

BOOKS AND THEIR WRITERS.

CANON C. E. RAVEN, of Liverpool, has acquired a position of considerable influence on the thought of Churchpeople by his courage, sincerity and frankness, combined with extensive learning and highly developed powers of expression. In *A Wanderer's Way* (Martin Hopkinson, 7s. 6d. net) he has made another bold venture, and has joined the ranks of those to whom we are indebted for a revelation of the secrets of their inner life and religious experience. The result is in several ways pleasing and is sure to be helpful to many, yet there must perhaps always be elements in such an intimate exposure of thoughts and feelings that leave a less pleasing impression and raise the question in regard to some details—Was it necessary to record this? Canon Raven has evidently felt the difficulty, for he opens his Preface with the words, "This book ought not to have been written: that is what the reviewers will say." He owns his embarrassment in making the confessions contained in it, yet he justifies its publication on grounds which he thus states: "Everywhere we hear pleas for a deeper realization of the indwelling Christ; but on examination such pleas leave us uncertain as to the character of the experience that we are invited to share. Is Jesus alive now as He appeared to St. Paul; and, if so, can ordinary folks like me, full of fears and vanities, folks living commonplace lives in modern surroundings, have contact with Him? Or is the indwelling of Christ just a title for the acceptance of an example or a body of principles, visualized objectively in primitive times, but nowadays rightly stripped of associations that belong only to abnormal sensibilities or an over-active imagination? This book seeks to supply material for a verdict, or at least to get the matter discussed."

Of the impressions of his boyhood, one of the most vivid is that "the elaborate ceremonial of the Mass would have made Jesus 'numinous' but unreal; and the hymns of the Protestant would have sickened me by their pietism and disgusted me by their illiteracy. And any normal boy would feel the same." It is impossible to enter into any lengthy criticism of this impression, but such a sweeping statement of the character of Protestant hymns and the Protestant type of holiness is obviously altogether unjustifiable. He makes no modifying addition, and on several occasions Canon Raven is guilty of wide generalizations which take away greatly from the balance and effectiveness of his self-revelation.

His early experiences of religious life at the University were unfortunate in the impressions left on him, "Christians were the chief obstacles to my acceptance of Christianity," for it is true, as he says, that "the ultimate evidence for Christianity is not its reasonableness but the type of personality that it produces in its disciples." At the same time, some of his failure to appreciate the religious life of others at this period may have been due to prejudices with which probably many of us have entered on our University

life. He gives ample evidence of the truth of his statement, "I had no sympathy with Protestantism," and we can well understand his position when he goes on to say, "My upbringing had inclined me to the Catholic party; yet its attitude towards the divine society and the inerrant creeds was frankly irreconcilable with a candid examination of the Councils or the history of the fifth century."

He exposes the methods adopted by the Catholic propagandists among the undergraduates at the University. "Their habit was to ask suitable students to go for a walk. I was invited first by one, and then by a second. In each case the routine was the same. Conversation started with boats or the Union or some safe and conventional topic. It drew round to the Church and the Eucharist. Then when we were nearing home, suddenly my companion made his frontal attack, selecting the sexual difficulties of a young man as his gambit. I let him talk: he did, discreetly, but assuming that I was heavily tainted. And when my silence encouraged him to proceed, came the inevitable remedy. Let me adopt the practice of regular confession, and all would be well. I should get relief and strength."

He gives an interesting account of his work in a boys' club in Liverpool while he held an appointment in the Education Office there, but he does not fail to tell us of the "hymns of a desolating Protestantism" thrown on the sheet; yet he has to admit that there he experienced that "beneath cant phrases and old-fashioned pietism was a flame of devotion, a passionate love of the children, a real if unintelligent testimony to the influence of Jesus Christ. I owe to it a debt that can never be repaid." As most expressions of religious life have their own defects, it might have been as well to omit the references to cant and old-fashioned pietism. A more interesting stage in the revelation comes with a visit to a friend which marked a new experience. His friend had "found Jesus" and the result was manifest. His whole outlook was altered: "there was joy and quiet confidence in his face, purpose in his life, sympathy and strength in all his actions. Jesus was alive and present to my friend as he had been to the eleven in the upper room." The reality came home to him and he describes this as the crucial event of his life. The remainder of the volume tells of the effects of this discovery. Those who are interested in our Church life and its future will read with profit much of Canon Raven's criticism of its various movements—the Liberal Evangelical, the Modernist and the Anglo-Catholic. Few will agree with all that he says, but all will appreciate the sincerity of his desire to make our Church more truly expressive of the mind of the Master, and will regard such warnings as are conveyed in the following passage:

"If any of us suppose that we can meet the demands of the new age by reading the Revised Version, or re-writing the State Prayers, or dropping the Athanasian Creed, or sanctioning Reservation, or allowing prayers for the dead, we are living in a world of illusion. We want more than an Enabling Act and a Deposited

Prayer Book and a Doctrinal Commission. These things are desirable enough, and will be useful just so far as they are dictated by knowledge rather of the splendour of the new than of the defects of the old."

