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NOTES ON RECENT BOOKS.

THE celebration of the Centenary of the Emancipation of Slaves in the British Possessions this year has produced a number of interesting accounts of the life and work of William Wilberforce. Among the most useful of these is *William Wilberforce: The Story of a Great Crusader*, by Travers Buxton, Hon. Secretary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society (Religious Tract Society, 2s. 6d. net). Sir Herbert Wilberforce contributes a Foreword in which he speaks of the twofold objects of the Celebration. They are to remind the world of the noble and unselfish lives of those who strove in a great cause in defiance of the forces of prejudice, vested interests, and misrepresentation. And secondly, to inform the public mind of the fact, of which it is astonishingly ignorant, that the Slave trade is by no means dead but is flourishing, either openly or disguised, in many parts of the world. This popular Life of William Wilberforce should be placed in the hands of as many readers as possible, in order that they may understand something of the heroic nature of the work of the noble pioneer who devoted his life to the great cause of the Emancipation of Slaves. Few realise to-day the difficulties that William Wilberforce had to encounter and the many disappointments he experienced until, at last, in the closing days of his life, his great purpose was achieved. Unfortunately, he did not live to enjoy the satisfaction to which he was entitled. On the evening of July 23, 1833, the Bill for the Abolition of Slavery, after many previous rejections, was read for the second time in the Commons, and on the morning of the 29th, William Wilberforce peacefully died. This record of his life explains the motives that actuated him. It is a satisfaction to Evangelical Church people to know that the early acceptance of Evangelical teaching led him to undertake this great work of Social Reform. It is sometimes mistakenly said that the interest of Evangelicals was devoted solely to their own personal salvation, but the lives of Wilberforce and of Lord Shaftesbury are a standing refutation of this calumny. The truth is, of course, that the true Evangelical inspiration leads to the application of Christian principles in every department of life, but we cannot expect the people of any generation to be so far in advance of their time as to realise all the possible, let alone the ultimate implications. It took eighteen hundred years of Christian teaching to achieve the Abolition of Slavery, although the value of the individual life was implicit in Christian teaching from the outset. Books such as this ought to enable Church people to form a more accurate impression of the real value and significance of the Evangelical presentation of Christianity.

The Bishop of Norwich has more than once dealt effectively with some of the problems confronting Christian thought to-day

in brief but convincing booklets. He recently answered the question *Does God Suffer?* (S.P.C.K., 1s. net), which has exercised many minds in recent years. He goes to the root of the difficulty, which arises from the idea that the doctrine of the Impassibility of God implies a want of love and care for human suffering.

Because man feels pain when he sees suffering, it does not necessarily follow that God must similarly suffer. The Compassion of God is a part of His Love and must be associated with His Power to heal. We cannot with our finite minds understand the full meaning of the sufferings of Christ, but it was part of the limitations which the Incarnation imposed upon the Godhead in Him. And the fact that God is eternal and that Eternity has no past nor future shows that we must realise the Perfection of God which is incompatible with the limitation involved in suffering.

The introduction of the revised Lectionary in many Churches has given an opportunity of adopting the plan of giving a brief and simple introduction before the reading of the Lessons. This practice has been found very helpful, but it requires to be carried out with considerable care in order that the statements may be clear while they are necessarily brief. The Rev. C. M. Chavasse, M.A., the Master of St. Peter's Hall, Oxford, has written a series of devotional Introductions to the Lessons of Sundays and Holy-days under the title, *The Meaning of the Lessons* (The Lutterworth Press, 6s. net). They are dedicated to the Congregations of St. Aldate's and St. Peter-le-Bailey, Oxford, for whom they were first written and at whose request they are published. The Bishop of Oxford, in a Foreword, commends these Introductions as meeting a real need of those who are not Biblical Students, enabling them to catch the point of connection between the Lessons and the Service of the day. In a few sentences the purpose of each Lesson is explained, and in every case the brief statement is sufficient to place the hearers in touch with the circumstances indicated in the passage to be read.

