

Book Reviews

ENGLAND UNDER THE STUART KINGS

By *F. G. Llewellyn, B.D., D.Litt.* (*Protestant Truth Society.*) 3s.

Dr. Llewellyn has already given us instructive examples of his historical studies, especially in the Tudor period, and we are therefore glad that he has expended his time and labour to bring the Stuart Kings under careful review.

In this new book of 190 pages most of the leading characters in Church and State are passed in review and their careers interestingly delineated and their influence faithfully recorded. We thus see clearly how they made their contribution to the varied and changeful scheme of the National life in this critical epoch. In this way the aims and ideals of Laud and Strafford are clearly portrayed as well as their unwise absolutist and sometimes cruel methods of attaining them.

There is a running and rapid summary of the political and constitutional events of the seventeenth century as well as a short but graphic account of its leading characters, especially those of prominent Restoration Churchmen, while a rather unusual excursion into the by-path of social and economic conditions of the period is especially welcome. The book is well illustrated and made more useful by an Index. It is just the short summary of events of this most fateful period of our National history which should be very valuable for a busy layman. He will find in its pages all of importance which he needs to learn.

C. S. CARTER.

CHRISTIANITY IN THOUGHT AND PRACTICE

By *William Temple, Archbishop of York.* (*S.C.M.*) 1s.

This is a book of supreme value and great importance. It consists of the Moody Lectures which were delivered at the University of Chicago in 1935-6 and they contain a remarkable forecast of the coming world crisis. One quotation will serve to illustrate the sound, practical commonsense of the author :

"I believe the political problems of our generation and of that which will follow ours are truly problems in theology, and that the answer to the questions that are being raised will be given this way or that, broadly speaking, according as men do or do not believe that personality in man has a status independent of all earthly associations and allegiances because of its kinship with the personality of God."

The Lectures were concerned mainly with the relations between

Philosophy and Religion, and they move along the lines of the Hegelian triad of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Dr. Temple points out that this is a process which never reaches an ultimate conclusion, for it consists of something which is always moving on. There is, of course, a sharp distinction between mediæval and modern philosophy and he urges that the supreme need in every civilized country is to construct a synthesis which will gather together the vital excellencies of both. He selects for a close analysis the important problem of the nature and status of personality and in his last chapter he deals with Christian Ethics in relation to individuals and groups.

It will help those Christians who are puzzled and anxious about their personal response to the call of King and Country. The Archbishop writes, "There is one really strong argument against the use of armed force; it is that none of us are good enough to use it without moral deterioration. As soon as fighting begins, passions are released which strangle high aspirations and the spirit of truth is stifled in the hearts of men. Yet I cannot hold that this is a valid reason for refusing the perilous duty; it is a cogent reason for spiritual discipline in preparation for it . . . The Christian may fight to preserve his country from invasion or to uphold defined justice among the nations with which his own is in contractual relations; but he must not fight for his faith, nor to defend his life when that is threatened because he is a witness to that Faith; for to fight for the Faith otherwise than by argument and by appeal is to betray it."

J. W. AUGUR.

THOUGHTS IN WAR-TIME

By William Temple, Archbishop of York. (Macmillan.) 4s. 6d.

This book can be taken as the sequel to the Moody Lectures of 1935-6, for it puts into practice the conclusions which Dr. Temple then arrived at in view of the coming world struggle. What is the duty of a Christian in time of War? At the present time we are all conscious of the tension between the absolute claims of religious faith and the relative judgments involved in political action. This tension cannot be ignored, and the Archbishop believes that every Christian should face it in the light of actual facts and with the conviction that War is a Divine Judgment. This, broadly, is the line which runs through all his religious and political addresses since the war began, and in this volume he has published the most important of them together with several articles which have appeared in certain periodicals. They have a lasting value, for they are built up on eternal foundations. Preachers and teachers will read and study them with much profit.

