

THE THREE RELIGIOUS LEADERS OF OXFORD AND THEIR MOVEMENTS, JOHN WYCLIFFE, JOHN WESLEY, JOHN HENRY NEWMAN. By S. Parkes Cadman. The Macmillan Company, New York. Price \$2.50. Pages xv + 596.

This massive volume, from the pen of a busy pastor, grew out of a course of lectures given at The Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences. It enshrines the memory of three great men—Wycliffe, Wesley, and Newman—and, incidentally, the fame of Oxford, their *alma mater*, whose great history is so intimately intertwined with the story of English life and letters.

It may seem almost like a work of supererogation to erect another stately literary monument to these three religious leaders of Oxford. They have by no means been neglected by the students of English history and of the evolution of religious thought. Every competent church historian has recognized their importance. There are numerous monographs on each of the three leaders, and authoritative studies of all of them. It may be asserted, therefore, that their historical significance is well understood in its genetic relations backward and forward. We understand the forces whose outcome they were, and the movements whose originators they became. One does not expect a new book to reveal unsuspected historical relationships, or unknown facts of importance in the lives of these men and in the larger movements of their times. The informed reader of Dr. Cadman's book will find abundant corroborative evidence of the power of this triumvirate and of their place in history, but nothing that would compel a radical readjustment of previous estimates.

In spite of these inevitable limitations, Dr. Cadman's book fills an empty niche among the chronicles of dominant personalities. Its claim to recognition does not rest upon originality of research, nor upon exhaustive treatment of the three separate topics, but upon the success with which the author sketches, in large outlines, the periods of English life dominated by the three religious leaders; upon the skill with which he fills the outlines with minor characters of importance; and upon the literary artistry displayed in a vigorous style and in a lucid presentation. What might easily have been a confusing mosaic of many parts proves to be three good portraits of great men set in a panorama of English life.

Thus Dr. Cadman's book is much more than biographical studies of the three great Oxonians. The lives of the "Morning Star of the Reformation," of the founder of Methodism, and of the leader of the Tractarian movement are merely the connecting threads of a much wider range of thought. Even "their movements," which forms a part of the title of the book, is an inadequate description of its rich contents. Set about the lives of the

three leaders, and linked with the movements which they expressed and inspired, the reader of the book will find in it a succinct amount of all the significant currents of thought and action in the periods under survey.

It is no small merit, for any man, to serve as a trustworthy guide through remote eras, filled with complex trends and tendencies and fraught with immense consequences for all future ages. And Dr. Cadman is thoroughly trustworthy in his critical and ethical appreciation of the historical forces that became incarnate in Wycliffe, Wesley, and Newman. He brings to his task every requisite of knowledge and insight. One may, indeed, question the association of Newman with the other two. No one, certainly, would contend that he ranks with them in importance as a creative personality in the religious life of England, and much less of the world at large. But, that apart, the Third Book, devoted to the great Tractarian and to the Oxford Movement of 1833-1845, contains one of the clearest accounts to be found anywhere of that interesting episode in Anglicanism.

As a popular presentation of three great men, their times and tendencies, their origin and influence, the book deserves earnest recommendation. It is true to fact, catholic in spirit, judicious in emphasis, lucid in style, logical in presentation. Perhaps no other existing volume can take its place for the ready and reliable orientation and information of intelligent men who lack the time or opportunity for detailed scientific study of the topics discussed. Carefully selected bibliographies and a good index are appended to the book.

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