The Rev. A. F. Simpson, M.A., B.D., has written a little book on *The Communion of the Lord's Supper: Its Meaning for Christian Experience* (Ivor Nicholson & Watson, Ltd., 2s. 6d. net) which we recommend very strongly to the attention of our readers. It is described as "A Study of the practice of and the teaching concerning the Lord's Supper in the first and second centuries, with a view to the discovery of its essential meaning for progressive Christian Faith." Although the treatment is brief it is full and convincing. The first part states succinctly the testimony of the Synoptic Gospels, examines statements regarding the breaking of bread in the Primitive Church, the Pauline Eucharist, the Johannine conceptions, and the Communion in the second century as given in The Didache and the writings of Ignatius, Justin Martyr and Irenæus. The second part is then devoted to the interpretation of

these sources, in order to show the significance that these things have for the Christian religious life and thought of our own time. It is satisfactory to Evangelical Church people to know that the result of this latest scholarly interpretation of the Holy Communion coincides in the main with the teaching that they maintain. For example, Mr. Simpson says : " In view of the belief that prevails in certain quarters that the Eucharistic Elements have a virtue in themselves apart from the corporate worship with which they are associated . . . it is necessary to point out that historically there is no justification for such a view in the early period." Another interesting point refers to the refusal on the part of some sections of the Church on ecclesiastical grounds to admit other Christians to their Communion. In regard to this he says : " The fundamental error underlying the exclusive policy is the mistaken theory that what constitutes Membership of the Church is allegiance to a particular ecclesiastical organisation. The real qualification is, of course, personal allegiance to Christ as Lord." These are only a few of the important points in this useful study. It covers the whole range of interpretation, and meets the theories put forward by Roman and Anglo-Catholics, showing that they do not add anything to the value which the Eucharist has as it is interpreted by Christian experience. Thus in Christian experience there can be only one type of presence of Christ, " and one cannot regard His presence at the Lord's Supper in any different sense from that in which we regard His presence elsewhere." This does not mean that the doctrine of the real Presence is untrue. " It is only a particular statement of it that we regret, and we regret it because it is without foundation in historic fact. It is Christ's presence at the meal and not in the bread or the cup that consecrates the occasion to us, as it consecrated it to the experience of the early Christians. This is the only doctrine of the presence of Christ at the Lord's Supper that may legitimately be derived from the evidence of the Christian writings of the first and second centuries." These statements indicate the sound and sensible interpretation of the Holy Communion contained in this useful study of the subject.

We have been asked to correct three misprints which occur in Mr. E. H. Blakeney's review of *The Beginnings of Christianity* on page 219 of the last issue of THE CHURCHMAN. Paul and the Players should be Paul and the Magus, *γερμανος* should be *γερμενος* and *ποηθεις* should be *ποησεις*.

The Editor regrets that he is obliged to hold over a large number of reviews of recent books.

CHURCH BOOK ROOM NOTES.

WINE OFFICE COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C.4.

National Church Almanack.—The National Church Almanack for 1934 will be ready early in October, and is published this year at 2d. (post free, 3d.). The Almanack contains the full Table of Lessons according to the Lectionary of 1871 and also according to the Revised Lectionary of 1922. The introductory matter contains notes on the Constitution of the Church, Synods, the Church Assembly, Parochial Church Councils and other useful matter. A picture of Beverley Minster serves as a frontispiece, and a brief account of the Minster explains its chief architectural features.

The Oxford Movement Centenary.—Although the actual Centenary Celebrations are over, literature on this subject is still in demand, and in addition to the books already named in this column, an important and able contribution to the study of the local point of the Anglo-Catholic controversy has been published under the title of *The Eucharistic Doctrine of the Oxford Movement*, by the Rev. Canon W. H. Mackean, D.D., 6s. (post 6d.). A full review of this book appears in this issue of THE CHURCHMAN by Canon A. J. Tait.

Another publication is *Tractarianism and Episcopacy* by Bishop Knox, which has been reprinted by the Church Book Room by kind permission of the Editor of *The Nineteenth Century and After*, price 4d.

