

Book Reviews

THE STORY OF ENGLAND'S CHURCH.

By L. E. Elliott-Binns, D.D. *National Society and S.P.C.K.* 3/6 net.

It is no mean achievement to condense the "Story of England's Church" into 127 pages of easily readable print, but this is what Dr. Elliott-Binns has attempted and well succeeded in doing, since he has given us a clear and connected outline of its history which is neither "scrappy" nor noticeably "sketchy." The ordinary churchman who has neither the time nor often the money to buy and read large and costly Church histories can in this little book, at the modest price of 3/6 get a most valuable and also, with a few exceptions, a reliable account of the life and development of his Church from the conversion of England to the present day.

Canon Elliott-Binns notices the important distinctions between the Celtic and Roman types of Church life, and the characteristics and defects of each are very forcibly sketched and all the really salient features are mentioned and emphasised. The decision of Whitby (664) to accept the Roman usages and jurisdiction is thus shown to have been truly beneficial to the future English Church.

In dealing with the Norman period Dr. Elliott-Binns is scarcely correct in asserting that Anselm's quarrel with Rufus turned on the question of Investiture (p.32) as this thorny matter did not arise till the subsequent serious struggle with Henry I.

Our Author concisely and accurately describes the corruption of the Medieval Church when he says (p.65) that "Christianity by the time of the Reformation had departed from its primitive purity, and by the more ignorant was regarded as a species of "magic" in which the priest was everything, the people mere spectators. All this was swept away by the English Reformers. In treating of the English Reformation Canon Elliott-Binns' warm appreciation of Cranmer's great work for it is a welcome sign and a useful corrective of much partisan "Anglo-Catholic" misrepresentation of this outstanding Anglican Father and martyr. We have abundant records of the persuasive and forceful preaching of the English Reformers and of the great power of the Gospel message proclaimed by such men as John Bradford, Hugh Latimer and Dr. Rowland Taylor, which changed the lives of the humblest people into bold and intelligent defenders of the Christian Faith even unto death. Canon Elliott-Binns is therefore scarcely justified in asserting that there was an "absence of fervent religious motives for the (Reformation) changes" in England, because "Englishmen had not the same consciousness of a fresh discovery of the Gospel message and of its liberating power" (p.63) as the Continental Reformers, nor is he right in declaring that the English Reformation "was accompanied by no spiritual awakening" (p.84).

The faithful witness of the Marian martyrs is surely a sufficient refutation of this surprising statement, and it is also a proof that the converting power of the Gospel was as great in England as on the Continent.

Canon Elliott-Binns wisely emphasises the fundamental difference between the Marian and the Elizabethan persecutions, the former being for purely religious opinions while the latter were due to treasonable plots against the Queen's life or to attempts to overthrow the existing governments of the Country. Concise generalisations are apt sometimes to be misleading. I cannot believe that Dr. Elliott-Binns wishes to assert that there was a "Central Party" of Elizabethan Churchmen holding religious views akin to those of Henry VIII, *i.e.* "Popery without the Pope". Yet when he conjectures that "Elizabeth's religious position was very like that of her father" (p.60) and that this "Central party shared the Queen's views" (p.67) this is what this generalisation actually implies. There was, of course, no such "Central religious party amongst Elizabethan Churchmen".

He also gives a short but discerning diagnosis of the Puritan struggle and its real implications for the Reformed Church Settlement of religion. It would however have been more accurate if Dr. Elliott-Binns had said that the ejected Ministers in 1662 "abandoned ministry in a Church with whose 'worship' rather than with whose 'teaching' they could not agree" (78) because these

Nonconformists had no quarrel with the *doctrines* of the Church as expressed in the 39 Articles. We are glad that Canon Elliott-Binns corrects the ignorant confusion of Evangelicals with "Low Churchmen" who were originally men of Latitudinarian views. Mr. Payne in his "Free Church Tradition in the Life of England" declares that Wesley was "moulded and shaped by his association with the Free Churches" (p.17), but Dr. Elliott-Binns is far truer to facts when he says that "Wesley always had a strong distaste for Dissenters of every kind and regarded them as a hindrance to his work and little likely to respond to his appeals" (83).

His description of the Tractarian Movement is however both inadequate and misleading since he omits all reference to its revival of medieval and Roman doctrines, and instead seems to regard the Movement as praiseworthy "for bringing again to notice certain doctrines which were in danger of being neglected" (101).

