

Reviews.

Stream of the River, by G. W. Byrt. (The Kingsgate Press, 5/-.)

This book will be read with lively interest by those to whom it is dedicated, "the people of West End, past and present." It will entertain, too, a much wider class of readers. Its chief merit is its delightfully human interest. In its 150 pages an attempt has been successfully made to depict what has happened in 150 years of the life of a Free Church in London, the West End Baptist Church, Hammersmith, once a rural hamlet, now a densely populated centre of London's suburban life.

The author is the Church's present Minister, the Rev. George William Byrt, a Bristol College man. He has a facile pen, descriptive power, keen insight, while his judgment on character, and on the main events on which emphasis should be placed in this Church's thrilling career, is very fair. Something is told us by Mr. Byrt of his fifteen predecessors in the Ministry. British Baptists everywhere will be glad to have this story of the connection with this Church of such men as J. Bird, one hundred years ago, the father of Benwell Bird, of Plymouth, of Dr. Leechman, P. Bailache, William Page, F. G. Benskin, Dr. H. C. Mander and others, also of less known but equally famous Church Secretaries, deacons, and deaconesses. The Church's keen interest, too, in foreign missions, and the men and women of its membership that have served various Societies abroad are mentioned. Chapter 32 will be a classic fifty years hence, with its graphic story of West End's experiences 1939-1944, during the tragic days of the Battle of London. A number of outside events, personalities and interests associated in some way with the Church's chequered history have also been realistically described. There are two illustrations of the Church buildings.

The title of the book, *Stream of the River*, is not, perhaps, the best that might have been chosen. But behind the Stream one can perceive the divine fountain of blessing, which flows and ceases not, bubbling up with water both bitter and sweet, that will not be quenched.

HERBERT ANDERSON.

Round the Club-Room Fire. Informal Talks for Youth Clubs, edited by E. H. Hayes and R. G. Martin (The Kingsgate Press, 3/6.)

This book consists of five series of talks on work, leisure, social relations and beliefs. It was written for the British Lessons

Council by a number of different writers, several of whom are ministers, and all of whom have a distinctively Christian outlook. The book, however, is an unusually realistic effort to understand the position of the boy and girl outside the Christian Church. In particular, the notes provided for the Leader on each of the topics show a fresh and broad-minded way of tackling the old problems, although this is not always maintained in the detailed presentation of the case for the young members.

The outstanding papers are the first and the last. The first, on Work, by the Rev. D. A. Griffiths, is good because it recognises the fundamental importance of the problem, and knows exactly what boys and girls are facing in employment to-day. The last, an appendix, is by L. E. Keating on Sex Discussion in the Club. It is left to Mr. Keating to deal with that most important of all uses of leisure—"boy-friends," "girl-friends," "dates" and the many connected questions that must be raised in a live club. These topics are dealt with admirably, but all too briefly, and it is difficult to know why they were confined to a short appendix.

One would like to know also why dancing has been omitted from the "uses of leisure," for it certainly takes priority even over the cinema—as every experienced club-leader will know. Whatever our own views on the subject may be, surely it is something that we cannot ignore. It might be suggested that the chapter on Right and Wrong is a somewhat negative way of dealing with the Good Life. A more positive attitude seems to be needed, and could be more easily understood by boys and girls to-day in the building up of a vital community life in the club, where personal morality and social relations can be worked out in real life. The two sections on "How We Live" are surely tackling the problem more soundly.

What remains now is for the book to be widely used by skilled workers who will not only guide the discussions, but will listen to what the boys and girls have to say on these important questions. This information would be well worth collecting, for only as we constantly listen and learn, shall we be of any real use to our Club Members.

E. C. N. BRITTON.

Experience Worketh Hope, by A. J. Gossip. (T. & T. Clark, 8/-.)

"If a man is really preaching," says Dr. Gossip in one of these sermons—strangely enough it is in one on the meaning of Infant Baptism, "Christ Himself is in the midst . . . and seeing Him, hearing Him, conscious of His presence there beside it, the soul runs to Him, clings to Him, accepts what He is offering, deals with Him face to face, and at first hand, with an intensity of

worship which the rest of the service never even touched." It is this high conception of the sacramental character of preaching which gives power to these twenty characteristic sermons by one of the greatest of contemporary preachers. No one can read them without being conscious of the burning sincerity of one who speaks as a "prophet" uttering a Word of God. Ordinary life and the circumstances of the hour are never out of his mind. Dr. Gossip has chosen as a sub-title "Some Thoughts for a Troubled Day." Perhaps a better one would have been the theme of the tenth sermon—"Some Blessed Certainties in an Unstable World"—for that is the keynote of them all. Most of them have a New Testament text and a very wide range of general reading is skillfully drawn upon. But it is from his own experience that he speaks most effectively and eloquently. And his constant aim is to bring men and women into contact with the Living Christ. Those who are fortunate enough to secure a copy of this latest and welcome addition to "The Scholar as Preacher" Series will find a kindling faith and hope glowing from the printed word.

Robert Fletcher Moorshead: Physician, by H. V. Larcombe (Carey Press, 6d.)

Mr. Larcombe's life of Dr. Moorshead, *First the Kingdom*, is now out of print. He has here distilled the essence of its message and presented the essential facts as No. 10 of the useful series, "Brief Biographies of Leading Laymen." Dr. Moorshead's abiding memorial is the medical work of the Baptist Missionary Society, which he organised, fostered and championed through three decades. But a new generation, as well as those whose memory of his work is still vivid, should know something also of his outstanding Christian character, which alone made his achievement possible. By an unfortunate error both the cover and the title page give a fresh but false address as the present headquarters of the Carey Press.

A Christian Year Book, edited by Hugh Martin and E. A. Payne, 1945 Edition. (Student Christian Movement Press, 3/6.)

With a third edition, this reference book may be said definitely to have established itself. It has again been completely revised and brought up to date, and the new edition contains much additional material. Among the special new features is an article by the Rev. M. E. Aubrey on "Christian Reconstruction in Europe."