Sunday Schools.—In our July issue we mentioned the Lesson Books by the Rev. G. R. Balleine which are now obtainable, and specially named *Christianity in Action*, 52 Lessons on Christian Ethics, printed this year. This Lesson Book, together with *Lessons from the Life of Christ*, is illustrated with stamps in colours which are supplied in book form containing enough stamps for ten children for the whole year, at 4s. per book. Albums are supplied at 1d. each, or, if the Church Catechism is inserted, at 1½d. A reprint of the Rev. W. A. Cunningham Craig's Lessons for tinies entitled *The Bible Zoo* has also been published at 1s. Stamps are supplied for this book at the rate of 2s. per set sufficient for five children for the whole year, and albums are supplied at 1d. The book contains fifty-two lessons for the year on the animals of the Bible, and is simply and attractively written.

It will be remembered that last year we published for the first time two Sunday School Registers. These were undated, and of the cut-class type. The smaller Register (5½ x 6½) is for marking single attendances (4½d. each). The larger Register (5½ x 9½) is for marking morning and afternoon attendance (9d. each). This year in response to many requests we have decided to issue in addition three dated Registers, for morning and afternoon attendance. The following are particulars : No. 1, 18 lines (5½ x 6½), 4½d. each ; No. 2, 26 lines (5½ x 8½), 6d. each ; and No. 3, 40 lines (5½ x 12), 8d. each. They are dated from Advent Sunday to the last Sunday in December following (thirteen months). The Registers contain specially prepared notes for teachers, and a form of Prayer for opening and closing the school.

A useful *Admission and Probation Card* has also been issued. It can be used for marking the attendance of a new scholar for the first four weeks, thus enabling the superintendent to know whether the child is likely to

become a regular member of the Sunday School, the name being added to the Register only after the four attendances have been made. The price of the card is 2s. per hundred.

A new *Prayer Card* has also been issued at 2s. 6d. per hundred. A specimen will be sent on application. The card can be localised, and the name of the Church or Parish printed at the top of each at a slight additional cost. The prayers will be found helpful for the average Sunday School child.

The Holy Communion.—The Rev. A. St. John Thorpe's *Devotional Studies in the Holy Communion* has had a very wide circulation, and in addition to the paper cover published at 6d., has now been issued in cloth at 1s. (post 2d.). This book is being used for Confirmation Candidates, and consists of six Sermons, which are warmly commended by Bishop Knox, who says : " Sound doctrine is the mother of true worship and of heartfelt devotion, and the relentless foe of pure superstition."

We are glad to be able to announce that the valuable series of essays entitled *The Evangelical Doctrine of the Holy Communion* edited by the Rev. A. J. Macdonald, D.D., has now been issued at 5s.

Dean Goulburn's *Primitive Church Teaching on the Holy Communion* is now published at 1s. This was first published as an appendix to the writer's *Commentary on the Communion Office* and was written, as the author states in his preface, because since the original publication of the *Commentary* two or three practices which seemed to him wrong in principle and to have a tendency to undermine the true doctrine of the Holy Eucharist had shown up with amazing rapidity. The subjects to which he refers are Fasting Communion, Non-communicating Attendance and previous private Confession, and these are dealt with in a practical way. Needless to say, the book is beautifully written and the tone is devotional throughout.

Communicants' Manuals.—For presentation to Confirmees we again recommend the following books : *Helps to the Christian Life* (new edition), by the Rev. T. W. Gilbert, D.D. (leather, 2s. ; cloth gilt, 1s. 6d. ; cloth, 1s. ; paper cover, 6d.) This manual, containing advice and suggestions on Prayer and Bible Study, and also instructions and devotions before, at the time of, and after Holy Communion, has been found a real help to the young and to the adult communicant. *My First Communion*, by the Rev. A. R. Runnels-Moss (cloth, 1s. net), has reached a third edition, and is a simple explanation of the Sacrament and Office together with the Service. A third edition of Canon Barnes-Lawrence's valuable manual, *The Holy Communion : Its Institution, Purpose, Privilege*, has been issued in three forms (cloth gilt, 1s. 6d. ; cloth limp, 9d. ; paper, 6d.). The body of the book is largely devotional, and some instruction on difficult points is given in an appendix. It is particularly useful for presentation to Public School boys and girls. We also recommend *At the Lord's Table*, by the Bishop of Chelmsford (cloth gilt, 1s. 6d. ; cloth, 1s.). The "preparation" is very practical and shows a true appreciation of the lives and thought of the younger generation. The Self-examination has three lines of thought—one based on the Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians v. ; one on the Beatitudes ; and one on the shorter Exhortation.