Again Dr. Elliott-Binns' reference to the Revised Prayer Book amounts to a serious misrepresentation of that heated controversy, when he contents himself with stating the half-truth that its rejection was due to nonconformist intervention" (119). He is altogether silent about the doctrinal changes involved in the proposed alternative Communion office and the authorisation of Reservation which caused not merely this "nonconformist intervention" but the determined opposition of the majority of Church-goers. The wide circulation of Sir William Joynson-Hicks' "Prayer Book Crisis" probably did as much as anything to stimulate this sustained opposition. Canon Elliott-Binns' condonation of the Bishops' later "defiance" of Parliament by authorising this rejected Prayer Book for liturgical use, with his verdict that it had "worked well" in practice, is certainly open to question. He also apparently endorses a statement, which he quotes, of Archbishop Ussher that clergy are merely required "not to contradict the teaching of the 39 Articles". It is a little difficult to square this negative attitude with the positive assertion of their "Declaration of Assent" that "the doctrine therein *set forth* in them is agreeable to the Word of God". The value and service of this most interesting historical *multum in parvo* would have been increased by the addition of an Index.

A SHORT LIFE OF KIERKEGAARDE.

By Walter Lowrie. London—Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press. 12/6.

Mr. Lowrie has rendered a valuable service in giving us in English this well printed and very readable "Short Life" of Kierkegaard, which is only a quarter the size of one published by the Oxford University Press in 1938. It is surely a conspicuous mark of the outstanding genius of this celebrated Danish writer that 90 years after his death not only are his works still being widely read, but that during the last eight years, twenty-three of his books have been translated for the benefit of English readers. There is little doubt that the serious mental and spiritual experiences which Soren Kierkegaard underwent during his short life (1813-1855) were largely due to his most unfortunate and unwise upbringing. His father's boyhood had been ruined by desperate hardships and want so that in a fit of youthful despair he cursed God. Later when, through the unexpected adoption of a rich uncle he became a prosperous business merchant, the father took a melancholy and morbid view of this childish act—as a "sin against the Holy Ghost". In a spirit of careless desperation he indulged for a time in a sensual life. This experience, even after his spiritual reformation, led him to bring up his children with unnatural sternness and repression. Young Soren therefore had no childhood, no games and his only "recreations" were serious learned discussions and instructions from his father, who had also led him to think "he was doomed to be a sacrifice", since five of his seven children had died in early youth, and Soren himself was a frail, weakly child with curvature of the spine. Soren was convinced that he would never reach the age of 34. He declares that as a child "he was already as old as an old man" Although he possessed at first "childlike faith", and his stern father often indulged him, yet Soren confessed later that his early austere Christian training was "crazy", so that Christianity often appeared to him as "the most inhuman cruelty". The odd way which his father dressed the boy invited the ridicule of his school-mates, and this provoked Soren's natural polemical temper so that he was regarded as a "regular little wild cat".

In a brilliant University career Soren soon displayed his natural ability, and it is not surprising that as a reaction from his strict home life he lost his melancholy by indulging in extravagant ways and in outdoor diversions, as well as by acquiring a love of music, literature and drama and the aesthetic side of life. But Soren pretended to be more frivolous than he was since he was still a devout communicant and was studying theology under Professor Martensen to fulfil his father's great desire for his ordination. By the age of twenty-three he reached, what he describes as the "second stage" of his life, that of "Revolt against God", and he was rapidly drifting away from Christianity, although he declares that "he never gave it up".

The year 1836 was for Kierkegaard the period of rebellion, dissolute living and despair. Probably as a violent reaction to his overstrict upbringing, he was for a time obsessed with the Carpocratian aim of experiencing personally the unrestricted passions of uncontrolled natural desires. He wanted to feel "all the sluices of sin open in his own bosom". His father's stern repression of "the sexual instinct in his son" had led Soren to declare that "Christianity had brought sensuality into the world". Consequently through the influence of two evil companions and while intoxicated, his sexual fall occurred in May, 1836. But remorse immediately followed and he longed to "rise again", but it took him two melancholy years to find his way back. He tried the study of philosophy as a substitute for the Christianity he had rejected, but in the end he felt that Christianity was far closer to reality than Hegelism. He had quarrelled seriously with his father in 1837 and left the home roof, but his father still allowed him an annuity of £220 and also discharged his debts. His father's later full avowal to him of his youthful sins was the means of a reconciliation in May, 1838, when Soren learnt that his stern religious instruction was dictated by love to save him from the sensuality his father had succumbed to. It was then that he learned "from his father what father love is and thereby I got a conception of the divine father love, the one unshakable thing in life". This was for him a definite spiritual turning point, and he registered a humble prayer of thanksgiving for his "earthly father", who died a few months later.

