

BOOKS AND THEIR WRITERS.

THE life of Christ seems to have an irresistible attraction for many widely differing types of writers. In recent times there have been a number of endeavours on the part of authors who would not be definitely classed as religious specialists to portray the life of Jesus as it makes its appeal to them. Of these, *The Life of Jesus* by Emil Ludwig, *The Life of Christ* by Papini, and *Jesus, Man of Genius* by Mr. Middleton Murry are the best known. A learned Jewish writer, Joseph Klausner, has also written a life of Jesus of Nazareth from his special point of view. Other books dealing with the life of our Lord, of recent date, are *The Man Nobody Knows* and *The Man Himself*. All these serve to show the deep interest there is in the presentation of the Life and Character of Jesus.

Of books written from a definitely Christian point of view there is also a great variety. All of them have been written to help in the interpretation of Christ to Christian people and all have served useful purposes. We may go back to the most popular of them all, *The Life of Christ* by Dean Farrar. It had an enormous circulation and the fascination of its style gave it an influence which has not even yet passed away. Less well known perhaps, but of great use and interest to students, was Dr. Cunningham Geikie's *The Life and Words of Christ*. It ran through many editions and was highly appreciated for its accuracy and scholarship. The book which won for itself a unique position was, however, Dr. Alfred Edersheim's *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. The author's massive learning, his acquaintance with Jewish life and the literature of the Jewish people gave his work an outstanding position which it still retains. No volumes on the life of our Lord have probably been so frequently consulted by preachers and teachers as Dr. Edersheim's exhaustive treatise. Of the latest books which seek to popularize the New Testament narrative none has been so widely and deservedly recognized as Archdeacon Paterson Smyth's *A People's Life of Christ*. With a special gift for popular exposition which he has shown in many works on various religious subjects the Archdeacon has told with effective simplicity the story of the life of Jesus. Since its first appearance in 1921 it has been reprinted at least twenty-five times. This is no small tribute to its usefulness.

We turn from these to two of the latest portrayals of our Lord's life and teaching. One is by an American writer whose name has become widely known in England through an earlier work, *The Inescapable Christ*, which had the advantage of a commendatory preface by Dean Inge. Dr. Walter Russell Bowie, the Rector of Grace Church, New York, calls his volume *The Master: A Life of Jesus Christ* (John Murray, 7s. 6d. net). The tendency to-day is to present the life of Jesus from the viewpoint of its human development. Many feel that in this way a better grasp of its essential elements can be obtained than if the life were approached from

a supernatural or doctrinal side. Dr. Bowie is an example of this tendency. His purpose is expressed in a note on the jacket of the volume in these words: "Dr. Bowie gives us the human story of the Personality whose surpassing power lies in no miraculous unlikeness to the life He seemed to share, but in something profoundly at one with the most native intuitions of the human mind and soul."

This treatment has many advantages and it helps to a realization of aspects of the life of Jesus which have at times been too much neglected. At the same time it has disadvantages which are difficult to avoid. It seems to be impossible on these lines to give such a presentation as will bring out the full power of our Lord as His divine being made itself felt upon the people with whom He was most intimately associated. It also leaves an impression at times that the author is minimizing some of the most important features in the New Testament picture. Dr. Bowie's method is attractive and stimulating. It presents many points of the old story in new light and helps to a better understanding of some of the difficult passages. He carries his readers along with the charm of his sympathy and of his style, but when he comes to crucial matters such as the miraculous we feel that he has left us somewhat in the air. Some of the miracles are to be explained as natural occurrences which the spectators may have misunderstood, or of which a wrong report may have got abroad. Others are minimized in other ways, yet we cannot help feeling that the life of Christ without the miraculous element is not in full accord with the New Testament record. A friend who is no mean critic tells me that he always judges every treatment of our Lord's Life in this respect by the way in which the raising of Lazarus is dealt with. It is significant that Dr. Bowie does not mention the event. While we make every allowance for the literalness of our matter-of-fact western minds which are apt to lead us astray on many points, we cannot regard an appeal to the poetical nature of Christ's utterances as an adequate explanation of some of the difficulties.

