

BOOKS AND THEIR WRITERS.

THE *Biography* of Francis James Chavasse (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 10s. 6d. net) will be welcomed as the record of a great Evangelical teacher and leader whose influence was widely felt during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and the first twenty-eight years of the twentieth. It has been entrusted to Canon J. B. Lancelot, Vicar of St. James', Birkdale, who has admirably succeeded in carrying out the three behests which, as he tells us in the Preface, friends laid upon him. "He was the people's Bishop. See that you make it the people's book." "Remember we want to see his *soul*." "I am sure that your book will be rich in affectionate understanding." Canon Lancelot has been assisted by the Rev. Christopher M. Chavasse, the Bishop's eldest son, who has supplied him with most of the intimate details.

The home in which the future Bishop was brought up was in many ways representative of the simple but deep religious fervency of the nineteenth century. His father, a doctor in Birmingham, was a man of devout life. The Bishop used to recall the "Communion Sunday" once a month of his boyhood, when "My father would be extra quiet all day, and shut himself up in his room both before and after the service. I have seen him come down from the rails with tears in his eyes." He would add, "I am not sure that it did not mean much more to people then than it does now. Communions to-day are more frequent, but I do not see more saints." His mother was the Doctor's second wife and Francis James was the eldest son of a second family. It was his early intention to become a soldier and he joined the Army Class in Chesterfield Grammar School, but curvature of the spine due to prolonged debility frustrated these hopes. At sixteen he went to a business house in Birmingham, but soon relinquished this, and with improving health the decision was reached that he should go to Oxford. A diary kept at this time gives an interesting insight into his inner life. It shows that "the prevailing interest of his mind is personal religion." It reveals the sense of shortcoming and the earnest desire to make the best use of every moment, which was characteristic of the Evangelical religion of the day. In many cases it led to disappointment from a feeling of failure, but in the case of young Chavasse it inspired him to habits of regularity and rule which marked the daily routine of his future life. At Oxford, where he entered Corpus Christi College in October, 1865, he was the friend of Bishop Knox and the Rev. A. C. Downer, both still with us. The diary at this time is "largely a record of self-examination on the one side, and of evangelistic work in the hamlets on the other. Prayer meetings are incessant, as also are lamentations over pride, reserve, moroseness, timidity, depression, weariness and so on." The intensity of Evangelical fervour and striving for the highest has the defects of its qualities. It can only be judged by the resulting type of character, and in the case of F. J. Chavasse it

produced a saintliness to which general testimony was borne. Sir William Forwood wrote of him just after his death: He came nearer to my ideal of a Saint than any man I have ever met or heard of, and I saw him under the most trying conditions; yet he never varied, but always looked upwards, and even Heaven itself is to-day richer for his presence. The late Prime Minister spoke of him in similar terms.

He was ordained for the curacy of St. Paul's, Preston, in 1870, and after three strenuous years he was appointed Vicar of St. Paul's, Upper Holloway, where he spent four years of equally devoted work. He then returned to Oxford where his work lay for the next twenty-three years until his appointment as Bishop of Liverpool in succession to Dr. Ryle in 1900. At Oxford he was first Rector of St. Peter-de-Bailey for twelve years, and then Principal of Wycliffe Hall for eleven. Of his work in these two spheres, especially in Wycliffe Hall, the best testimony is in the lives of the members of the University who came under his influence either as members of his Greek Testament class or as students of the Hall. His twenty-three years as Bishop of the important diocese of Liverpool were marked by development and progress along many lines. The Bishop's simplicity of character, his religious fervour and his gift of sympathy won him a position of almost unique influence, and helped to the carrying out of his many schemes, of which the foundation of the Cathedral was the most outstanding.

At the outset of his career as a Bishop he stated his own position—an Evangelical by inheritance, by education and by conviction; and he made clear his attitude towards "the lawlessness which sets up a Church authority of its own, which on the one side refuses to obey in spiritual matters a secular court because it is secular, and on the other side a spiritual court because it is not constituted according to its own liking, or because its decisions do not coincide with the laws of a 'Catholic Church' which it is most difficult to define and still more difficult to discover." In strong terms, he describes the results of such lawlessness in Church and State. The years of his episcopate included the period of the Great War in which he had the sorrow of losing two of his sons, one of whom had won the exceptional distinction of the V.C. with bar. After his retirement in 1923 the Bishop lived at Oxford where he resumed some of his old activities, preaching, lecturing at Wycliffe Hall and holding his Greek Testament class. His closing years were disturbed by the Prayer Book revision controversy. He held very strongly that the alternative Communion Service, and the legalization of the practice of Reservation altered the doctrine of the Church of England, and introduced teaching for which there is no sure warrant of Holy Scripture.

We are grateful to Canon Lancelot for the picture which he has given us of the Bishop both in the outward circumstances of his active and successful career and in the more intimate details of his inner life, from which came the power and influence so widely and beneficially employed.

