

BOOKS AND THEIR WRITERS.

MANY, like myself, find a special interest in books on St. Paul. It is always a pleasure to welcome any that are designed to help in the study of his epistles. I have a strong belief in the first great missionary of the Church as an interpreter of Christ's message. Some one has said that every great revival of religion has begun in a fresh study of St. Paul, and it may be that the renewed interest in his writings at the present time may be the precursor of that spiritual awakening for which many are praying and hoping. Any book, therefore, which helps us to understand from any point of view the circumstances of the Apostle's life, the conditions under which he wrote, the position of those to whom he was writing, and the contents of his letters, is of use in bringing the teaching of St. Paul into that prominence which we ought all to desire to see given to it. Such a book is *A Guide to the Epistles of Saint Paul*, by Herbert Newell Bate, Canon of Carlisle (Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., paper covers 3s. 6d. net; cloth 5s.).

Canon Bate's aim is to help "the kind of reader who is prepared to read whole epistles through, in English or Greek, and to utilize such help as is given here merely as an aid to his own independent study, and to be conscientious in looking up references." Such a reader will find the guidance given in these chapters illuminating and inspiring. They are an incentive to a fresh study of the epistles and the many interesting questions to which they give rise. He avoids the problems which are only of importance to experts, yet there is ample evidence that he is fully acquainted with the latest opinions of scholars on these deeper questions. He summarizes results with wonderful clearness in very brief space and gives the student what he requires for an intelligent grasp of all the essential facts. In the opening chapters he emphasizes the supreme place of the Hebrew element in the Apostle, in contrast to the attempt sometimes made to represent him as predominantly Hellenic. At the same time he illustrates the value of the Old Testament mould in which the Apostle's mind was cast. When he deals with the epistles in detail he shows considerable independence in his views, and fairness in treating disputed points. I can only indicate a few of his conclusions. He regards Galatians as the earliest of the Epistles, and accepts the south Galatian theory. He adopts the view that the two Epistles to the Corinthians must be divided into four in order to explain adequately the references contained in them. Romans cannot have been addressed to a Petrine Church. It is "probably the hardest book in the Bible," but "it is the first great Christian attempt to justify the ways of God to men." An interesting contrast with II Esdras is suggested. Colossians deals with two main questions: "How must we think about the place of Christ in relation to God and the world?" and "What has Christ done for us?" Ephesians is "a message for a time of transition

and crisis"; and because it interprets that time in the light of truths which do not change, it is "a message for all times, a mirror in which the Church can always discern its own ideal, and the abiding law which its members must serve and obey." I have said enough to indicate the nature of the help which this interesting study of the epistles gives. It would be a useful book as a basis for a study class.

On several occasions I have had the pleasure of drawing the attention of my readers to the series of Devotional Commentaries published by the Religious Tract Society as the type of volume specially useful to those who have the duty of conducting Bible or study classes, and as helpful to preachers giving a course of addresses on some special book of the Old or New Testament. The last addition to the series is one that will specially commend itself for this purpose, as well as for private devotional reading. The commentator in this instance is the Rev. W. H. Rigg, D.D., Vicar of Beverley Minster, Yorkshire. Dr. Rigg is well known to readers of THE CHURCHMAN as a frequent and valued contributor on subjects of Biblical study. He contributes to this R.T.S. series the two volumes on the Books of Samuel. These are two of the most important parts of the historical portion of the Old Testament. They give rise to many problems of interest to critical students, but Dr. Rigg has wisely decided to omit any discussion of these matters as outside the scope of the series, and there is quite sufficient for his purpose apart from such questions. He has adopted the best line, as is suggested in an admirable sentence in his Preface: "One golden thread runs through the whole of the Bible, and that is Christ. He is the interpretation of the Old Testament, as He is the Revelation of the New. Hence for the Christian who reads the Scriptures, his primary aim and purpose must be that, in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, he, through them, may become more closely acquainted with the Mind and the Spirit of the Master, and that his devotion to Him may be kindled anew and deepened. Thus will he be helped to become more Christlike in his daily life and conduct."

The Books of Samuel deal with some of the most interesting personalities and important events in the Old Testament. They afford ample opportunity for illustrating the elemental facts of human experience. Dr. Rigg makes full use of them for this purpose, and finds scope for many valuable lessons on the common failures as well as the virtues of men. His various points are well illustrated by quotations from well-known writers and the great poets. He has also made use of incidents such as the witch of Endor to deal with more peculiarly modern phases of thought such as what he correctly designates "Spiritism." Throughout he is faithful to his own conception of study of the Old Testament, that all points to Christ; and he never fails when opportunity offers to enforce His claims upon mankind. To read the Books of Samuel with this Commentary will be a refreshing experience to many.