A year previously Soren had fallen desperately in love with a young girl of fourteen, who was devotedly attached to him. Very soon, however, in a morbidly and selfishly inrospective fit of remorse for his previous moral lapse, he refused to marry "Regina", and in spite of her tears and entreaties, Soren insisted on separating, although he retained a strong, lasting affection for her till his death, and this "disappointed love" was the theme of many of his writings.

As an author he was most popular and his writings made a deep impression. His "Either/Or" in 1843, the mysterious work of a genius, created a great sensation and was translated into several languages. Soren was a prodigious worker and he impaired his health by overstudy and want of physical exercise. He was an old man at thirty five. In a little more than two years he published fourteen books, besides writing continuously a most extensive "Journal" from the age of twenty. "His considerable gifts of mind" were his only consolation of joy, but he was not insensible of his increasing reputation. In 1847 he wrote: "After my death not only my works but my life will be studied and studied." He made a good profit from his books, but his mode of life was extravagant and luxurious so that at last he was living on his capital on the verge of want.

His "Concept of Dread" in 1844 dealt with the dogmatic problem of "Original Sin" and was a deep psychological analysis of his own spiritual experience. He regarded fear or "dread" as the chief determinant of original sin, "All sin begins with fear", and he adds, "It was dread which caused me to go astray." "Dread is an attraction to what one fears" was his questionable assertion. "It is" he declares, "an alien power which lays hold of an individual and yet he cannot tear himself loose from it. What one fears also attracts one."

As a literary writer he could employ biting art and satire, and by his attack on an objectionable comic paper Kierkegaard incurred a long period of popular scorn and derision which he described as the "martyrdom of ridicule". Again in the last three years of his life he launched a bitter, satirical and extravagant attack on Christianity and the Danish Established Church, which did much harm to some of his oldest friends. His "Fatherland" in 1854 created consternation as Kierkegaard had always loyally supported Church and State, and several times was on the verge of ordination to a parish. In a series of widely circulated tracts he declared "official Christianity" to be "intellectually

ludicrous and indecent, a scandal in the Christian sense". The Church or "Christian garrison", was, he declared, "a peril because it falsely represented Christianity". "The Christianity of the New Testament is something infinitely high." "It is for all who will put up with everything and suffer everything."

Although a genius and a profound thinker and teacher Kierkegaard was certainly a compound of human imperfections and contradictions, which were in a large measure due to his abnormal upbringing and his delicate health. Mr. Lowrie declares that the Kierkegaard he loves is not "the dissolute and despairing youth, nor the returning prodigal, nor the unhappy lover, not the genius, but the frail man utterly unfitted to cope with the world, who nevertheless was able to confront the real danger of penury as well as the vain terrors his imagination conjured up. He said distinctly the definite thing he was bidden to say and died with a hallelujah on his lips" (p.209).

An Appendix gives us a list of over thirty of Kierkegaard's works translated into English, and this illuminating, analytical and instructive "Short life" of Walter Lowrie's should fulfil its main purpose to stimulate many thoughtful Christians to become acquainted not only with the philosophical and aesthetic, but especially with the profound and original religious writings of this remarkable Christian apologist.

THERE IS A TIDE.

By Mervyn Stockwood. George Allen and Unwin. 6/-.

This book is written by a young clergyman in the Diocese of Bristol. He dedicates his work to his Diocesan "with respect and affection". It would not have been written had it not been for Miss Peggy Cripps, daughter of Sir Stafford Cripps, M.P., with whom the author has co-operated in religious and political work. Miss Cripps wished for a reasoned presentation of the Christian faith. Mr. Stockwood decided to write a series of essays on the Creed. He writes as a Left Winger saying: "I detest capitalism and all its manifold ramifications, but I do not believe that a Labour Party, which has ignored Truth for fictitious platitudes, is capable of building a new England." He is a convinced Socialist. He has some hard words to say about the jubilant sermons which greeted Mr. Chamberlain's activities in Munich. "We applauded them not because we were concerned with the fate of Czecho-Slovakia, but because we presumed that the unscrupulous expediency of the Prime Minister and his accomplices had saved our skins." That may be Labour propaganda, but it is not truth. Nobody knew better than Mr. Chamberlain that we were not ready for war. He came back saying that the document he had signed meant "Peace in our time". He died a broken hearted man. But it was he and not Hitler who flew to Munich in order to try to save the world from the horrors of war. To compare him to Pilate is really ludicrous.

