

THE MEN OF THE KINGDOM.

Published by Jennings & Graham, Cincinnati. Price \$1.00 per volume.

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This series of popular biographies, some of which have already been reviewed in these columns, are not intended primarily for scholars and clergymen, but for busy men, preachers and laymen who have but little time to devote to biography and at the same time desire to get some conception of the life, times and work of some of the leading "Men of the Kingdom." The underlying principle upon which the selection of subjects was made does not appear, but all the characters treated were men of note and influence. The biographies are all brief, varying from 100 to about 260 rather open pages. The distribution of space would seem to be defective, since 260 pages are given to Savonarola and his abortive attempt to reform Florence, while only 255 pages are assigned to Luther and 203 to Calvin, founders of great Protestant churches and types of theology and Christian life. It would seem that even the exigencies of a series could have been made to yield a better result. The various volumes were written by different Methodist scholars and divines, and the length and character of the treatment, it would seem, were left largely to the predilections of the individual. It is difficult to see the reason for the sub-titles of some of the volumes. For example, why should we have "Calvin: the Statesman," "Luther: the Leader," and "John Knox: the Reformer"? Luther was pre-eminently the reformer, and *leader* is absolutely colorless. But according to the plan there must be sub-titles, and of course these must differ. This illustrates some of the limitations and difficulties of any series. And for the purpose of this series it matters little.

The volumes naturally differ in value, judged from every

standpoint, but a somewhat cursory examination leaves the impression that all of them possess decided interest and value as a popular presentation of the lives of some of God's great men. The volume on Calvin deals only with the disciplinary and administrative side of his work, almost entirely omitting his great contribution to the history of theology. It must be said, however, that the statesmanship side of Calvin's career is well handled. The volume on Luther is excellent, treating the subject under the three general heads, "The Making of the Leader," "Pulling Down the Old" and "Building Up the New." The author is himself a German by birth and cherishes an enthusiasm for Luther and an insight into his aims, ideals, difficulties and achievements that is difficult, if not impossible, for a foreigner. This fact has enabled him to write a very interesting and instructive popular life of Luther. The volume on Wycliffe is valuable not only for the life of the man, but also for the vivid picture of England in the later Middle Ages. Other important volumes are those on Augustine, Savonarola and Huss, but there is no space to notice these and the others in detail. Pastors will find this a valuable and helpful series of biographies.

W. J. MCGLOTHLIN.

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