The Mission Field has provided some of our finest examples of Christian biography. The heroic deeds of the pioneers of Mission work have been an inspiration to the Church. Conditions in many parts have changed since the missionaries led lives of adventure and had to face great physical dangers. The Mission Field does, however, still demand lives of heroic mould fully consecrated to the service of God. The conditions of the work may change, but the same spiritual qualifications are needed in the workers. The *Life of Temple Gairdner* by Miss C. E. Padwick (S.P.C.K., 7s. 6d. net) gives an inspiring account of such a consecrated life in the midst of the difficulties presented by some of the modern conditions of missionary work. The account of his early life and his call to the work constitute a powerful appeal which should be placed in the hands of young people. Many a life may be guided to self-surrender and to the work of the Church overseas by reading the various steps by which Gairdner was led to his great decision to devote his life to Christ in the foreign field. He was born in Ardrossan in Ayrshire in 1873. His father, Sir William Gairdner, was a distinguished Professor of Medicine in the University of Glasgow. He was educated at Rossal and went to Trinity College, Oxford, with a classical exhibition in October, 1892. A graphic picture is given of the life of the University in those days, and of the members of the O.I.C.C.U. who in the fullness of their zeal went "bawling down the High Street" to a totally undistinguished tune, such words as these :

It is better to shout than to doubt,
It is better to rise than to fall,
It is better to let the glory out
Than to have no glory at all.

The impression which he made upon his fellow-students is indicated in such testimony as "he was the greatest man among my contemporaries." "He was at Oxford with Sir John Simon, Lord Birkenhead and Hilaire Belloc, and he was the greatest of them all, and the most richly endowed," but he decided early that "the only thing in the world worth living for is to find out the will of God and to do it." The death of his brother Hugh marked a time of decision for him, "When I knelt by Hugh's bed I first felt the necessity of putting Christ first and the rest nowhere. . . . And then I knew that henceforth there could be but one duty for me, to follow where I heard Him calling."

It was not without much heart-searching and many inward struggles that he settled the sphere of his future work. Missionary interest was becoming strong in Oxford at the time and men like Dr. John R. Mott and Mr. J. C. Oldham were bringing a new spirit into it. The Student Christian Movement began and Gairdner became one of its most active workers. He threw himself heart and soul into it as he did into every work which he took up. He was ordained in October, 1898, at St. Paul's Cathedral for work in Egypt, and with his friend Douglas Thornton began his long association with that country to which both of them gave their lives. The

hopes, the fears, the joys and the disappointments of the work especially in the early years as they are recorded here give an insight into the conditions of a missionary's life. His marriage with Miss Margaret Dundas Mitchell, also a worker in the Mission Field, brought him the companionship and support which largely aided in the development of his powers. The picture of his home life is specially attractive and the part which music played in it showed the blessing which an unusual gift and artistic talent can be. Gairdner's abilities marked him out for special work among the educated Moslems. Special knowledge was required for dealing with the language and literature of Islam. His gifts were recognized and he was set apart to study for a year in order to equip himself fully for the work. He spent the year in contact with the leading Arabic scholars of England, America and Germany. Yet the tragedy of the situation was that on his return to Egypt he never had the time or the opportunity of doing the special work for which he was thus so thoroughly prepared. The calls of the routine work of the Mission, the shortage of staff and the immediate demands on his time made it impossible for him to carry out the plans for the more difficult and more important work for which he and he alone was specially gifted and equipped. The lesson of such a life ought to be learnt by those responsible for the use of the human material placed in their charge. There are many instances throughout the Church of men qualified for highly specialized tasks who are engaged in humdrum duties which could be equally well or even better performed by men of ordinary abilities. Gairdner's noble choice of a life devoted absolutely to the service of God and the failure to make use of his special gifts to the full are the two outstanding features of a biography which will be received first as a record of a remarkable life and secondly as a valuable contribution to the records of missionary work. Miss Padwick has performed her task with distinguished success, and with a wonderful sympathy and understanding of the spirit of the man whose character and work she depicts so admirably.