He is a high churchman but rejects transubstantiation. But what proof can he offer of his own theory of the Holy Communion: "When He was on this earth, His ego was associated with a body of flesh and blood; in the Sacrament it is associated with a body of bread and wine. What happens at the altar is that our egos come into communion with his ego, and the points of contact are, on our side, flesh and blood and, on his side, bread and wine." How does this explanation square with the original institution? He was then before them in His flesh and blood. But enough. We do not think that Evangelical Churchmen will find this book helpful.

A. W. PARSONS.

"LORD SHAFTESBURY."

By Florence Higham. S.C.M. Press. 6/-.

Those who read Mrs. Higham's earlier book, "Faith of our Fathers", will open this volume with an anticipation which will be matched by its realisation. Although this study is not a full-length biography, it is fuller than a short sketch. It is what it claims to be—"A Portrait." A portrait, however, must depict its subject with insight, truthfulness, sympathy, and that subtle quality which can reveal a character in its strength or its weakness. The portrait must also have a background which is related to the life and character of the sitter.

All these qualities are brought together in this portrait of one of the noblest Christian gentlemen of the nineteenth century. He is portrayed as a man of firm principles and earnest religious convictions, which were grounded upon the revelation of God in Christ and in Holy Scripture. Shaftesbury's burning passion was the betterment of his fellowmen who were suffering agonies under a

system dominated by the cruel principles of unbridled *Laissez-faire*. The background of the picture has been painted equally faithfully, and reveals a period, regarding certain aspects of which no Englishman can be proud. To us, it seems impossible that Shaftesbury should have had to fight so long and so doggedly to secure a decent standard of life for the workers of the land. The portrait of this devout, Christian humanitarian has been drawn with vivid strokes, striking colours, and dark shades, and readers will want to know more of the man's religious convictions which inspired his efforts for men. The background of his labours, sketched as vividly as is the personal portrait, will invite fuller investigation after the manner of Arthur Bryant's study of the industrial aspects of those years in his "Years of Victory" and "English Saga".

Satisfying as is the portrait, it must be said that a few criticisms of his religious background are not just. Shaftesbury was an evangelical of the evangelicals, and the company in which he found his inspiration is described as composed of "sound, if uncritical, members of the Church of England." (p.33); yet these are the very men who from a spiritual point of view turned the Church of England "upside down". It is said that "the Evangelical framework of his faith saddled Shaftesbury with a creed, less enlightened than that which his own life proclaimed" (p.96); and again, that "it would be idle to deny . . . that in many ways his Evangelical approach gave Shaftesbury a narrow vision" (p.94). If, however, the dictum of the New Testament is true, that a tree is known by its fruits, these observations need drastic revision, for the inspiration Shaftesbury gained for his humanitarian works was fostered in that movement which Overton declares was "the strongest force" in the Church of England throughout the first decades of the nineteenth century. If the book reaches a second edition, it is to be hoped that Mrs. Higham will endeavour to correct what we feel to be an unjust judgment. The "portrait," however, presents us with a pleasing picture of a great and good man.

E.H.

THE FRIENDSHIP OF CHRIST: A DEVOTIONAL STUDY.

By the Rev. Canon Charles Smyth. Longmans, 1945. 2/6.

This is an admirable book, not, apparently, intended for those who have no experience of Christ, but rather for the Christian who is anxious to enlarge his vision and to deepen his devotion to our Lord as a living Person.

The author has previously given us many historical studies of real value, and, in the book before us, he has made a wide exploration of the literature of many centuries dealing with the subject of friendship. References to and quotations from this literature are frequent in every chapter. Anyone who desires to follow the subject further, and who has access to a good library, will find the book an excellent guide. We do not think that the author exaggerates in the least degree when he claims "to be blazing a new trail." On the other hand we certainly do not agree with him when he describes his work as "crude, pedestrian, amateurish."

