

Review.

Charles Simeon. By H. C. G. MOULE, M.A. Methuen and Co., 1892.

THIS book will be very widely read, we trust, and will do good service in several ways. Most members of the Evangelical School, probably, have read the "Memoirs" by Canon Carus, and are familiar, more or less, with what has been written about Mr. Simeon in other Biographies, and in periodical literature. Many Churchmen, again, who have no acquaintance with the "Memoirs," and have read but little about the work at Cambridge mentioned therein, were pleased with the admiring picture of Mr. Simeon drawn in the "Sir Percival" of Mr. Shorthouse—a picture suggested, as its artist says, by the "Memoirs" of Canon Carus. But a large number of devout and earnest Churchfolk, it is probable, know scarcely anything about Mr. Simeon, and yet are ready to learn something of the great work which in various ways he did. To such readers, undoubtedly, the present biography (the author modestly terms it "a short sketch of a memorable career") will prove welcome and helpful. It is a really interesting book; deeply spiritual in tone, with a refreshing candour and tolerance; rich in information, admirably arranged; from a literary point of view, an excellent piece of work. It will remove much prejudice, and bring together—a thing greatly to be desired—many who see the evils of "party" spirit, and who, differing in measures of "High" or "Low" or "Broad," are at one in love of the Prayer-book and loyalty to the Church of England.

The Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge, sometime Fellow of Trinity College, has special qualifications for the task (the "delightful task," he calls it), of writing a present-day book on the life and character of that honoured servant of Christ, who lived and died an Incumbent of a Cambridge parish, and a Fellow of King's. In the course of years, living in Cambridge, Mr. Moule has gathered up many personal reminiscences; moreover, unpublished papers have been placed at his disposal; and he has many links of sympathy and affection. Mr. Moule's intimacy with Canon Carus, Fellow of Trinity, curate, successor, friend, and biographer of Mr. Simeon has led him to insert (after the Preface was written) a few lines of "In Memoriam," which many who knew Canon Carus will read with pleasure, and which we cannot refrain from quoting here, as follows:

It had been my earnest hope to be permitted to place this little volume in his living hand; now I can only inscribe it to his beautiful and holy memory, thanking God that I have enjoyed the happiness of knowing him, and of seeming to know in him the saints of that elder time which he remembered so well.

A few brief paragraphs may be quoted from this delightful book.

From Eton, in 1779, Charles Simeon passed to King's College. Three days after his arrival, the Provost sent to tell him that within a few weeks, in mid-term, the Holy Communion was to be administered in the chapel, and that he (according to a college rule) must communicate on that day. What Simeon felt he described in a private Memoir:

"What?" said I, "must I attend?" On being informed that I must, the thought rushed into my mind that—Satan himself was as fit to attend as I; and that, if I must attend, I must *prepare* for my attendance there. Without a moment's loss of time, I bought the "Whole Duty of Man," the only religious book that I had ever heard of, and began to read it with great diligence; at the same time calling my ways to remembrance, and crying to God for mercy. . . .

He consulted Kettlewell's book, but chiefly Bishop Wilson's, on the Lord's Supper; and at his second Communion, on Easter Day, he "had

the sweetest access to God." The services in the College Chapel were at that time irreverently performed; but such was the state of Simeon's soul for many months from that time that the prayers were as "marrow and fatness" to him.

This is a proof to me [he wrote] that the deadness and formality experienced in the worship of the Church arise far more from the low state of our graces than from any defect in our Liturgy. If only we had our hearts deeply penitent and contrite, I know from my experience at this hour that no prayers in the world could be better suited to our wants or more delightful to our souls.

Similarly, we read (p. 107) that in the use of the Prayer-book in public worship Simeon "found one of his purest joys." "No other human work," he said, "is so free from faults as it is." "Never do I find myself nearer to God than I often am in the reading-desk."

Perhaps the English Church "never had a more devoted son and servant than Simeon," St. Charles of Cambridge, to quote an expression in the "Essays" of Sir J. Stephen. From the first to the last of his Cambridge life he was "resolutely and unceasingly anxious that all men should love and venerate the Church of England." He deplored the coldness and slackness of Church life in the country generally, "and he looked on its real resuscitation as one of the sacred objects of his own labours."

And I cannot but think [continues Mr. Moule] that not a little of the revived consciousness of corporate life and duty in the national Church, often attributed almost wholly to the movement which Simeon lived to see begin at Oxford, is due to his persistent work and witness at the other centre of academic influence.

In an admirable passage, later on in the book (p. 260), Mr. Moule remarks that, so far as the Oxford movement "was a reaction from an over-drawn individualism in religion and an excess of the subjective spirit, there was much in Simeon's thought and teaching which struck a concord with it." Again: "The evangelical revival of the eighteenth century found a certain defect supplied in the school of Simeon."

This devoted pastor and preacher was free from party spirit. Mr. Moule says (p. 95): "From that baleful spirit, altogether different from a faithful and reverent jealousy for distinctive revealed truth, Simeon was kept extraordinarily free all through his life." Certainly it was with those devoted clergymen and laymen who accepted the title Evangelical (they did not, as is sometimes said, *claim* it) that Simeon's sympathies mainly lay. But his "necessary and affectionate special relations with them" were always governed by his deep loyalty to Scripture, his "cordial allegiance to the doctrine and discipline of the English Church as such, and his love of his Redeemer's image wherever he saw it reflected."

On the state of Cambridge at the time when Simeon went to King's, and on the remarkable changes which took place as regards both "town and gown" during the period of his ministry (he was *fifty-four years* Vicar of Trinity Church), the biography contains much interesting information, no small portion of which, probably, will be altogether new to many readers. Principal Moule refers, of course, to Gunning's "Reminiscences"; volumes full of curious details as to clerical worldliness and grossly inconsistent living; and also to the "Recollections" of the late Professor Fryme.

The funeral of Simeon was itself a most striking testimony to the good man's faithful and laborious career. The whole University was resolved to honour the man once almost banished from its society. Heads of Houses, Doctors, Professors, men of all ages, stations, and opinions. and of every College, came to the burial of Simeon.