It will reveal some of the wonderful varieties of spiritual experience which abound in every portion of Holy Scripture.

The Dean of St. Paul's is recognized as one of the most independent and courageous thinkers in the ranks of the clergy. Every book by him is sure of a wide circle of readers, and is welcomed even by those who cannot always agree with him, as suggestive of fresh thought, and stimulating and inspiring in the spiritual ideals which he presents. He was the Hulsean Lecturer at Cambridge for the years 1925-26, and his lectures have been published by Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co., under the title, *The Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought*. (4s. net.) His purpose is, as he makes clear more than once, "to vindicate the existence of a third tradition in our religious and theological life, besides the two which are most conveniently designated as Catholic and Protestant." This he describes as "Christian Platonism which is the philosophy of mysticism," and it might also have been described as "Johannine." These various divisions are not mutually exclusive. Each shares some of the characteristics of the others, but he believes that there is need to emphasize Christian Platonism as representing the essential features of the religion of Christ, the true spirituality of the Christian revelation. The first lecture contains an historical survey of the manifestations of "the religion of the Spirit" and the conflicts which it has had to wage with the spirit of institutionalism as it developed and was consummated in the form of "Cæsaropapism." In the other lectures he considers three periods in English history "when there was a fruitful return in the Church to 'her old loving nurse the Platonick Philosophy.'" The first is "the Renaissance period, including the Cambridge Platonists." The second is that of Wordsworth, "the greatest born Platonist, perhaps, that our country has produced"; and the last deals with the Victorian age. The general line of the Dean's thought is probably familiar to most of my readers from his other works. The chief interest of these lectures lies in the accounts and estimates of English writers representative of the tradition, and in many characteristic *obiter dicta*. Of these I give a few interesting examples. "There was more culture among the Puritans than among the roystering Cavaliers." "One of the best commentators on English religious poetry, Principal Shairp of St. Andrews." George Herbert "is a typical Anglican because, like the best Anglican clergymen, he is the layman's friend and counsellor." "Reading poetry is, or ought to be, a severe moral discipline. It is best, perhaps, to have one or two favourites, and try to enter into their minds." "I am afraid that to-day no cleric is much more than the prophet of a coterie." "The true apostolical succession, in the lives of the saints, has never failed, and never will." "Institutionalism has a great survival value, which is quite independent of its religious value." These few examples of the striking sayings in these lectures are in themselves sufficient to entice readers to the volume. In addition there are many important facts recalled

regarding such writers as Whichcote, Henry More, Cudworth, Wordsworth, Shelley, Ruskin, Maurice, and Bishop Westcott.

Although Dr. Dyson Hague's new book, *The Story of the English Prayer Book*, will be dealt with more fully in the review pages of this number, I must take the opportunity of recommending it to the attention of my readers. There are many books from many points of view upon the Prayer Book and its history, but in this volume of two hundred and eighty pages, issued at the modest cost of five shillings, there is provided a popular and at the same time accurate account of the stages through which the various forms of worship have gone from the early days of the Church until we have the form set out for our own Church in the Prayer Book. At a time when special interest is being taken in the Prayer Book on account of the revision proposals, such a book is of particular importance. Dr. Dyson Hague, as a clergyman of the Church in Canada, has already seen the process of revision as it was conducted in the Dominion. He is therefore familiar with all the stages of the process and the arguments which can be brought forward in support of proposed changes. The result of his mature judgment as seen in this book has therefore special value, and the accounts of the Prayer Books of the Canadian Church, the Irish Church, and the American Church will be read with interest. To each chapter are added suggestions for discussion which will be useful to those who desire to use the book as a guide to the study of our Liturgy. Dr. Dyson Hague has had considerable experience as a teacher of theology in Canadian Colleges, and is also favourably known as an author. This volume increases the debt which Church people owe him for his helpful studies in historical and liturgical subjects.

The ninth volume of *The Speaker's Bible* (The Speaker's Bible Offices, Aberdeen, Scotland, 9s. 6d. net) deals with the Epistle of St. James. The practical character of this Epistle always renders it a favourite with preachers, and specially with those whose bent is practical. They are not infrequently also those indisposed to prolonged and minute study. The help provided in this volume will therefore be all the more acceptable to them. Much of the material is drawn from the writings of preachers of note. It is admirably arranged, and is supplemented with a mass of most appropriate illustrations also drawn from the best and most modern sources. It is a storehouse of most useful references, and preachers may well rejoice to have such a wealth of suggestive thoughts so readily at their command. There is little excuse for dull sermons with such help as these volumes provide. To this volume is added an Index to the nine now issued. It fills sixty of these large quarto pages. This will give some idea of its extent and completeness. It is unnecessary to point out the additional value such an index gives to the series. It renders its use a matter of ease and provides a ready source of suggestion and enrichment on a wide range of subjects.

