a personality." "The Smith at His Forge" is the attractive title of the lecture on preparation. Personal experience is drawn upon with good effect in regard to reading, the noting eye, the homiletic mind, and straight lines or tangents. He warns against texts that are pretexts, and the art that is merely artifice. The one unpardonable thing in Christian preaching is to turn the thoughts of the people from the Message to the Messenger. The marks of good preaching are illustrated from a wide variety of sources. On the use of material and the preacher's conduct in the pulpit, the advice is of the practical kind that is most helpful. A preacher full of true enthusiasm for his work, Mr. Black in these lectures gives fresh inspiration for the message of the pulpit.

While Mr. Black provides the theory that gives Scottish preaching its power, a volume of sermons issued by Messrs. Thomson & Cowan (5s. net) provides excellent examples of the results produced. They are *United Free Church Sermons*, edited by Hubert L. Simpson and D. P. Thomson, with a Foreword by Principal D. S. Cairns. The editors refer with just pride to "the great pulpit tradition" of their Church, and speak of these sermons "delivered in the course of their ordinary ministry by representative preachers" as "interpreting the message of Jesus Christ afresh in the light of contemporary thought." Principal Cairns points out that the volume has a two-fold interest. It shows the seriousness with which the preachers treat their work, the character of their great themes, and the clearness, sincerity, and sympathy with men and women of the discourses. It indicates also the position of their Church with regard to the great verities of the faith, and the outlook and nature of the congregations, for "as every real preacher knows, the congregation has a very large share in the making of the sermon."

When we turn to the sermons we find that they bear out the high commendation bestowed upon them. Some of the preachers have a world-wide reputation as writers on various subjects. Among them are Dr. W. M. Clow, Dr. H. R. Mackintosh, Dr. James Moffatt, and Dr. George H. Morrison, but they would probably be among the first to acknowledge that some of their less well-known brethren represented in the volume have splendid gifts of exegesis and powers of appeal. Many of the sermons are models of all that pulpit teaching should be. It is almost invidious to make selections, and

those we mention are only examples of the whole. For instance, the Rev. James Black, whose volume on preaching we have mentioned, takes as his subject "The Envy of the Angels," and gives an impressive picture of the mystery and majesty of human nature, the wonder of divine grace, and the future glory of the redeemed. In "The Word of the Cross" Mr. Daniel Lamont makes plain the meaning of the death of Christ in glowing terms—"the whole love and entreaty and urgency of God are in it." Mr. Gossip on "What Christ does for a Soul," Mr. Hislop on "Loneliness," Mr. Padkin on "Providence," and Mr. Sutherland on "The Ministry of Sympathy," are all examples of preaching with insight and understanding. They have the gift of touching the heart as well as satisfying the mind.

Two new volumes of "The Living Church" series have appeared. *The Thinkers of the Church* by Archibald B. D. Alexander, D.D., and *The Vocation of the Church* by J. H. Leckie, D.D. They maintain the high standard of the series, and its purpose of showing "what a tremendous factor the Church has been in history," and that she has power to meet in fresh forms the old needs and problems.

Dr. Alexander draws attention to the intellectual activity of the Church as distinct from its other manifestations. He thinks too little attention has hitherto been given to the subject. He chooses representative men in successive periods and through them illustrates the development of Christian thought. In the apostolic age St. John, with the two great gifts of genius—insight and inspiration, and St. Paul, with his varied equipment, stand out. Justin Martyr is the representative of the Apologists, and Clement, Origin and Athanasius of the Alexandrian School. At Nicea the deepest things of the Christian life were at stake. It was the battleground of the soul and one of the turning-points of history.

In St. Augustine, Latin Theology found its highest expression, though Tertullian's power cannot be ignored. He passes from the fifth to the eleventh century and gives an interesting account of the chief of the Schoolmen. The Leaders of Protestant Thought receive sympathetic treatment. "The greatness of Luther lies in his rediscovery of God." The Reformation proclamation of Justification and Freedom were a republication of Christianity. They

broke down the despotic rule of the Roman Church, and the dualistic system of Medieval Morality. They influenced every aspect of life, literature, science, art, citizenship, and social service. The Philosophers Bacon, Descartes, and Leibnitz prepared the approach to Modern Thought. The Deistic Era represented an unhappy period of "Old Bailey Theology" when "the Apostles were tried once a week for the Capital Crime of Forgery." But the age was not altogether barren—Bishop Butler is a landmark in English Theology, though in Dr. Alexander's view our age has passed beyond his method. The principle of development and the sense of historical growth are the notes of the next period. Germany provided the greatest formative forces in it. We come then to the days of the Evangelical Revival and we are glad to find a just appreciation of its thought.

