

for the general reader which will give him, at the same time, a large number of extracts from Taylor, Dr Hart's book is a work of solid scholarship which puts everyone who is interested in the history of the Caroline Restoration and of the Revolution in his debt.

To describe Bleddyn ap Cynfyn as 'another medieval tribal leader' is so infelicitous as to border on the inaccurate; Llywarch ab Bran is not much better served as 'a Welsh bard of the Middle Ages'; and there is, if I am not mistaken, another portrait of Lloyd at Cefn, near St Asaph. So far as Mr Ross Williamson's book is concerned, many students of Jeremy Taylor will remain unsatisfied with his interpretation of his subject's character; and I, for one, must deny that the Anglican view of the relations of the Church with the State in the seventeenth century was necessarily 'Erastian'.

T. CHARLES EDWARDS

CHAUCER. By Raymond Preston. (Sheed and Ward; 25s.)

Mr Preston's intention is to 'try to interpret the work of Chaucer to the reader of today'. The book is constructed around quotations. Mr Preston comments on situations, makes comparisons and provides a résumé of bits of narrative which must be omitted. The comments are just, the manner not intimidating and the whole is well informed from the corpus of Chaucer criticism ancient and modern. The difficulty for the reader with procedure of this sort is that of skipping constantly from quotation to comment. Those who do not read Chaucer may find it harder to concentrate on countless disjointed pages and half pages of text than to read the collected works. Those who read Chaucer may find Mr Preston's comments too chatty and too short. It is the natural disadvantage of trying to write criticism for so wide an audience. Extensive quotation has justified itself for Elizabethan and later poetry when accompanied with line by line, even word by word, analysis to show how the whole is created by the parts. No one has successfully analysed Chaucer in this way. The reason for this may be that medieval poetry requires a different and broader approach, or it may be that we deceive ourselves in thinking we understand the associations of Chaucer's words just because their primary meanings have not altered beyond all comprehension. Mr Preston assures us that we can understand the archaic text, but if 'the reader of today' feels more at home with Chaucer for references to Mr Ezra Pound, Mr Benjamin Britten, Yeats and Appalachian folk-songs, he may omit to notice that the propounding of 'the problem of evil' might be more expected from Mr C. S. Lewis than from the contemporary of John of Gaunt.

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