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BOOKS AND THEIR WRITERS.

THE Bishop of London has chosen the Rev. W. P. G. McCormick, Vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, London, to write his Lent Book this year, and Mr. McCormick has taken as his subject, *Be of Good Cheer* (Longmans, Green & Co., 2s. 6d. net). St. Martin's is well known as one of the chief centres for the Broadcasting of religious services, and its Vicar has a wide experience of many types of humanity through the correspondence which these services bring to him. He dedicates his book "To Listeners, in grateful acknowledgment of their prayers and encouraging letters." His experience has shown him that people to-day do not "enjoy their religion," to probe the causes and to suggest a remedy is his aim. The Bishop of London in his Introduction is of the same opinion. He says, "I am glad he has chosen the subject of 'Joy,' as Joy is the one note wanted in our religion to-day." This defect arises in the first instance from false ideas concerning God. "If we are to revive Religion, we have got to restore the idea of God to the world, not as a malevolent Power, or as a merely good-natured 'Jove,' but as revealed in all His Holiness, Greatness and Love in Jesus Christ Himself." Mr. McCormick deprecates his own power as an author, but he has no reason to fear his ability to get his message across to those for whom he writes. He does not require the gifts of an accomplished theologian to convey some of the reality of his own joy in God to others. In these chapters he illustrates the joyous life from many points of view. The first requisite is a right idea of God. Then follows the Joy in God's Will; the Joy of the seeker and the worker; Joy of Communion, of Discipline, of Sunday; Joy in Church, and finally, the Joy with God. Practical in their purpose they deal with life practically, and they convey instruction that will be a help to many in the routine of daily duties.

The name of the poet Cowper has been more or less intimately associated with the Evangelical Movement in the eighteenth century through his connection with the Rev. John Newton of Olney and Mrs. Unwin. Cowper's mental instability affected his whole career, and rendered him a victim of many delusions. No one has attributed these to his Evangelical surroundings. It could even be maintained that he owed to them a certain measure of relief which he would not otherwise attain. In the long and extremely drawn-out examination of Cowper's mental state in Lord David Cecil's *The Stricken Deer, or The Life of Cowper* (Constable & Co., 15s.), a vague impression is conveyed that, in some way the peculiar tenets and practices of Cowper's Evangelical associates were in some measure responsible for deepening the gloom which ultimately settled down upon the poet's mind. Evangelicalism is depicted in the fashion popular with those who maintain that

it was narrow, ignorant and intolerant, though in all three respects it was probably not more so than any other movement, religious or secular, of the time. The influence of Newton upon Cowper is represented in a most disadvantageous light, but there is no tribute to the spirit of generosity and love inculcated by Evangelicalism which led Newton to take the poet into his home for a year during one of his periods of gloom. Nor is any mention made of the source of the devotion and care of Mrs. Unwin due to the same Evangelical teaching. The best that is said for Evangelicalism is this, "it is true that the emotional tension encouraged by Evangelicalism, and the personal responsibility for its own fate which it placed on the individual soul, did increase Cowper's nervous agitation and so accelerate the advent of his madness. But though it accelerated it, it did not make that advent more sure." It is acknowledged that the one happy period of his mature existence was due to his Evangelical surroundings. No one can say what his life would have been without them. The Monastery or Nunnery cell could probably provide worse cases than prejudice can bring against the Evangelical system.

In *The Bishop's Register* with Introduction and Notes (S.P.C.K., 12s. 6d. net), the Rev. Clifford J. Offer, M.A., has brought together an interesting collection of extracts from Episcopal registers of the Middle Ages illustrating varied aspects of Church life and the duties of many classes of Church officials. There are informative introductions first to the documents illustrating the religious life, and secondly to the administrative and parochial documents. There is a third section of miscellaneous documents which are by no means the least interesting, for it includes such items as "An Indulgence for Listening to Sermons," "An Assault on a Rector," "Exorbitant Charges of Unbeneficed Clergy," "A Bishop borrows (a) a Bible, (b) Money." While the documents are interesting in themselves, in spite of the official and tedious language in which they are couched, Mr. Offer's introductions are full of information illuminating the life of the period covered by the extracts. His account of monastic life and the conditions of the monasteries and nunneries tells of the internal affairs of the orders, and the methods employed for the support of the establishments and the maintenance of order and discipline which in many instances left much to be desired. The documents also reveal a laxity which show that the realities of the religious life often fell far short of the ideal. The Introduction to the second section makes clear the administrative difficulties encountered by the bishops, by reason of the immense size of the dioceses, the difficulties of travel, and the many interests which presented obstacles to episcopal jurisdiction. Mr. Offer provides a useful picture of a portion of the life of the Middle Ages, and his book will take its place among those valuable contributions to the subject which are now giving a fresh insight into the past ages of the Church.

The Purpose of Jesus in the First Three Gospels, by Campbell W. Moody, M.A., D.D., being the Bruce Lectures in the United Free Church College, Glasgow, 1929 (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 5s. net), is a book that everyone should read. Every age has its trend of thought and gets into grooves where many things are taken for granted until a thinker of freedom and boldness comes to point out the inadequacy of many current conceptions and shows that in paths neglected there are old truths that cannot be ignored. Dr. Moody is such a thinker and many will thank him for these thoughtful reminders of enduring truths concerning great fundamental facts. "It is high time that we came back to the Lord Jesus." With that motto he leads his readers to a fresh examination of our Lord's public preaching with its emphasis on repentance and faith. The word of the Cross with the substitution implied in it is a central theme.

The Making of Modern English Religion, by Bernard L. Manning, Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge (Student Christian Movement, 3s. 6d. net), is described as "An historical impression of certain religious forces in Modern English History." It is a striking study of some religious movements from novel points of view and is full of suggestive thoughts on the significance of the developments of religious life. The Medieval legacy in institutions and beliefs decayed and in their place came the rediscovery of Evangelical religion with Martin Luther and a restatement of the meaning of churchmanship with John Calvin. He is quite emphatic that the Anglican Church broke with Medievalism at the Reformation, but we cannot agree that it adopted an attitude of compromise or was indebted to Luther for its doctrine of the Holy Communion. The author has a stimulating and thought-provoking method which will interest students of Church History.

The English Heritage Series edited by Viscount Lee of Fareham and Mr. J. C. Squire (Longmans, Green & Co., 3s. 6d. each net) will without doubt prove a very popular venture. "To describe the main elements in the wealth of character, custom, and beauty of mental and material possessions, which are summed up in the word 'England,' is the task which the Editors of the English Heritage Series have set out to perform." An Introduction by Mr. Stanley Baldwin appears in each volume and is a happily conceived appreciation of all that is essentially English. Among the volumes which have already appeared are *English Humour* by J. B. Priestly, an interesting study of those English writers who indulged in "thinking in fun while feeling in earnest." *The English Public School* by Bernard Darwin, in which the merits and demerits of the English Public School system are displayed, and an account given of some great headmasters. *Shakespeare* by John Bailey, a fresh and independent study of our great dramatist as representative of the English spirit. *English Wild Life* by Eric Parker, which will appeal to all lovers of outdoor things by the wealth of information concerning our flora and fauna.

G. F. I.