The Appendix includes the remarkable essay by the late Canon B. H. Streeter published in 1915, on "This War and The Sermon on the Mount." Amongst many other pregnant utterances, he declares that "the Sermon on the Mount is not to be read as a set of rules and regulations but as a battle song."

J. W. AUGUR.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

By Herbert Hensley Henson. (Cambridge University Press.) 7s. 6d.

In the series "English Institutions" a place had to be found for that most typical of English institutions, the Church of England, a source of constant surprise to its sons and of continual bewilderment to aliens. The choice of one to write such a book must have given the General Editor considerable anxious thought. From many points of view the former Bishop of Durham fills the requirement as well as any other. His ability is unquestioned; his experience of Church life has been varied; he has passed through several stages of development in his own views, and he has now the necessary leisure for such a task. The result of his work is an odd but interesting volume, always readable and characteristic of Hensley Henson. Of necessity the early pages are historical in character, though the volume itself is not intended to be a careful historical survey of the Church. This section of the book contains much that is debatable, but Evangelicals will notice the warm tribute which is paid to the character and work of Cranmer, whose martyrdom, it is stated, made permanent his life's work of giving order and meaning to the English Reformation. The varying fortunes of the Church from the Elizabethan settlement to its "frank subjection" to the State at the end of the seventeenth century are characteristically set forth.

The "subjection" of the Church to the State occupies a fairly large proportion of the volume, and it is obvious that the whole volume proceeds from one with whom that particular grievance is ever present. He is convinced that the only reasonable solution is disestablishment and that the solution will not long be delayed. As may be expected, the rejection by Parliament of the Proposed New Prayer Book, in many quarters now considered to have been providential, is made a major complaint of State interference with the Church's liberty.

On the question of Bishops, the author has much to say, both in connection with the mode of appointment and with their "lordly" state. He will have a great deal of support in his suggestion that an effective episcopate, really in touch with modern life and thought, will have to surrender a good deal of its pomp.

The parochial system, education, the establishment, and the parochial clergy provide chapters, always interesting, usually provocative. We wonder how far the author is justified in his patent lament over the decline in the "standing" of the clergy. It is true that the ranks have been greatly extended and that the public-school no longer provides the bulk of ordinands, but it is questionable whether in general training they are less worthy than their predecessors.

There is something severe about the author's logical reasoning, and, of course, the Church of England by its history and its "compromise" provides an admirable target for any sharpshooter. In this case the one who shoots can claim the privilege, granted to one who lives sufficiently deeply, of indicating blemishes and weaknesses with a view to amendment and improvement. There is no doubt that Hensley Henson enjoyed writing this book and those who read, though they will frequently register non-agreement, will certainly find pleasure and profit.

STOIC, CHRISTIAN AND HUMANIST

By Gilbert Murray, LL.D., D.C.L., Litt.D., formerly Regius Professor of Greek in the University of Oxford. (London: Watts & Co., G. Allen & Unwin.) 5s.

This is a little book consisting of only four essays; but its importance and its significance are not to be measured by the number of its pages. Professor Gilbert Murray has so long been before the public, first (and foremost) as a brilliant *littérateur*, secondly as an enthusiastic advocate of the League of Nations, that he requires no introduction to readers anywhere. In a fairly full preface he tells us that he has more than once been moved to make a systematic attempt at stating his religious position, "comprising a profound belief in ethics and a disbelief in all revelational religion." And then he proceeds to give us a little bit of autobiography, to show how it is (or was) that he came to hold those views. He knows that what he has written may alienate, or at least pain, some of his friends; but he could not keep silence on subjects of such vital importance. We do not propose to review the book in detail; suffice it to say that—admirably written though it be—this volume is, in considerable measure, an attack on Christianity as a "faith" and a "revelation." This is particularly noticeable in the second half of the work, in the two chapters on (1) the conception of another life; (2) what is permanent in Positivism. There is, indeed, no vulgar attack on Christianity such as sometimes meets us in publications by the Rationalist Press Association; Prof. Murray is too great a gentleman to descend to such methods. For all that, and despite the fact that (as we cannot help believing) within the inmost being of the old Professor there is (what Tertullian called) the "*anima naturaliter Christiana*," it is painful to know that he has definitely and finally rejected the Gospel; and that he has used his learning, his skill, and his persuasiveness to undermine what is—after all—the One Hope of the World. He has brought himself to assume that "men accepting these mystical forms of belief" (*i.e.*, the belief that there is a personal Being who is a God of Love and of Justice) or some theistic form of faith, do so not "because they believe it to be true, but because they are convinced that it is good for other people to believe it." No doubt, there are such people; but Christians, in any true sense, they could not be.

