

BOOKS AND THEIR WRITERS.

THE interesting volume in the S.P.C.K. *Studies in Church History*, on Richard Baxter, Puritan and Mystic, by A. R. Ladell, M.A., with a preface by W. H. Frere, D.D., Bishop of Truro (5s. net), is full of surprises. It is first of all a surprise to find Richard Baxter, a Puritan leader, included in the series and introduced to us by the Bishop of Truro. Another surprise is the estimate which is given of Puritanism and its representative. The author tells us in his prefatory note that he has made an honest attempt to understand Puritanism, and as a result of his study "the aim of this essay is to show that the contempt commonly meted out to the great leaders of Puritanism is far less deserved than is usually supposed." Indeed his estimate is so favourable that he feels it necessary to safeguard himself against misunderstanding on the part of less tolerant Churchmen. He closes his preface with the words: "The writer feels that his own loyalty to the Church may be called in question by some conclusions reached in this study of Richard Baxter. Lest that should happen, he hastens to add that the following estimate of the great divine has not been prompted by any sympathy with his nonconformity. Any apparent nonconformist bias, apart from being entirely unintentional, can only be due to the writer's earnest desire to give every possible credit to the side which appeals to him least." I think that we may say that the best biographies are generally written by those who are in sympathy with the personalities of whom they write. Critical estimates have their value, but they are not always satisfactory as complete pictures. They may give us the sort of pleasure which we obtain from Mr. Lytton Strachey's merciless dissection of Cardinal Manning and some other Victorian celebrities, but no one will say that we get our highest pleasure from the laying bare of the weaknesses and foibles of an ambitious man, whose capacity for intrigue developed with his years. Mr. Ladell is fortunate in having as his subject a man with whom, although he must have been on many points out of sympathy, yet in spite of this won his admiration by his love of truth, his firmness, and sincerity. The Bishop of Truro in his somewhat enigmatical

preface finds in Baxter a "type of character with which the Church has again to reckon" to-day. "The motives and moral of his ministry touch closely many of the problems which confront the Church of England in this generation." We might probably put a different interpretation on these words from the Bishop, but we have no doubt that if the same love of truth and sincerity are characteristic of our day, the Church will win through to the unity and power which he desires. Another and much larger life of Baxter has recently appeared. Its author, Dr. Powicke, is a Non-conformist, and is connected with Kidderminster, the scene of Baxter's chief ministry. To him Baxter is a hero, yet he has severe criticisms to offer for many of his acts, and especially for his attitude towards Cromwell. It is interesting to contrast the two lines of approach to the same facts and the differences in the estimates reached.

On the whole Mr. Ladell gives a fair picture of Puritanism, but on one or two points regarding the position of the Church of England his language may be misleading. For instance, he says: "There never could be either mutual understanding or any form of agreement between those who stood for Puritanism and those who stood for Anglo-Catholicism." The term "Anglo-Catholicism" has such a very different meaning to-day that it may give a wrong impression of the English Church of the seventeenth century, to use it without more definite explanation of its connotation. Of course it is the nature of what makes "catholicism" which marks the difference of view. Mr. Ladell says that "Unhesitatingly the Church declared itself to be at one in fact and theory with the Catholic Church of Christ, though purged, on the one hand, of the superstitious encumbrances of the Church of Rome and safeguarded on the other from the presumptuous extravagances of the Church of Geneva." This, we may point out, if it is intended to represent the modern Anglo-Catholic view of the Church of Christ, is not the conception of Catholicism contained in the XXXIX Articles or represented in the teaching of the Reformers.

Of the vicissitudes of Baxter's life a graphic account is given. We must all sympathise with those who had to pass through the stormy days of the Civil War and the Commonwealth. The testing of character was severe from every point of view, whether on the

side of the successful or the defeated. It is much to say that in spite of constant physical suffering, Baxter's conduct wins so large a share of approval from successive generations. The secret of his life is well given in the sentence "Nicholas Ferrar may have equalled him in sincerity of conviction, George Herbert in piety, Lancelot Andrewes in his love for the souls of men; but Richard Baxter is greater than these by reason of his conception of the priceless worth of holiness to every man, and of his endeavour to give to all the treasure he so highly valued." He lives as the author of *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*, a book that has helped to form the English character, and has been one of the most powerful incentives to the spiritual life of many generations.

The Bishop of London's special book for Lent this year is *The Word and Work*, by G. A. Studdert Kennedy, M.A., M.C. (Longmans, Green & Co.). Mr. Kennedy's style as a preacher is so well known that it is scarcely necessary to try to describe it. He is associated with the work of the Industrial Christian Fellowship, and the application of Christian teaching to our social problems naturally holds a prominent place in his thought. He takes in these chapters the prologue to St. John's Gospel and applies its leading ideas to the interpretation of life. Many are questioning the meaning of the world of men and things. He is emphatic that "the world and the life of men in the world have a meaning and a purpose." The Incarnation is the only key to them, and the only true life is that lived in the light of it. "The ultimate environment of man is God." Personal responsibility gains fresh meaning from the fact. But first men must attain to and achieve internal harmony. This is the hall-mark of humanity. Life is a tragedy, and the Cross is the only interpretation of its meaning. A new order of Social life is demanded. This is "as much an essential part of the Christian life as prayer and communion with God." When the Sacrament of the Breaking of Bread is divorced from this, it is deprived of its true significance. "The whole of our Social Order is the Bread of the Altar which waits the act of the Christian community, who lift it up to God." These are some of the vigorous and suggestive thoughts in a book which is intended to give Christian people "a pain in the mind," and rouse them from apathy in regard to the full meaning of the Christian life.

