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BOOKS AND THEIR WRITERS.

THE Cromer Convention of the Anglican Evangelical Group Movement held in June last year marked a further stage in the development of an organization whose work must be of interest to all church people, and especially to members of the Evangelical School. Dr. Binns in his book *The Evangelical Movement in the Church of England*, published last year by Messrs. Methuen and Co. in their series of volumes dealing with "The Faiths," gives a brief account of the origin and early days of the Group Brotherhood. It began in Liverpool where three of the local Evangelical clergy "felt that some action must be taken to arouse Evangelicals to a sense of the dangers they were in through their internal divisions and through their failure to understand the needs of the times." This was about the year 1905. Joined by three others and known as "The Six" they expressed their views at various gatherings. "The points upon which they were most insistent were the need for some kind of positive policy in place of negations with which the older generation of Evangelicals seemed to be satisfied, the desire for fellowship, and the demand to be allowed to think things out for themselves, and not merely to repeat the old formulæ."

For eighteen years the groups remained a private, almost a secret, organization, meeting in small numbers in various parts of the country and holding each year conferences of all the members. By means of these conferences a spirit of fellowship and brotherhood was fostered which made "Groups" a thing almost unique.

A change in the character of the Movement came in 1923. "Events in the Church at large, the creation of the Church Assembly, the rapid spread of the Anglo-Catholic Movement, and above all misunderstandings and disputes among Evangelicals themselves, together with the realization that secrecy meant suspicion and distrust on the part of those outside, caused the Movement, at a Conference at Coleshill in June, 1923, publicly to declare its principles and to invite application for membership."

Since then the Movement has grown in numbers and last year held a most successful Convention at Cromer. Canon Storr in a small booklet, entitled *The Splendour of God: The Message of Cromer, 1928* (S.P.C.K., 1s.), has summed up "the message and spirit of that wonderful gathering" in order to give a wider circle some idea of its character and value. The Conference was, he says, "an attempt to obtain a new experience of God." The title "*The Splendour of God*" was intended "to suggest that there were hidden in God beauties and truths which we should do well to explore."

He explains the method of that exploration set before the Conference. It is necessary to correct untrue or inadequate views of God. True views come to us through many sources. Science contributes its share. Human experience reveals the Living God moving in the hearts and minds of men. "God's greatest splendour is the splendour of love." Love means self-sacrifice, and God is not

indifferent to the pain and sorrow of the world. Suffering comes through sin and Calvary is the result of sin. Christ is our Leader in a great campaign, and we must follow him in the work of building the Kingdom of God. The World Call is a summons to renewed effort to meet the new opportunity. Our resources for this enterprise are those in Christ Himself, and no one can set limits to His power. It will be seen that the aim of the Convention was intensely practical. It was a call to service for the glory of God.

Students of English history are familiar with the career of William III after he came to the throne of England. They have learned the events of his Irish campaign from the graphic pages of Macaulay. Our latest historian, Prof. G. M. Trevelyan, has reminded us of the significance of the conflict. "In the year 1690 Ireland was the pivot of the European crisis. The fate of Britain depended on William's campaign, and on the fate of Britain depended the success or failure of Europe's resistance to French hegemony." On that success or failure depended also the future of Protestantism and Romanism. The Jesuits would have gained the power they sought in European politics if William had suffered defeat. This was not the first contest William had engaged in with France and the Roman Church. He had learnt in his early days the dangers with which he was surrounded. With this portion of his life many may not be so well acquainted, and will welcome the important study of the first twenty-four years of the Prince's life which Miss Marjorie Bowen has given in *William Prince of Orange* (The Bodley Head, 18s. net). This is the first of three volumes in which Miss Bowen intends to give an account of William III's life based on a fresh examination of all the authorities and of the reliable sources of information. We shall look forward with interest to the succeeding volumes.

The story as told by Miss Bowen is full of dramatic interest. The birth of the infant prince after the death of his father ushered him into a scene of conflicting interests, where his mother the daughter of Charles I of England was opposed to her mother-in-law, and both to John de Witt, the Grand Pensionary, who was determined that the Stadtholdership of the Princes of Orange should never be revived. For twenty years John de Witt dominated the life of the young Prince, directing his education, choosing his tutors and endeavouring in every way to bring him to realize the subordinate place which the Grand Pensionary had arranged for him to play in the future of Holland.

The character of the Prince under this tutelage is developed before us. It was strangely different from all that the Grand Pensionary planned. From almost his earliest days William displayed an uncanny appreciation of all that was intended and of his own position. He adopted a reserve of manner which concealed his inmost thoughts and feelings. He submitted with good grace to many of the indignities heaped upon him. But with extraordinary cleverness he learnt the mysteries of statecraft, and when scarcely 18 he made his first step towards the assertion of his position when

he assumed the presidency of the Assembly of Zeeland as premier noble of the Province. His popularity with the people was immense, and this action was soon followed by others equally pleasing to the people. John de Witt was defeated and showed his anger. "At twenty years of age William had his affairs entirely in his own hands, was answerable to no one, and had taken his part in public life and among the councillors of his country."