The rest of the book calls for nothing but cordial admiration; rarely has the Stoic philosophy been set forth with more clarity and insight, while the opening chapter on Paganism at the time of Christ is a model exposition. This makes us all the more regretful that Prof. Murray should have thrown in his lot with those who, themselves "without hope or God in the world," are doing their best to destroy that hope, that faith in God and Christ, in the lives and souls of others.

THE BEGINNINGS OF Gnostic CHRISTIANITY

By L. Gordon Rylands. (London: Watts & Co.) 15s.

The author of this work, in order (he tells us) to guard against misapprehensions, wishes us to understand by Gnostic Christianity, not the doctrines associated with such writers as Valentinus and

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Basilides, but the Christianity of Paul and the Fourth Gospel. His attitude to Christianity might be inferred from the fact that he regards the conclusions of such men as Bousset, Loisy, and Guinebert, as more or less indisputable. But he goes a good deal further than most modern criticism, even of an extreme type, would allow, and in a previous book he has endeavoured to prove that no such person as Jesus ever walked this earth—that He is, in fact, a fictional character round which has crystallized floating legends, and beliefs in a coming MESSIAH. A man who holds such views ought not to be taken seriously; his bias is too sharply pronounced. The author of the *Golden Bough* has this comment to make on all such attempts to disprove the historicity of the main Gospel narrative: "The doubts which have been cast on the historical reality of Jesus are, in my judgment, unworthy of serious attention." Sir James Frazer's opinion would be that of all but a handful of crotchety intellectuals. Most of Mr. Rylands' new book may be dismissed as unsound; but the two chapters on the Odes of Solomon contain matter of interest for scholars.

E. H. BLAKENEY.

THE MISSIONARY CHURCH (A Study in the contribution of Modern Missions to Ecumenical Christianity).

By W. Wilson Cash, D.D., (C.M.S., Salisbury Square, E.C.4.) 7s. 6d.

When the leader of our largest Missionary Society writes a book commended by the Archbishop of Canterbury as a book "which ought to enlarge the mind, quicken the imagination, and stir the spirit of all who read it," then it is a book to be read not reviewed.

Speaking as a missionary of nearly twenty-five years service, I would say that it should be read by every missionary secretary, by every member of a missionary committee, by every missionary leader in the field, and if possible by every missionary; and not only so but by every parson and minister throughout the country, not only because they have the responsibility of keeping alive the missionary cause at home, but also because the book itself embraces things which are of special importance to the Home Church including present-day challenges and the Ecumenical outlook.

It is delightful to take up a book on such a subject written by a man who was one of the seven pioneers of the Egypt General Mission, and to whose trust God has now committed the leadership of the Church Missionary Society—a man therefore with a full-orbed experience of all kinds of missions, and, better still, of very clear experience of Christ in his own soul.

In every way this is a great book recording great facts, facing great problems, and expressing great principles. It sets before us how God's world-wide purpose is progressing in and through evangelisation.

Here in one volume are the big issues with which, in the view of the Archbishop, "all Christian people" should be concerned. One quotation will suffice, "The point I seek to make throughout is this, that God is at work and is taking the initiative."

ALFRED BUXTON.