

ROYAL ARMS AND COMMANDMENTS IN OUR CHURCHES.

By H. MUNRO CAUTLEY, A.R.I.B.A.

That Archæology contains unexplored regions awaiting development is evidenced by Mr. Cautley in this book on the Royal Arms in our Churches.

For although many fragmentary references have appeared in ecclesiological writings, no expert hitherto has submitted them to an exhaustive analysis or produced a satisfactory account of their origin, legal obligation and general history.

Armchair archæology and the persistent copying of guesses made by old-time writers has yielded place to Mr. Cautley's method of diagnosing reputed facts and challenging their claim for acceptance.

Although the book deals with Church topics it must be remembered that it is written by a Layman for the general public and any dereliction from certain technical shibboleths of canonical orthodoxy and any "red rags" fluttered anent the Papal Bull, in no way impair the purpose of the book. Neither need we criticise passing allusions to the idiosyncrasies of Monarchs about which historians are at variance. Of King Charles II it is said, "He never said a foolish thing and never did a wise one." This shows that, at least, he possessed tact and charm.

The illustrations, which are about 60 in number, are from photographs taken by the Author, and are a marvellous exhibition of photographic skill, taking into consideration the inaccessibility of many of the subjects, bad light and the lack of contrast and sensitiveness remaining in these old and faded paintings.

Readers will be grateful to Mr. Cautley for including a brief exposition of specific heraldic terms, used in connection with his description of the Royal Arms but possibly lack of space compelled him to limit his glossary and to reduce the list of Royal Badges to an extent that renders a few of them ambiguous.

Badges were devices distinct from Crests or Shields and were worn by dependants and servants and often appear as Inn Signs. They were hereditary, and for this reason we must remember that the Badges herein ascribed to Queen Mary, of a Sheaf of arrows and of a Pomegranate and to Queen Elizabeth of a Falcon holding a Sceptre, were inherited from their respective mothers, Katherine of Arragon and Anne Boleyn, and may refer to either mother or daughter.

In Preston Church there is a most interesting Coat assigned to Queen Elizabeth but Mr. Cautley gives cause to show that it is a Coat of Edward VI adapted to pass as that of Elizabeth. He also points out

that in many other instances the Royal arms of an earlier Sovereign have been "touched up" to qualify them as those of succeeding monarchs.

The final chapter in this interesting book is devoted to the Texts and Tables of Commandments also found on the walls of our Churches. Of these a dozen or more illustrations are given together with dates and description.

Also certain reasons and authorities are given to account for their introduction. But surely they were the natural result of progressive educational evolution, from Sign writing to the Written Word.

Until he could read written words, the walls of our Churches were covered with mural paintings, signs and symbols, which were called "The Poor Man's Bible," but when the "Poor Man" learned how to read, under Tudor culture, sign writing became a lost language, and although mural paintings were not destroyed owing to superstitious fears, they were not renewed, but as, owing to educational progress, they had lost their proselytizing value their mission of teaching was carried on by the more advanced method.

In this connection we must not overlook the many alterations that followed the change in the Church Services from Latin into English and its effect upon every description of Church evangelization whether by wall, board, voice or pen.

Royal injunctions bearing on their introduction into our Churches would appear to be permits rather than commands, because "the wish is father to the thought" and deed.

The majority of these inscribed boards have vanished and their message with them, but one in Preston Church is recorded and contained a Latin epic on the Armada, 1558, written at a much later date, possibly by Sir Simonds d'Ewes, High Sheriff for Suffolk in 1639, and Member for Sudbury in 1640.

The cadence of the original is weakened somewhat in its English rendering, where the Barbarous Iberian is converted into the "Spanish savage" and the heavy artillery of the mighty Galleons toned down to "fireballs." We are grateful however that a translation has been given instead of the original Latin.

This book is well printed with a useful Index locorum et nomina and is replete with information. And the fact that it incites criticism is a proof that it excites interest.

H.A.H.