The other life of Christ comes from S.P.C.K. It is called *The Wonderful Story: A Life of Jesus for the Children of the Church* (5s. net), by the Rev. G. R. Oakley. It may frankly be said that this is not a book which would have been issued by S.P.C.K. even a few years ago. Its purpose is to present Christ as the Teacher of the most distinctive features of the Anglo-Catholic conception of Christianity. It is a party book of an extreme type into which doctrine is dragged with more violence than discretion. Early in the narrative we get an inkling of what is coming when we are told that our Lord by placing His hands on the man's eyes whose sight He was restoring was teaching us the value of Sacraments. When we turn to the account of the Institution of the Lord's Supper, the simplicity of its ceremonies is denied. "This feast at which our Lord ordained the Holy Eucharist was by no means a 'simple meal.' It was accompanied by elaborate ceremonies." Here are some points of teaching which follow. "When Jesus said 'Do

this ' He used words which were often used, in the Greek Old Testament which the Jews used, for 'celebrate this' or 'offer this.' I can only refer my readers to Dr. T. K. Abbott's scholarly pamphlet "Do this in Remembrance of Me: Should it be 'Offer This'?" for the complete refutation of this statement. The statement that "the word He used for remembrance in every other place where it occurs means a memorial before God and not just a means of reminding men is also shown to be without foundation in the same pamphlet. While his further statements that there is a sacrifice offered on the altar, and that "the consecrated Bread and Wine are Christ's Body and Blood, and that where they are there He, in His whole person, must be, as really as God was present in Jesus as He lay in the crib or in His mother's arms . . . therefore we bow the knee before His Sacramental Presence and worship and adore Him" are the crudities of expression which cause offence to most sensible Christians who are anxious for the maintenance of truth and at the same time desire to advance the unity of Christendom.

It is the fashion with a number of writers to-day to affect an air of superiority towards the products in literature and art of the Victorian Age. It is difficult to refrain at times from surmising what the attitude of the next age will be towards the works of these writers of the Georgian age who have such a high conception of their own gifts. Few of them seem able to impress their contemporaries as novelists like Dickens and Thackeray, poets like Tennyson and Browning, and painters like Watts or Turner impressed the people of the nineteenth century.

It is refreshing to turn from such writings to a book with the outlook of Mr. D. C. Somervell's *English Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (Methuen & Co., 6s. net). Here we find a thoroughly interesting account of the intellectual movements of the century, and a just appreciation of the merits and demerits of its prominent characters. It was a great age and Mr. Somervell adequately summarizes its characteristics. "The Victorians lived in an age of absolutely unprecedented development. Population was growing as it had never grown before, and from the 'forties onward, wealth grew faster than population. Within the lifetime of a single man we passed from general illiteracy to general education: from rotten-boroughs to democratic suffrage, from stage coaches to railways and telegraphs, from—is it necessary to extend the catalogue? It was inevitable that those who lived in such an age should be at once bewildered and exhilarated. They felt that they were living in an epoch which, whatever else might be said of it, was certainly of unique significance. The Victorian Englishman felt that he was a member of the greatest nation in the world at the most important epoch of human history, and that he must rise to the occasion." In contrast with this the Georgian is living in "an age of disillusionment" with all its disadvantages, and he

must be pardoned if he is a little envious of the spacious days which he has just missed.

Mr. Somervell divides the century into three portions, and gives a very appreciative estimate of the characteristics of each. In the first third we find the old Tory Orthodoxy of Burke and Scott, the religion and philanthropy of the Evangelicals, the varieties of radicalism ranging from Paine and Godwin to Mill and Brougham. Five poets of the Romantic Movement are included in the period. The second period, comprising the middle third of the century, includes the Benthamite-Liberal orthodoxy, Evangelicalism and its rivals, the scientific movement and some Victorian men of letters. The last third is treated under the headings Imperialism, Collectivism and Socialism and Some Aspects of Modernity. From these titles it will be seen that a comprehensive survey is taken of the intellectual movements of the century. Fair treatment is in the main meted out to every one, and there is an air of detachment which adds to the sense of appreciation of sympathy with some phases and of criticism of others.