There is a widespread impression that parochial missions have had their day and are no longer effective in winning the people outside the influence of the Church for Christ. To those who hold this opinion Canon Peter Green gives a decided answer in *Parochial Missions To-day*, which he describes as "A Handbook of Evangelistic Missions for Missioners and Parochial Clergy" (Longmans, Green & Co., 3s. net, paper covers 2s. 6d.). In his opening chapter he avows his firm faith in the usefulness of the old-fashioned missions and meets the various objections that are raised against them. His own experience of the benefits which have come to the life of many parishes through a well-organized and carefully conducted mission has led him to write this book for the guidance of those who either desire to have one or are chosen to conduct one. His advice is practical and detailed, covering every point both in the preparation and conducting of a mission. The causes of failure are thoroughly examined, and valuable hints given for a successful effort. There is great need, he believes, for teaching on conversion. "I am convinced that many parochial missions fail because the Missioner does not recognize the need for conversion—for an act of decision, that is to say—on the part of the individual Christian, and so does not aim at it or work for it. The evangelical note is, I fear, sadly lacking in most of our ordinary preaching." There must be the appeal for the acceptance of Christ, for self-dedication and consecration. Although Canon Green does not conceal his type of Churchmanship, and frequently advocates some of its special practices, his advice on the general aims and method of a mission is applicable to missions in parishes of all schools, and in fact he strongly condemns the use of a Mission as a means of introducing changes in ceremonial and teaching. "Changes, no matter in what direction, should not be made hastily, arbitrarily, or without the full consent of the people." Although he welcomes ritual advance, he dislikes a lack of straightforwardness about the way it is brought about. When to have a mission, and when not to have one, are points carefully considered. In this connection he has some interesting things to say on foreign missions. Congregations which neglect them are seldom active in home mission work. Dr. Lang when offered Portsea sought the advice of a friend, who advised him to accept or decline according as he found the parish doing much or little for foreign missions. The preparation for a mission is as important as the actual mission itself, and each point in successful preparation is treated in detail. Adequate reasons are given for every suggestion that is made. Equally important is the after-work of a mission, and although it is impossible to agree with the recommendation of the practice of confession, there is other advice which will appeal to Evangelicals as sounder.

For example, there is a warning against expecting young men to be drawn to Christ via the billiard-table, and a recognition of the need of providing more opportunities of work for young people of both sexes in our Church life. Sound teaching of the faith is one of the chief needs after an Evangelistic mission. He deplores the ignorance of Churchpeople. He has found that many who have rejected Christian teaching knew nothing really about it. "What they rejected was not Christianity, but some queer farrago of nonsense picked up from the cheaper newspapers, from popular novels, and from the conversation of people as ignorant as themselves." The advice given to missionaries is equally practical, and the whole book is a useful contribution to the greater efficiency of our Church life in the best use of a means which has in the past proved its value in the work of such men as Canon Hay Aitken, and can still be used with good results when adapted to the special needs of to-day.

The Bishop of Ripon writes an enthusiastic and well-deserved commendation of *Simplicity Towards Christ*, a series of studies in the teaching of our Lord, by H. C. Robbins, D.D., Dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York (John Murray, 6s. net). The Bishop compares these studies to the "Saturday Articles" in *The Times*, "but with a higher percentage of definite Christianity." He also says, "Both the thought and style are (to my mind) so gracious and distinguished, and at times so original, that the book seems marked out for reading by those to whom the ordinary 'religious' book, or volume of sermons, would not appeal." The studies deserve this commendation, for they are striking and original. They set out the spiritual interpretation of the world and man in the way which appeals most strongly to thinking men to-day, and at the same time they contain direct and forceful lessons both about Christ and from Him. The essay which gives its title to the book is a strong appeal for a return to the childlike spirit of the great Christians, who in the fulness of their trust in Christ accomplished heroic deeds for Him. The Third Beatitude gives an interpretation of meekness that sets out its conquering qualities in world affairs. A new interpretation is given of grace in "Giving and Receiving," for the comforts and conveniences of our lives come to us not as the rewards of our own efforts, but "unbought, unearned, and unpriced, sometimes from far distances and from heights of forgotten effort and sacrifice." Our Lord's words concerning Satan falling from heaven are shown to have a significance in every conquest of evil, and are a prophecy of the ultimate triumph of the good. The Star which the wise men saw in the east is a type of "the great mysterious guiding lights, the light of divine ideals and heavenly guidings" which all wise men follow, and all stars lead to Bethlehem and the highest wisdom seen in the Incarnation with its purpose of the Creator's love. These are examples of the compelling treatment given to familiar themes. Among others similarly treated are *The Prodigal Son*, *The Unmerciful Servant*,

The Casting Out of Devils, the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, Christ's Care for the Individual and for the Multitude. In the last chapter on the Festival of the Kingdom of Christ, there is some very just criticism of the attitude of the Roman Church towards the rest of Christendom, and of the Encyclical Letter of Pius XI setting up a new Festival of the Kingdom of Christ to be observed on the last Sunday in October.