There was a time when, next to the Bible, Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* was probably the best-known and most widely read book in the English language. It was first issued in Latin, of which language Foxe was one of the greatest stylists of his time, in 1554. The earliest edition in English appeared in 1563. It rapidly passed through several editions. It was ordered by the Convocations in 1571 to be placed in the Churches and in the halls and houses of the bishops and archdeacons to be read and studied by the people. It is recorded of Bunyan that the two books which he took with him when he went to Bedford gaol were the Bible and Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. It is easy to understand its popularity in ages when religion was the chief interest of the people. It introduces the reader to the most interesting characters of the most interesting ages in the history of the Church, and in a way provides a conspectus

of the Church's life. It is *An Universal History of Christian Martyrdom*. It passes from the early persecutions of the Primitive Church, through the sufferings of the Waldensians, the atrocities of the Inquisition and the trials of the Reformers in Bohemia to the martyrdoms in England under Queen Mary. It has been the custom in some quarters, especially those in which Roman Catholic influence prevails, to represent Foxe as an inaccurate historian, and to speak of his "credulity and bitter prejudice." Dr. Maitland, one of the Tractarians, spent much ingenuity in a series of pamphlets issued between the years 1837 and 1842 to prove Foxe's accounts untrustworthy, but with little success. Those who are best able to judge declare that Foxe has been most unfairly treated, and agree with Professor Pollard's opinion in the *Cambridge Modern History*, that Foxe's work "contains a vast number of facts and documents, and its errors are certainly not greater than in similar works." The *Book of Martyrs* has frequently appeared in abridged editions and in consequence much of its value has been lost. It is satisfactory therefore to find that a new and unabridged edition has recently been issued by Messrs. Chas. J. Thynne and Jarvis, Ltd., at the very moderate price of six shillings. It runs to nearly eleven hundred pages, and contains a number of illustrations and a useful index. It has also an Essay on Roman Catholicism by Dr. Ingham Cobbin, revised and enlarged by that indefatigable scholar, Dr. C. H. H. Wright. This is in itself a valuable piece of work as it gives an accurate account of some of the distinctive doctrines of the Roman Church drawn from authentic sources. Dr. Wright also contributed an Introduction which gives an account of Foxe's life and answers the aspersions which have been cast upon his character as an historian. Of the text of so well known and authoritative a work it is needless to say anything. English Churchmen would do well to revive their acquaintance with some of the important facts which it contains. It would enable them to form a better judgment on the great foundation facts of our Church's teaching.

Dr. Montgomery Hitchcock's scholarly work is well known to readers of *THE CHURCHMAN*. His biblical studies are always based on his own research work and exhibit independence and originality of thought. His book on the Atonement and Modern Thought has been recognized by those most competent to judge as an important contribution to the study of the subject and as an able defence of the teaching more particularly associated with the Evangelical School of Thought. It is therefore a pleasure to find him turning to the devotional side of Christianity and using his powers and his knowledge in commending the Christian Faith as a guide of life and thought for those who are thinking out the problems of to-day. In a small book, *Christ's Answer to our Questions*, published by the Religious Tract Society (1s. 6d. net), he suggests the answers which Christ gives to the three fundamental questions of human thought—What can I know? What shall I do? and What may I hope?

In a preliminary survey he points to the connection of Christ with the thought of progress and shows that "we are making progress so long as we are advancing to Christ; so far as we are making His ideal life the ideal of ours: so much as we are drawing the inspiration of our conduct from the living waters of Christian love and truth." In short, the practical test of progress may be summed up as the approach to the serene summits of the Sermon on the Mount. He also shows that the true principle of success does not lie in any conception of outward prosperity, but in learning the lessons of the moral and spiritual ascendancy of Christ. The three concluding chapters on "Christ and Life" develop the thought that the three onward steps in the Christian life are "In Christ, for Christ, and to Christ."

In *The World Wide Prayer* (C.M.S., 2s. net), Canon V. F. Storr has given us a fresh treatment of the Lord's Prayer in a series of studies in its missionary aspects. We have all experienced the wealth of meaning that the Lord's Prayer opens out to us as we use it in the interpretation of our own prayers. Canon Storr has applied the various familiar petitions to the Mission Field with its World Wide Call to-day, and has shown how fully and exactly it expresses the situation and its prayer needs. Each clause yields its appropriate significance. From the divine Fatherhood and its correlative in the brotherhood of man, through the purposes of God as revealed in the Old and New Testaments, and the meaning of "Thy kingdom come" to which special attention is given, to the use of our means and the obligations implied in membership of the Christian family, the whole prayer is shown to be suggestive of appropriate intercessions for the opportunities of to-day. Although small the book is rich in thought, and will be found helpful for those who wish to conduct a course of missionary intercessions or give a series of addresses on the World Call. Some Devotions arranged by Canon Edward S. Woods on the petitions of the Prayer form a useful addition to the book.

Canon Odom is the doyen of the Sheffield clergy. He has spent most of his life in the city, and has written a number of interesting books on historic places and personages connected with the city. His latest book issued in his eighty-third year gives an account of two Sheffield poets, James Montgomery and Ebenezer Elliott. James Montgomery was the son of a Moravian missionary and had a long and successful career as a journalist in Sheffield. He is best known as the author of many well-known hymns, including "Go to dark Gethsemane," "Hail to the Lord's Anointed," "For ever with the Lord," "Jerusalem, my happy home," "Sow in the morn thy seed," and perhaps the best known of all his noble verses on prayer beginning "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire."

G.F.I.