We are naturally most closely interested in Mr. Somervell's treatment of the Evangelicals, and he is on the whole very fair to them. He gives them full credit for their enthusiasm in philanthropic reform, although he cannot resist a sly dig at some of their limitations in the earliest period. Evangelicalism, he says, was a greater force than Benthamism, for it moulded the character of the nation. He quotes with approval Halévy's statement: "Men of letters disliked the Evangelicals for their narrow Puritanism, men of science for their intellectual feebleness. Nevertheless, during the nineteenth century, Evangelical religion was the moral cement of English Society. It was the influence of the Evangelicals which invested the British aristocracy with an almost Stoic dignity, restrained the plutocrats newly risen from the masses from vulgar ostentation and debauchery, and placed over the proletariat a select body of workmen enamoured of virtue and capable of self-restraint." If Evangelicalism was the principal ingredient in "Victorianism," it is agreed that "Victorianism" cannot be dismissed with contempt. It is regrettable that he sees nothing in the "No-Popery" cry but narrow prejudice. The Protestantism of England is based on something more substantial than that. It is not without reason that the English people reject "the Mass in Masquerade" and regard Puseyism and its offshoots as something more disastrous in character than a mere appeal to "the vocational pride of the clergy." He gives an accurate estimate of the recent rejection of the revised Prayer Book. "The contrast between the powerful majorities that accepted that Book in the Church Assembly and the resolute and successful opposition of a large section of the House of Commons illustrates the fact that the Anglo-Catholic movement, though it dominates the Church, has not overcome the traditional Protestantism of the nation."

Mr. Somervell has made a survey of a wide range of interests and has set them in admirable perspective. He has a real interest

in religion and its influence upon the life and character of the nation, and for that reason if for no other, his account of the thought of the nineteenth century will be found a fascinating volume by churchpeople.

The papers read at the Cheltenham Church Congress have been issued in volume form by Mr. John Murray under the title *The Anglican Communion: Past, Present and Future*, edited by the Bishop of Chelmsford (7s. 6d. net). They constitute a body of representative opinions on the history and doctrine of our Church which cannot be ignored by any student of its development and teaching. Regret has been expressed on various sides that some of the views represented should have been allowed to be put forward on a Church Congress platform. But there is no point in disguising the fact that the views expressed are held by some sections of the Church, and no one was in a position to act as censor and to lay down the limits of comprehensiveness. Such a volume as this gives an opportunity of seeing the best that can be said for opinions that may be regarded on one hand or the other as scarcely within the wide bounds of Anglican doctrine. It is not possible here to enter upon an examination of the widely differing conceptions of the Church, its nature, its ministry, its teaching and its future which are developed in this Report. The volume deserves careful study, and will be a book of reference for a considerable time to come. It might well be used as a basis of study in clerical study circles. At a time when many are endeavouring to soften sectional differences, some of the lines converging towards agreement might be discovered among these documents, while some of the theories put forward will undoubtedly be found to render any approach to unity impracticable.

The case for the Evangelical Movement was stated by the Rev. C. M. Chavasse with great force and clearness. He showed that where the Evangelical stream has not flowed strongly there has been darkness and death. In spite of many efforts on the part of the higher authorities to crush the Evangelicals they had made contributions to English religious life which in Lecky's words "compare with the first days of Christianity." He paid a tribute to the educational work carried on by the National Church League and the "Groups Movement" and pointed out the virility of Evangelicalism and the value of its contribution to the future of religion. Canon H. A. Wilson presented the Evangelical view of "The Anglican Interpretation of the Christian Faith." He emphasized the significance of the term "Reformed" as applied to our Church. While it implied liberty of thought and freedom of expression it also imposed limitations. By requiring that nothing contrary to the teaching of Scripture shall be allowed, our Church has attained a solidity and stability in its position which is unshakable.

The papers, by representatives of the various churches, were illustrative of important phases of the movement towards reunion,

and serve to show the difficulties which have to be surmounted. This volume stands by itself among the Reports of Church Congress. It is an important contribution to the study of Anglicanism in its present-day aspects.

