

## Some Recent Baptist Books.

**T**HE *Life and Faith of the Baptists*. By H. Wheeler Robinson, M.A., D.D., 184 pages and index, 5s. Methuen.

Dr. Jacks is editing a series in which the varieties of Christian expression among men of differing communions are being set forth, so that sane and trustworthy accounts may be had with a minimum of controversy. Principal Robinson has well earned his right to be our spokesman. And he has well chosen an unusual form of description.

This age demands facts before theories; and Englishmen especially do things first, then afterwards (if ever) try to understand their relation and meaning. So eight pictures of Baptist life are here drawn first. They are very various; a boy, his soldier-uncle, a social reformer, a teacher, a woman author, a school-master, a preacher, and the inner life of a church as shown in its minutes dealing with discipline and hymn-singing. Of the people, only three were ministers, and two of these are better known in other capacities; this choice shows what we mean by the priesthood of All believers. What other communion would have selected a group with no theologian, no ecclesiastical statesman? An Anglo-Catholic from these sixty pages will get many glimpses into the real character of Baptist life, and may marvel at the difference in tone from his own circle.

Then come four chapters to emphasize four characteristics. The first is the importance we attach to conversion, personal direct response to God's call; and the way we impress this at the psychological moment, by baptism. Then our doctrine of the Church is unfolded. Next the object of the Church, to win more adherents for Christ. And our intense love of liberty. Other people believe in these things, and even combine one or two; to us they are the cornerstones of our faith.

We may for our own profit study half the final chapter, which deals with the strength and weakness of the Baptists. Friendly observers tell us that our very emphasis on these points, especially the first, bars re-union and keeps us isolated: that we under-estimate the divine impartation of grace; that our organisation is too crude for us to utilise our latent powers; that we do not train and use our young people; that we tend to undue literalism of interpretation. We cannot but recognise the truths in these kindly warnings, and Dr. Robinson suggests how we may be able to profit by them, and enrich our life. It is one of the

great merits of this volume that there is no assumption of our superiority at every point; and thus while we may amend our ways by attention to this half of the chapter, others may gather hints from the other half, won by its truly Christian tone.

W. T. W.

*The Permanent Value of the Ten Commandments.* By H. J. Flowers, B.A., B.D. 7s. 6d. Allen and Unwin.

A book of this kind is much needed. Although the Ten Commandments are prefaced with a clear statement that they were for a people brought out of Egypt, they are often painted on the walls of churches in England, bearing no relation to Egypt. Although our Lord expressly criticised some of them as inadequate, and although He offered Two Commandments as fundamental and all-sufficient, yet Christian catechisms try to teach duty under these ten heads. Frank dealing is decidedly in place: and the title of this book promises it.

The author has shown to our readers how he is at home in Pauline thought, and his competent handling of Paul's Greek. Here he reveals himself as equipped in Hebrew, and in Hebrew thought. He is truly Pauline in using plainness of speech, so that there is no vague ambiguity in his exposition. If there be a very clear statement of views that will surprise some old-fashioned stalwarts, in language that is not highly theological or conventional, yet there is no reticence as to the seat and source of authority to-day. "All authority is given to Me," was the explicit claim of the risen Christ: and this is stated in other Biblical terms here, as that He is our Lord and King.

*The Master and His Men.* Studies in Christian Enterprise. By F. Townley Lord, D.D. (Carey Press, 3s. 6d.)

One of the dominant arguments for Christianity, if not the supreme argument, is found in the appeal to the Church's history and the witness of the Christian experience. In this stimulating book, Dr. Lord shows us the Church starting out on her adventurous voyage, "not heavily loaded with formal enactments, detailed schemes, and credal statements," and yet, as the years rolled by, expressing Christian enthusiasm in a hundred ways. With keen insight, he discusses the men and women who, in different ages, "have caught a vision of the splendour of Christ and set out to reflect that splendour to their own world and in their own way." We realise afresh our immense debt to that first strange group who companioned with the Master and gave us those literary records without which we cannot conceive Christian history.

The chapter on the conflict with imperial power is arresting and inspiring. To-day, the Christian belief in immortality is possibly not stressed as it should be, but it was this strong conviction which helped the men who would not bow the knee to Caesar "all along the tortured way and through the arena or the flames to the Other Side." With sustained interest, we follow Dr. Lord as he writes of the men who forsook the world—impelled thereto by a yearning for simplicity of life, an illustration of the continual action and reaction between the life of the spirit and the life of organisation; of the Friars who, on the open road, found "a Nature and a Humanity responsive to their call"; of the men who sailed to heathen lands and of the men who carried the gospel to the slums. These men followed great ideals. But ideals are not enough; there must be the dynamic to urge to their pursuit. And the dynamic which inspired these men was their divine constraint. They knew Christ as Saviour and Teacher and could not "refrain from an attempt to make that experience known to others." In his final chapter, Dr. Lord reminds us that "the youth of our Christian Churches to-day enter into a heritage which cannot be excelled in any other society in the world" and he discusses four prominent features of our religious life: (1) The atmosphere of religious freedom; (2) The new intellectual standards; (3) The restless spirit of present day life; (4) The new unity of the world.

Scholarship breathes on every page, but it is scholarship that does not terrify. For Dr. Lord knows the youth and the thinking man of to-day, and to them his musical style, with its vivid poetry in words fitly joined, will make a particular appeal. The book is well produced by the Carey Press and deserves wide circulation.

SEYMOUR J. PRICE.

*Christ and Money.* By Hugh Martin, M.A. (Student Christian Movement, 3s.)

It is remarkable that comparatively little attention has been given to this important and most practical problem in traditional Christian teaching. Mr. Hugh Martin is a wholehearted believer in the practicability of the Christian Gospel: he is anxious that the Christianity of our time should leave its ennobling influence in the sphere of economics, and although he has not written this book in the interests of any particular theory, it is clear that he is very dissatisfied with the existing order of things. He believes that already the Spirit of Christ has found an entrance into our commercial and industrial life, and to read this book is to realise that he has made a contribution to the subject which

is far greater than his own modest claims. From a consideration of the value of money he proceeds to a brief but clear treatment of the Teaching of Jesus, and then has some straight things to say about property. "The tradition of the Church from the days of the Apostles till now is that all property is held in trust. The owners have to answer to God for its use. There is no moral standing in bare possession." Particularly valuable is his chapter on personal expenditure. He will not lay down rules—"It is a matter of the spirit"—but he stresses the idea of stewardship, condemns luxurious expenditure, advises the Christian duty of saving and provision for age, and has some fine things to say about systematic giving to the work of the Church both at home and abroad. Altogether this is a healthy book which may be specially recommended to the young people of our churches. Its clear style and virile treatment should commend it to a wide circle of readers.