The first two chapters are taken up with an analysis of the quality of human friendship: that is, of friendship between man and man. The central portion of the book is most valuable, for it traces fully the Gospel teaching as to what is implied in the friendship of Christ with man and of man with Christ. The Friendships of Jesus with individuals are passed in careful review, and the treatment is always thorough and reverent. We note a fine passage in the concluding chapter—"In Christ is ultimate wisdom, final truth; in Him alone is the complete and perfect fulfilment of the intellectual quest: He holds, because He is, the answer to all my intellectual problems, and some day I shall fully know that answer when I behold Him face to face."

We thoroughly recommend this book as likely to enrich both mind and heart of the thoughtful reader.

D. TAYLOR WILSON.

IN OUR TONGUES.

Edited by J. P. Stevenson. S.P.C.K. 5/-.

Mr. Stevenson in his introduction to this book mentions two criticisms which are commonly made against the Church. One is that the language in which we present the Gospel is stilted and unreal, and unrelated to the world to-day. The other is the lack of a sense of wonder in our proclamation of the glorious news of the Gospel. Miss Dorothy Sayers has said in one of her books that it has been left to Christians to lay upon Jesus Christ "the reproach of insipidity".

The contributors to this volume can certainly not be accused of insipidity in their treatment of the great matters of religion. They are all men well versed in speaking to the man in the ranks, and they speak in a language that he can understand. The contributors include C. S. Lewis, Dr. G. F. McCleod, Dr. Welch, and Canon Cockin. Some of the addresses were delivered to men in the desert, some in Padre's Hours, some in broadcast talks. O.R.C.

THE BIRTH OF JUDAISM.

By Dorothy Batho, B.D., S.Th. National Society and S.P.C.K. 5/-.

Now that Scripture is to become a subject for instruction in all schools and for teachers' examinations, it is well that the Church should give time and thought to the writing of suitable text books.

The late Miss Dorothy Batho has produced a book which should be widely used for Old Testament instruction. Her work is not an Old Testament History, but it takes the relevant facts from it and weaves them into an excellent study of the origin of Judaism.

The Hebrews are placed in their right perspective amongst the nations of antiquity. Materially, they were a comparatively unimportant people. Spiritually, their influence on subsequent civilisation can scarcely be over-emphasised. The writer points out the difference between the way the Old Testament historians wrote their history and the modern method. In the former case, the writers interpreted events to show that God was over-ruling men and nations for His own purpose for man. Modern historians treat their subject objectively and connect events more externally.

The ability to see God's hand in the world of time differentiates the Old Testament prophets from secular historians. Thus the Old Testament gives a unique point of view which we can accept or reject, but the authoress shows that this point of view is eminently reasonable, and that the prophets were men, who being in close contact with God, received Divine illumination.

The book is well written, contains a good index and many maps. There is also a series of photogravures which add value to the work, e.g., the Tel-el-Amarna Tablet. Both teachers and students will find the book very valuable for examination purposes. It is neither too critical nor too factual.

G. G. DAWSON

"WILSON CARLILE, THE LAUGHING CAVALIER OF CHRIST."

By Sidney Dark. James Clarke and Co. 10/6.

Any book by Sidney Dark is bound to be interesting: this latest volume from his pen is not an exception. In this case, too, he had a subject which, itself, could hardly avoid being attractive. Yet, it is questionable whether Sidney Dark was quite the right person to be responsible for a life of the Founder and Chief of the Church Army. As Dean Matthews points out in the Foreword, the heart of Carlile's work, before and after he founded the Church Army, was his Evangelicalism; his biographer's sympathies do not run especially in that direction. Mr. Dark is himself conscious of another point in which their sympathies diverged: although Carlile did such excellent work in the realm of social reform—prisons, housing, etc.—he was insistent that nothing less than the conversion of the individual was the primary aim. A third and more general criticism of this volume is justified: too much of it is concerned with Sidney Dark's own opinions on various subjects.

Throughout the book are passages and statements to which the Evangelical will take exception or which he will query, and he will wonder why the author is so concerned to drag in Roman Catholics, saints, etc. Why, for example, does he, quite unnecessarily quote, on housing, Archbishop Griffin? Our own bishops have made equally decisive pronouncements. Why does he constantly drag in Roman Catholic saints for comparison with Carlile, whose sympathies were wide certainly, but not particularly in that direction? We think too that Carlile's "sacramentalism" is somewhat exaggerated. Oddly enough the passage quoted from Archbishop Laud's last will and testament could have been used by a definite Evangelical. But Laud is obviously one of Sidney Dark's heroes, though this hardly excuses the use of the well-worn plea that Laud died for the English Church. Competent historians would not endorse that. J.B.