The life of Bishop Bompas—the great pioneer Bishop of the remote North-West of Canada—has been told by many writers. One of the best known is Archdeacon Cody's thrilling narrative of the dangers and difficulties of the Bishop's adventurous undertakings which he gives in the volume *An Apostle of the North*. A memoir of the Bishop's wife, the devoted companion of his labours, has now been written by Mrs. S. A. Archer and bears the appropriate title, *A Heroine of the North* (S.P.C.K., 5s. net). It ranks among the inspiring stories of missionary enterprise and adventure. Mrs. Bompas was the daughter of a London doctor who on his early retirement took up his residence at Castlemare on the beautiful hills above the Bay of Naples. Here amid surroundings of natural beauty Charlotte Selina Cox spent the most impressionable years of her youth. The art of Italy appealed to her strongly. She became a gifted musician, and had a strongly developed appreciation of the wonders of art in Rome and Florence. She also developed her gifts as a writer and produced a number of tales and magazine articles. She had a perfect mastery of the Italian language and even in old age she carried her Dante in her pocket. In the year 1873 William Carpenter Bompas came back from Canada to be consecrated the first Bishop of Athabasca and in the following year he married Miss Cox. It is difficult to imagine a more marked contrast than that of her early life in the midst of Italian art and refinement and the hardships and privations of her life in the Yukon. The volume contains a large number of extracts from her journal and letters which give vivid impressions of the daily hopes and disappointments of their life among primitive and degraded Indians.

The record of the journey to the distant diocese shows the difficulties which had to be encountered in those early times. Days were spent in open boats with the sun beating down upon their heads and innumerable swarms of mosquitoes causing intolerable irritation. This was followed by the intense cold of winter. Sometimes the provisions ran short and they had to depend on the uncertain produce of the rabbit-snares and the fishing-net. Their constant ration was moose-deer meat. "It looks for all the world like a heap of dirty rough shoe-leather. This we have boiled for breakfast, dinner and tea." The isolation was a severe trial. Letters from England sometimes arrived a year after they were posted. The Bishop was often away on long journeys, and her loneliness was intense. Yet she threw herself heartily into the work and was happy in seeing the results of her labours in the lives of the young people in whose education she took a large share. Bishop Bompas died suddenly at Carcross, one of his chief mission stations, in the year 1906, and was succeeded by Bishop Stringer, who contributes an interesting preface to this record of a beautiful

life. Mrs. Bompas survived till 1917. She settled down in the Province of Quebec where she died at the age of 87. Up to the end she took a keen interest in the work in the North West and frequently spoke on behalf of it.

C.M.S. Story of the Year 1928-9 has been issued under the title *The Search* (C.M.S., 1s. net). It is similar in character to the stories issued each year for the last four years and will be found equal in information and interest. The title is suggested by the fact we find ourselves to-day in "a seeking world. We are in the midst of a mighty renaissance, world-wide, all-embracing, and the spirit of seeking is abroad as never before, untrammelled and free." The record reveals the nature of the search in the various parts of the world where the Society is at work. The search for personality in West Africa; the search for wholeness of life in East Africa; the search for leadership in India and the search for a dynamic in Japan are some of the features of the work. A vivid impression is left on the mind of the greatness of the opportunity presented to the Christian Church to-day as well as of the inadequacy of the response. The mass movements in India and the demand for education by the tribes of Africa are a call which ought not to go unheeded. The dangers to the future of Christianity are touchingly revealed by the words of an African Christian who realized the peril of heredity. "The grace of God may be in the heart, but grandfather is in the bones." Another fact to be seriously reckoned with is indicated in the words: "Frantic attempts (which are sometimes successful) are made to convert Christians to Hinduism and Islam, and both religions can boast of Christians among their converts." The maps with which the accounts of the missions are accompanied are very useful. They help to give a more complete impression of the conditions of life and work. Many in addition to those interested in C.M.S. will do well to read this inspiring and yet in parts depressing record.

Mary of York, Orange and England is the title of Miss Marjorie Bowen's new work on the life of Queen Mary II, which the Bodley Head will publish shortly.

Miss Bowen has collected some intimate and hitherto unpublished data and letters dealing with the Stewart Queen. The book is to be illustrated and, as before with Miss Bowen's work, with some interesting and unusual pictures, including a reproduction of the famous "Queen Mary" crystal ring which has only just come to light after being lost for so many years. Both Mary and her sister, Queen Anne, were brought up in the Old Palace at Richmond, little of which now remains.

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