Autobiographical accounts of conversion are seldom satisfactory. Even Newman's *Apologia pro sua Vita*, the best known and most cleverly written of all, leaves a sense of inadequacy as to the sufficiency of the reasons which led him to join the Church of Rome. Where a writer of Newman's capacity failed writers less gifted are not likely to prove successful. The fact is that we all travel by our own peculiar paths to our convictions, and however closely the psychological processes may resemble one another, even when dealing with the same or very similar material, there will always be wide varieties of religious experience. At the same time there is always a special interest in accounts of religious experiences and the self-revelation which they give. These are of practical usefulness to the clergy and to all who have to deal with the difficulties of enquirers. Mr. G. A. Ferguson has narrated his experiences in *How a Unitarian Found the Saviour Christ*. He tells "how a Unitarian minister found peace and intellectual satisfaction in the Church of England, having passed through Theosophy as a half-way house." In spite of much repetition, it is interesting, while it combines both the advantages and disadvantages of which we have spoken. We are not surprised that he finds the doctrine of the Real Presence a difficulty. We hope he will discover that it is no part of the teaching of our Church, and that he will be on his guard against the tendency in all who make the spiritual journey he has made to go to extremes.

To the books on Gambling recently written by Canon Peter Green, and the Rev. James Glass, the Archdeacon of Westminster has added another, but on quite different lines. He calls it *Gambling and Betting*.—A Short Study dealing with their origin and their relation to Morality and Religion (T. Clark, 1s. 6d. net.). After defining gambling, and noting its universality, he gives an account of the ends and origins of the practice. He notes that "since gambling is essentially an appeal to chance, or the element of the irrational and unknown in life, it follows that gambling belongs to the savage or uncivilised type of character." He deals with the various differences between gambling and skill in games and business, and exposes some of the specious reasoning put forward in its defence. The grounds on which gambling is to be condemned are set out clearly, especially its effect on character. He finally

shows that the only effective means of eliminating the gambling spirit is Religion. How gambling is organised may be gathered from the fact that there are estimated to be 30,000 bookmakers in England, and "every master-bookmaker lays claim to some district as his own, the working of this district he commits to his subordinates, who are variously men, women, and children. In these districts hardly a large factory or firm is left uncanvassed by the agents . . . they persuade men to risk their wages, and women to hazard their husband's earnings . . . they get hold of men who have temporary charge of money, and tempt them to embezzle it, they corrupt the weaker members of the police force. . . ." These facts show that "the whole gambling community constitutes a moral leprosy dangerous alike to the individual and the State."

A Layman's Book for Laymen on St. Paul would perhaps be the most appropriate description of *The Letters of Paul the Apostle*, by Henry Coates, F.S.A. Scot. (Robert Scott, 3s. 6d. net). The writer has had a long experience of Bible Class work, and is familiar with the type of thought and the aspects of a subject which would be likely to interest the average layman. He has written this account of the life of St. Paul and his writings from such a point of view, and I am sure the majority of his readers will find it, as I have found it, an exceedingly attractive and instructive volume. He deals "but lightly with the deeper doctrinal problems involved in the letters." His aim is something simpler. As Dr. James Moffatt expresses it in a brief foreword—for those who desire a simple and accurate idea of the subject, the author has made his points well. A brief account of St. Paul's life is followed by points of resemblance and contrast between him and his Master. The characteristics and contents of the letters occupy two chapters. Three on the personality of Paul as revealed in his letters follow; the remainder deal mainly with the individual letters, of each of which a useful summary and analysis are given. Laymen will gain just the vivid and complete impression of St. Paul as a man, a writer, and a missionary which they ought to have from these pages written as a labour of love by one whose devotion to his study is seen on every page.

Preachers will welcome the appearance of another part of *The Speaker's Bible* (Speaker's Bible Office, Aberdeen, Scotland. 10s. 6d. net). It contains the Book of Job and the first thirteen Psalms. The comprehensiveness of the treatment can be gathered from the extent of the space allotted to them—two hundred pages are given to Job and over one hundred to the Psalms, and these are quarto pages with double columns. The Book of Job deals with some of the great fundamental mysteries of life. Every age has to face them anew in the light of its own knowledge and experience. The treatment here is for us of the twentieth century. There are four essays on Resignation, the Battle of Life, Reverence, and Testing Truth. Among the titles of the sections which suggest subjects for sermons are the Ideal Man, the Ideal Home, Cynicism, Freewill, the Uses of Adversity, Broken Purposes, and God's Sovereignty. These are only a few of many that give suggestions for living messages. The help given by these volumes can only be tested by experience, but the illustrations and references alone make them worth having.

The introduction to the Book of Psalms gives useful information dealing with such difficulties as the "enemy" and "vindictive" psalms. There is the usual full list of commentaries and sermons on the various passages. When the preacher adds to the knowledge supplied by the material in this volume the personality which in Bishop Phillips Brooks' well-known definition of preaching is essential for a sermon he will be adequately equipped. G.F.I.

ROBERT SANDERSON (*S.P.C.K.*, 6s.), by the Rev. George Lewis, gives us a full picture of the life and teaching of one of the leading figures of the Church under Charles I, the Commonwealth and Charles II. To him we owe the Prayer Book preface, "It hath been the wisdom of the Church of England, etc.," and his great work on Conscience has had influence on thinkers. He was one of the very best Bishops of Lincoln, and though he occupied the See for only two years he showed himself to be a true Father in God to his clergy. His ecclesiastical position consistently maintained is expressed in his own words, "Episcopacy is grounded upon Scripture texts of greater pregnancy and clearness, and is attested by a fuller consent of antiquity to have been uniformly and universally observed throughout the whole Christian world, than the Lord's Day hath hitherto been shown to be." Mr. Lewis is evidently a strong admirer of his hero and we have found his book a valuable help in understanding the stormy times in which the able and conscientious Bishop lived.