At this time Louis XIV of France and Charles II of England had united in the infamous Treaty of Dover in the design of destroying the Dutch Republic. They endeavoured to buy William off, but he refused to desert his country and, when the campaign began, as a youth of 21 he was placed in chief command of the forces that resisted the invasion. Miss Bowen tells with graphic power the story of those strenuous years, in which the Prince rose superior to every calamity and by his courage and perseverance inspired the people to desperate resistance. They opened the sluices and flooded some of the most valuable portions of their territory. He led sallies upon the forces of the French king. By his resistance he gained time to secure allies and to place Louis XIV in comparative isolation.

The narrative breaks off at an interesting point in the taking of Bonn, which was the turning point in the war—"the Kings of France and England paused to contemplate their amazing antagonists; the genius of William III had overturned all their designs." The volume is well illustrated with portraits of the chief personalities. There are ample notes and an excellent index.

Missionary literature has acquired a new power in recent years. The problems with which writers have to deal have widened the scope of their treatment until they range from high and abstract theories of the Philosophy of Religion to the details of the presentation of Christianity to meet the needs of individual souls, and to deal with conditions of life in various parts of the world. Mr. W. Paton's *A Faith for the World* (C.M.S., 2s. 6d. net) is an excellent example of this modern type of Missionary book. His purpose is "to set out the main elements of the case for the Christian world mission, and to show some of the principal tasks which are bound up with that mission." Incidentally it helps to bring home the message of the Jerusalem Conference. Having made his claim for Christianity as a universal religion, he states its message and sets it out in contrast to those of other universal religions. Jesus Christ supplies what the others fail to give. His message is for all men and for every department of life. The Living Society of the Church is the means of spreading the message. Its primary duty is Evangelism, by every means it can adopt, Education, Medical work, Newspaper propaganda. It must embrace the whole of life. "Field, Factory and Workshop." It must face the problems of colour and caste, and it must faithfully apply the principles of Christ in every sphere of conduct. This comprehensive survey of the whole Missionary field should be read by all who wish to appreciate the greatness of the present opportunity and the best means of using it.

Students of the Sacraments will be interested in Canon A. L. Lilley's *Sacraments: A Study of Some Moments in the Attempt to Define their Meaning for Christian Worship* (Student Christian Movement, 4s. and 2s. 6d.). Canon Lilley's treatment of the subject is not along either usual or conventional lines. Having arrived at the conception of Religion as "our spiritual apprehension of Reality," in which he includes the most intimate and most sustained communion, he shows that this communion must be through symbols, either "the immediate mental symbols which we call words or those intermediately sensible symbols which we call Sacraments."

He examines the views of some of the great theologians on the significance of the sacraments. St. Augustine, "the most influential and representative theologian that Christianity has ever produced," distinguishes between the symbol and the reality and for him "the Sacraments are only an acted word." Passing over the teaching of Hugh and Richard of St. Victor we come to the new theological era of St. Thomas Aquinas. Here "symbolism" gives way to "instrumentality" and with it the errors expressed by Transubstantiation and by such phrases as "the Sacraments contain grace."

In later scholastic discussion mechanical views were developed, and even magical conceptions are found. Canon Lilley is anxious to show the influences "correcting the tendency to magical conceptions from which sacramental practice is never wholly free." The Reformed Churches have maintained symbolism and there must be a frank return to symbolism in its widest range.

On Mr. H. R. Allenson's list of new books there are three which I have found of special interest. The Rev. John E. McIntyre, M.A., has written a series of "Studies in Practical Religion" with the title *The Idealism of Jesus* (6s. net). While he recognizes that Christ is sufficient for every new need of Western civilization he has doubts if the Church is adequate for the new needs of the world. He desires to bring the Church from the isolation of these days to the main tide of life, and to attain this purpose he has written these essays, in which life is viewed from the standpoint of the Gospels. They are divided into three sections. Expositions, Experiences, and Enlargements. The presentation is thought provoking and critical of many old points of view, but if the new generations really require new presentations of the old truths we must be prepared to learn how to satisfy their needs. Yet we can hardly follow an idealism that goes so far in emphasizing the duty of kindness as to say "a pure Christianity would not tolerate prisons. If people were to waken up to what 'seven years penal' means, the daily hourly torture of it, there would be no more of it." It may be useful to show that Christian experience is not completely dependent on historical assumptions, yet it is going too far to maintain that Christian faith can be independent of historical facts. "God's future, we see in the light of Christ, is an organized society of loving persons," and it is good for us to have that vision constantly before

us and to strive eagerly to attain to it, but meanwhile there are the actual conditions of life in the midst of which we have to live.