"It is quite a mistake to say of the Evangelical Movement that 'it was completely cut off from any living relation to the thought of the age.' It was a mighty reactive power. It revolutionized every institution of the land—the home, the Church, the State." The religious revival was followed by a literary awakening. Cowper, Coleridge, Wordsworth were its leaders. Of Newman's works (as of other writings of the Anglo-Catholic School) it is true that "though written with the incisiveness and subtlety of thought and literary grace of which he was a master, one cannot help feeling that they are based on assumptions which largely detract from their effect as works of theological enlightenment."

He thus sums up his view of that School. "Anglo-Catholicism has its theoretic basis in a definition of Catholicity which is repudiated by all other Communions, Roman and Protestant. Its traditions are largely legendary. It lacks, moreover, the consistency and thoroughness of Newman himself. There is no half-way house for the Anglo-Catholic. The only refuge for the Pseudo-Romanist is Rome. His imitations are cheap and tawdry. 'The goodwill of the Tractarian firm has been acquired by men with very different aims and methods. The ablest members of the party are plunging violently into social politics, while the rank and file are fluttering round the Roman Candle.'"

Among nineteenth century writers the author may be pardoned for giving Scotland a prominent place. In concluding, he looks for a great reconstructive movement in religious thought. The rela-

tion of man to God, Freedom and Immortality, are subjects of perennial importance. The Incarnation offers the only key to their problems. "The Christian Church stands or falls by the ultimate values she attaches to the historical Christ and to His redemptive and reconciliatory Person and Purpose."

It will be seen from these scanty references that this survey of Christian thought contains a vast amount of interesting and suggestive matter. With most of the views expressed Evangelical Churchmen will be in agreement.

Dr. Leckie's *Vocation of the Church* is a somewhat novel treatment of the character and purpose of the Church. He writes with future unity in his mind, and shows that the true marks of the Church preserve a continuity that is not destroyed by differences apparently most irreconcilable. After a statement of the essential character of the Church as seen in its early development, he devotes himself to the Church's work as Prophet, Priest, and Servant of the Kingdom. The titles indicate the original lines of his thought. While there is much that invites discussion in his treatment, there is a wealth of wise sayings and sound judgments. He endeavours to say the best he can of Romanism, and of those who hold Episcopacy to be of the essence of the Church. We are surprised in a work of this character to find the erroneous popular categories of Protestant and Catholic used as indicating the Reformed and Roman communions. We are told that "Catholics know nothing of Protestant theology," and "Multitudes of Protestants have never worshipped in Catholic Churches."

Under the title *Classics of the Inner Life*, Archdeacon Macnutt edits a series of interesting addresses given last Lent in St. Martin's Collegiate Church, Leicester. The Dean of Bristol gives a sympathetic account of Brother Lawrence and "The Practice of the Presence of God." The Bishop of Edinburgh has a congenial subject in Thomas à Kempis. Bishop Taylor gives the lessons to be learnt from the Private Prayers of Bishop Andrewes. St. Augustine's Confessions fall to Dean Inge, who regards it as "the greatest of all devotional books." The Christian Year has ample justice done to it by Dr. Walter Lock, and the Bishop of Oxford tells of the spiritual influence of Law's Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life. From such a body of lecturers the best was to be expected, and the volume

is assured of a warm welcome from all who value the help and guidance of the experiences of holy men of the past.

S.P.C.K. are issuing a new series of biographies under the general title "English Theologians." Two volumes have already appeared, *Bishop Butler*, by Albert E. Baker, M.A., and *Robert Sanderson*, by George Lewis, M.A. The object of the series is "to make clear, in relation to present knowledge, the work of some well-known English theologians." These books will perform a useful service if they bring the works of a representative body of the great English divines to the notice of a generation that is apt to overlook their merits. Bishop Butler's position in the world of thought is of course secure, and Mr. Baker treats him, as well as the epoch in which he lived, with a critical spirit. At the same time he appreciates the permanent element in his thought, and is more sympathetic to the value of probability as a guide of life than some others who have written on Butler's method. Bishop Sanderson is in quite a different category, and his contribution to the life of the Church was of quite another character. Mr. Lewis gives an interesting account of the stirring times in which the Bishop lived, and of his varied contributions to the Church's thought and work.

G. F. I.

The Girl Guides have found their storyteller in Mrs. A. C. Osborn Hann, who loves the work and has the gift of seeing what it means to the girls. *Peg's Patrol* (Religious Tract Society, 2s.) tells the tale of the formation of patrols in a Walworth parish, the difficulties that had to be overcome and the influences the patrol duty had on the lives of the girls. The remarkable feature of the book is its absence of anything like being written with a purpose, for the story naturally grows, the girls are real, and the captain and her friends are drawn true to life. When we laid down the book we asked ourselves, "Is this exaggeration?" and then we went over the incidents and found that our author has good warrant for saying they are described from life. That is so, but who except Mrs. Osborn Hann could have made them live in cold print? We look forward to other volumes from her gifted pen.