The Truth of the Christian Faith, by J. S. Rutherford, M.A. (James Clarke & Co., 3s. 6d. net), is a statement of Christian apologetic specially designed to meet the difficulties of young people of the present day. Many of them are questioning the great foundation truths of life. They are not content to accept the creeds of the Church without examination and criticism. Mr. Rutherford has gauged the needs of this special class, and has met their special difficulties with sympathy and understanding. Starting from the evidence for God in nature and God in man, he passes on to the great central truth of God in Christ. The fact of Christ is treated in its twofold aspect of Son of Man and Son of God. The attitude of men towards Christ is the test. "When a man tries honestly to place himself in Christ's hands, and to live according to His guidance and in His spirit, he comes to feel more and more how true everything is which Jesus said about Himself." The chapter on Christ, the Saviour of the World, contains some useful notes on the Atonement, and points to a method of avoiding expressions which have at times produced perplexity in some minds. Christ is also the Lord of Life and His teaching has to be understood. We must try to penetrate behind the form to the intention; to catch the spirit, rather than to dwell upon the letter. Christ, an Indwelling Spirit, emphasizes the fact of Christ's presence with the believer as the secret of the power of his life. The final chapter, *The Life Everlasting*, shows the fact that "this life and the next are not two separate existences; they are only two states of one continual existence." The whole treatment shows understanding of the need and ability to meet it adequately.

A volume of considerable interest has been published by the Religious Tract Society under the title *Life and Legends of Apostles and Evangelists*, by Miss Myrtle Strode-Jackson (6s. net). It has been prepared under the auspices of the Zion Research Foundation, Brookline, Mass., U.S.A., and is an excellent example of the useful information which can be brought together by the encouragement of such research. The author deals with the lives of some of the chief New Testament characters round whom many traditions and legends have gathered. It is difficult to estimate the historical value of many of these, but Miss Strode-Jackson has woven them together to make interesting narratives showing in several instances the origin of Christianity in various lands. Thus the connection of St. Thomas with the Syrian Christians and with the existence

of the Syrian Church in South India to-day is brought out. Equally interesting is the association of the Nestorian Church with China. To Joseph of Arimathea, who visited Glastonbury in company with Lazarus, is attributed the introduction of Christianity into England. "There is a beautiful tradition that Jesus actually came Himself to the British Isles when a Boy. Many references and facts point to the conclusion that Joseph of Arimathea was a tin merchant, and travelled backwards and forwards to Cornwall to the mines there for this valuable metal; and it is supposed that he brought the young lad Jesus with him on one of these journeys." She also accepts as assured that St. Paul visited England. The interest of the book is indicated by these examples of the many historical points raised.

The Vision of God, by Nicholas of Cusa, is a fifteenth-century volume representative of the succession of mystical writers. The author was a Cardinal of the Church of St. Peter in Chains and Bishop of Brixen. The work was written for the instruction of the monks of Tegernsee in his diocese. He takes "an icon of God," and from the peculiar feature of the eyes of this icon that they are fixed on the beholder wherever he may go he makes the all-seeing power of God the basis of his examination of the essence of the Being of God. Miss Evelyn Underhill, who contributes a brief study of the mysticism of the author, says "the peculiar mark of this book is that, unlike many mystical writings, it centres the whole of its teaching on the all-seeing reality and prevenience of God, and not on the methods by which the soul attains Him." Miss Emma Gurney Salter, who has translated the work so effectively, points out that "Nicholas sets out to prove that man's intellect cannot comprehend God, that his ultimate knowledge is to recognize his own ignorance," and that "the reconciliation of all contradictions in God is the key-note of his teaching." Yet when he comes to deal with the doctrine of the Trinity and the divinity of Christ his treatment of his subject becomes much easier to understand, and is of a nature that appeals much more to the modern mind. Those who are interested in the works of the mystics will be glad to have this translation of a work representative of some of the most characteristic phases of the mystical approach to God. (The publishers are Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons, and the price is 6s. net.)

Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons publish a new study of St. Francis by Seymour van Santfoord (*St. Francis: The Christian Exemplar*, 6s. net). The life of St. Francis has become known to a very large circle through the celebrations of last year, and little remains to be done but to gather up the lessons of his life and to show their practical bearing on the lives of Christians to-day. This is the purpose of this interesting little study. It cannot claim any great originality, but it places the correct emphasis on the motives of St. Francis, and shows the difficulties which he encountered in his endeavour

to maintain his high ideal. The condition of the life of the time it describes in these terms: "It was an age of Faith by profession, while the actual practice was avarice, sensuality, covetousness, disregard of the rights of the weak, fawning obsequiousness to the rich and the powerful—anything and everything which might be achieved by chicanery and falsehood or demonstrated by the sword." Into this life St. Francis came with his Rule of Living, "Walk as Christ walked; live as Christ lived; in all things do literally as Christ enjoined," and he effected a revolution. Yet the purity of his ideal was not long maintained and the order called by his name sank to a lower level under the pressure of events. In the conditions of society to-day such a life would be impracticable, yet the spirit of St. Francis gives the one solution for many of our problems. "Love was the perfected flower of his accomplishment. Begotten of his passionate deathless adoration for his Master, love for others became the ruling impulse and desire of his life. The final message of his religion was the spirit of brotherly love."

In *Deeds Done for Christ*, edited by Sir James Marchant (Cassell & Co., 7s. 6d. net), there is a selection of the lives of some of the great heroes of the Christian faith from the earliest times to our own day. Every age and land is represented. The early martyrs, beginning with Polycarp, are given the first place. Then follow the Homeland heroes. The heroes in foreign fields include Henry Martyn, William Carey and Hudson Taylor in Asia, Livingstone, Mackay and Schweitzer in Africa, Grenfell and Barbrooke Grubb in the Americas; heroines of the Mission Field, and the translators of the Bible are also represented. These brief and vivid accounts of Christian workers whose lives are an inspiration should be of special use to those who wish to make young people familiar with the records of great Christians. The splendid heroism of these saints and martyrs is one of the best means of awakening the desire for service. There is a wide catholicity shown in the choice, and in the variety of Christian work represented, so that the book will appeal to a wide circle.

The Student Christian Movement issues a volume of *Two-Minute Bible Readings* for use in opening school and at other Morning Prayer (3s. net). The selection is in five divisions: the Gospel Story, The Sayings of Jesus, The Early Church, The Prophets, Psalms and Proverbs and Old Testament Narrative. In some cases the passages which are taken from the Authorized Version have been adapted by selection and omission for the brief space of time allowed for the reading. This has rendered possible the choice of some narratives which would otherwise have been too long, such as the martyrdom of Stephen and the account of our Lord at the well. The passages have been selected with judgment and the book provides a collection of Scripture passages which will be useful when short portions are all for which time is available.

Mr. John Murray publishes a second edition of the Bishop of Worcester's history of the 275 years of the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy. The first edition was written for the 250th festival in 1904, and the present reprint, with various corrections and with additional information covering the past quarter of a century, is frankly stated to be for purposes of propaganda. The purpose is to make the Corporation more widely known and to be more clearly appreciated by those who can help it. Its name does not convey any idea of the aim of the Corporation. In the year 1927 it helped 3,224 persons, widows and unmarried daughters of the clergy and their boys and girls who are starting out to make their way in life. The income of the Society—about £41,000 a year—is far too small to meet the demands upon it. This account of the Corporation presents the picture of a venerable institution with a splendid record of charitable work. It will no doubt fulfil its purpose of winning new friends and supporters for its useful mission (*The Sons of the Clergy*, John Murray, 7s. 6d. net).

Dr. John Oman was invited to address a gathering of ministers in Scotland, and chose as his subject *The Office of the Ministry* (Student Christian Movement, 1s. net). His searching examination of the weaknesses and special difficulties of the clerical profession is made with many amusing touches which do not take away from the helpfulness and suggestiveness of his conclusions. Just one example of the host of good things it contains: "What is edifying in preaching . . . it is what a man is saying to his own soul."

Dr. W. R. Matthews, Dean of King's College, London, has written an excellent small book on *Some Modern Problems of Faith* (Cassell & Co., 1s. net). The modern problems are the ancient ones—the meaning of faith, the guiding of Providence, the differences between religion and magic, the meaning of the Advent Hope, and the future of Christianity, but the modern aspect of the difficulties connected with these are examined in a specially helpful way. The brief treatment of these important themes is carried out with Dr. Matthews' well-known philosophical acumen.

In the same series Dr. L. P. Jacks makes an original study in practical ethics in *My Neighbour the Universe*. He shows that all questions of conduct ought ultimately to be considered in relation to "the vast perspective of their cosmic setting." This is not a matter of vague theory, but has a practical bearing on the everyday actions of ordinary people, "as surely as the ripples caused by a stone thrown into a pond affect the equilibrium of forces in the nebula of Orion."

G. F. I.