Next October, the seven hundredth anniversary of the death of St. Francis of Assisi will be celebrated, and general attention will no doubt be directed to the life of this wonderful man. There are many lives of the saint written from varied points of view—Roman Catholic, Anglo-Catholic, Liberal Protestant and several others. Those who desire a short and readable life may be glad to know of that by William H. Leathem, M.A. (Messrs. James Clarke & Co., 3s. 6d. net). It is sympathetic towards the ideals represented in the life of Francis without any of the bias shown by other writers in behalf of the Roman Church. In fact, Mr. Leathem wisely says that the life of Francis is a challenge to every Christian and to the Church in every age. It was inevitable that in some age the interpretation of the teaching of Christ adopted by St. Francis would be adopted as the practical rule of life by some faithful soul, and it was an accident that it occurred in the twelfth century and in Italy. St. Francis is really of no special age. The perversion of his spirit in the interests of monasticism is of the thirteenth century and of the Roman Church. These facts cannot disguise the inspiration of the Poverello, nor diminish the appeal of the principles of the Fourth Order to numbers outside the Roman communion. These pages are written as their author says "not in order that we may live a dream life in the past, but that we may find help to meet with courage the demands of the present." Many useful lessons may be gathered from this presentation of the ideals of Francis.

Mr. Prescott Upton's examination of the "Anglo-Catholic" case for reservation in his *Reservation, Unscriptural; Uncatholic, Unlawful* (Charles J. Thynne & Jarvis, Ltd., price 4d.), is a useful statement bearing upon a subject of special importance at the present time. Mr. Upton's knowledge of the whole case is well known, and he has brought together in brief form a mass of material of the utmost value to all who have to defend our Church from the introduction of practices rejected and condemned at the Reformation. Anglo-Catholics display considerable subtlety and ingenuity in their arguments. They make use of documents to support their case which are not easily accessible to the ordinary reader. In some cases they misrepresent the true meaning of statements contained in them, and lay a false emphasis on passages which they regard as likely to assist their cause. Mr. Upton deals with these adequately and faithfully. He shows that the claims put forward for the practice are baseless. He examines these in some detail. In dealing, for example, with the efforts to evade the perfectly clear meaning of the post-Communion rubric concerning the consumption of the elements, he exposes the frequent misuse of Bp. Cosin's words which are twisted by the extremists into a protest against "Puritan irreverence." This brief resumé of the case against Reservation contains substantially all the facts, and they should be known to Churchmen, especially at the present time, and in view of the efforts to secure the legalization of the practice.

Probably many of my readers find *The Expository Times* one of the most interesting of our monthly periodicals. It has a unique place among the many magazines issued for the purpose of helping students to an adequate knowledge of current theological literature. It has a special value as a means of keeping us informed of new books in many different departments of religious and ecclesiastical thought. It gives just the information many of us desire in order to keep in touch with the vast quantity of literature which we have little opportunity and time to read, and perhaps less ability to purchase. At the same time we desire to know what books are being published and what lines are being pursued in the various branches of study. *The Expository Times* is truly catholic in its sympathy. Few books of importance escape its notice, and they are all so skilfully, even though sometimes very briefly, dealt with, that a good idea can be obtained of current thought. In addition to the admirable notices of books there are frequent articles by acknowledged leaders of thought on some of the problems of special interest. Sometimes an interesting account is given of the latest views on some special doctrine. One of the parables may be expounded with fresh insight by some scholar of prominence. Practical help for preachers is given in the long extracts from the sermons and addresses of eminent preachers. In many respects it is one of the best means of keeping abreast of the literature which is of special interest to the clergy.

In the Abbey Series published by Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co. appears a new edition of Dr. John Donne's *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions, together with Death's Duel* (3s. 6d. net). These Meditations, Expostulations and Prayers of the great Dean of St. Paul's in the days of James I have been described as unique. When we remember the conditions under which they were written—a long course of fever during the greater part of which the author's recovery was not anticipated—we can only be amazed at the qualities displayed in them. Dr. Donne had a remarkable career. He only took Orders when he was forty-two years of age, and then chiefly at the instigation of the King, who regarded him as eminently qualified by character and attainments for the ministry. Yet he was a deep student of theology, and these Devotions show a marvellously minute and accurate acquaintance with the Bible and a quaint ingenuity in the application of its words for his purpose. They are scarcely of a popular type, and yet they have qualities which will always render them attractive to thoughtful minds, and especially to those who are students of the older divines, and love their peculiar methods of thought and expression.

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