In *The Eternal Quest* (5s.), by E. A. Wanderer (Rev. W. A. Elliot), we have "an illuminating piece of apologetics." The Wanderer tells "How I wandered in the Wilderness of Life and how I found Religion." With the aid of other wanderers he argues out the many problems with which we are faced in life, and shows how by processes of reason he is led on through belief in Eternal Energy to the great fundamentals of Christian faith, and through the doubts raised by some aspects of scientific teaching to a clear and reasonable faith in the Cross.

"It was this Cross that kept Christianity alive through the dreary centuries of the Dark Ages, and that keeps it alive to-day. Misrepresentation and misunderstanding have done their worst, animalism and selfishness have done their best to tear the Cross of the Crucifixion out of life; but that's the only kind of Christianity that keeps the world agoing." So many points of view are presented in these interesting chapters that a preacher or teacher is equipped with a knowledge of the difficulties which present themselves to the minds of young thinkers, and is provided with useful suggestions as to the best method of meeting these difficulties.

A Belfast paper, the *Northern Whig*, has followed the example of *The Times* and publishes an article weekly on a religious subject. The writer of these articles is the Rev. Douglas M. Joss, M.A., of Rosemary Street, Presbyterian Church, Belfast. He has issued thirty-three of them in book form and calls the volume *Springs of Water* (5s. net). They are well described on the jacket as "fresh in outlook, lit with apt illustration and each bearing a message that gets home." Mr. Joss has a combination of qualities that make him successful in this class of composition. He has a keen sense of a suitable subject with a direct bearing on Christ's value for human life; he presents it from a fresh view-point, clothes it with appropriate imagery or allegory and adds a wealth of illustration gleaned from all sorts of sources. The result is a series of papers that grip the reader till he has read through them all. It is a book full of suggestion for those who have to make addresses.

The friends of Sir George King owe a debt of gratitude to Archdeacon Buckland for the charmingly written biography which has been published by R.T.S. (5s. net). Archbishop Davidson in the Foreword describes Sir George as "a noteworthy example of the best type of English Protestant," and those who knew him best know how much of real piety, genuine Christian enthusiasm, learning and self-sacrificing service are connoted in the term. The Evangelical School in the Church lost one of its ablest representatives by his death. His convictions were based upon a solid foundation of sound learning, and his character had its inspiration in the records

of our Lord's life, of which he was an ardent student. Many of us will remember him best as a loyal and generous friend.

Claud Corfield, *The Chronicle of a Busy Life*, by his Wife (Wells Gardner, Darton & Co., Ltd., 10s. 6d. and 5s. net), is a tribute to the memory of a well-known clergyman whose work at Heanor in Derbyshire for twenty-five years, and at Taunton in Somerset for another fourteen, represented the best activities of the parochial clergy in the organization of the work of large parishes and specially in the care of the young in Day Schools and Sunday Schools. Canon Corfield was a keen worker and had the joy of seeing the work at Heanor develop until the Church had obtained a strong hold on the district. At Taunton he carried on the work he loved among the young with the same good results. This biography gives an intimate insight into the life of one whose "character and ideal of life may be summed up in the words Service, Love, Purity."

A small but interesting book published by Messrs. Simpkin Marshall, Ltd., is *In Christ's Heaven*, by Dennis Stoll (2s. net). It is a young man's endeavour to answer a friend's five questions: What is God like? What is a Christian? Why does Evil exist? Does the Church preach Christianity? and Where are the dead? The effort is a serious and earnest one and commands respect for its reverence and sincerity. He goes to the heart of the matter every time. God is like Jesus. The Christian finds his life in Christ. Faith is the essence of his life. He has no concern with superstition and useless ceremony. Freewill lies at the root of the mystery of evil. The Church, he fears, does not represent Christianity. He tells the story of the reply of Erasmus to the Canons of the Chapter of Strasburg Cathedral who told him that only those with at least fourteen noble ancestors could be admitted:—"Then Christ Himself could not have been received into the Chapter unless He got a dispensation from this rule." He adds, "One cannot help feeling that Jesus of Nazareth might be extremely uncomfortable in many of the places of worship erected in His name."

Christ and the World's Unrest, by Harry T. Silcock (The Swathmore Press, Ltd., 2s. 6d. net), is the Swathmore Lecture for 1927, which is an annual lecture on some subject relating to the message and work of the Society of Friends. With many interesting references and facts drawn from many sources it illustrates that Christ Jesus alone can solve the world's problems.

G. F. I.
