

ineffable, but it seems likely that the two sciences will survive this latest attempt to abolish them.

L.B.

ALBERT SCHWEITZER. *An Anthology*. Edited by Charles R. Joy. (Black; 18s.)

This volume is an attempt to gather into manageable compass a selection of the more inspiring and significant passages from Albert Schweitzer's voluminous works. The story of his life, with its example of utter self-sacrifice for no other purpose than to be a Good Samaritan to the poorest and most suffering race of mankind, has fired the imagination of Western man. Few men of our age had before them so distinguished a career as this critic, theologian, philosopher, musician and teacher. But all had to be sacrificed that he might help the unfortunate. Christianity for him was a being in love; it implied suffering and dying with Christ.

In spite of his eschatological interpretation of the life of Christ, he seems to regard the essence of Christ's teaching as a combination of Ethics, Reason and Mysticism. 'The driving force of it all he calls life-affirmation, world-affirmation or reverence for life. We must love and reverence all life, even in its lowest forms. Life is sacred, whether it be bodily life or spiritual life. Freedom and personality are perfections of life, and the Christian must struggle to save them.

As we read this very excellent collection of passages, it is all impressive. We can sense the sincerity of the soul which inspires it, and begin to feel that we can realise something of the idealism which inspired his life. We must value highly those passages in which he insists on the too common tragedy of losing one's early idealism. 'If all of us could become what we were at fourteen, what a different place the world would be!'

Unfortunately, he is so won over by the principle that everything must give way to the affirmation of life in this world that he rejects the asceticism and self-restraint of the middle ages and early Christianity as life-negation and therefore a degeneration. Christianity seems at times to be for him identical with the advance of civilisation, since civilisation is the highest type of life. He does, however, recognise that there must be internal progress in the external institutions of civilisation. Though he often praises reason and the search for truth, he seems to place higher the mystical instinct which follows felt, but less understood, ethical ideals than cold thought and reason. In this way he interprets the Christian ideal of being *in* the world, but not *of* it.

Few of the passages chosen but will provoke thought. On the other hand, unfortunately there is nothing here of what a Catholic would regard as supernatural; there is an unsympathetic rejection of doctrinal religion; there is no after-life; and the whole gives the impression of pantheism. Which of course makes his life a mystery to us. Can we say that God in

his grace has moved him to genuine Christian charity, though something in the human soil of his upbringing prevented him from seeing the doctrinal truth of the full Christian message? Certainly we must be loath to explain such heroism as graceless.

H.F.D.

QUEEN VICTORIA AND HER PRIME MINISTERS. By Algernon Cecil. (Eyre and Spottiswoode; 25s.)

It was the custom of Carlyle to set on his writing table a portrait of the man he was describing: 'A practice', as Dean Inge remarked some twenty-five years ago, 'which would greatly diminish the output of literary impertinence.' If only for this reason Mr Cecil's book deserves our gratitude. His studies of More and of the foreign secretaries of nineteenth-century England, together with his book *A House in Bryanston Square*, had already put us in his debt, and this last book has more than confirmed our expectations. Written with grace, learning, and a skilful use of anecdote, it is tempered by a quality of reflection which is in the great tradition of English historical writing.

The book opens with a picture of the author's father, the younger brother of the Prime Minister, a soldier and, for twenty years, a member of Parliament. This serves as an introduction to the age, an introduction which effectively disposes of several dangerous half-truths which still prevent a proper comprehension of the Victorians. For instance, few will be inclined, after reading Mr Cecil's book, to believe that complacency and optimism were invariably characteristic of the Englishmen of that day. Lord Salisbury was, in fact, being very typically Victorian when he spoke of 'the essential cowardliness of optimism'. Lord Derby emerges, very properly, with a greatly enhanced reputation. It is interesting to find that he remained unimpressed by Disraeli's mischievous nonsense about the Two Nations. In spite of the title, there is less of the Queen in the book than might have been expected; and yet, on second thoughts, this preserves the proper perspective. For, as Mr Cecil points out, Queen Victoria consciously and skilfully bridged the transition which began when the prime ministers of England were still, in the traditional sense, the ministers of the Crown, and which concluded when they had become in reality, the tribunes of the people; and it is not the least of the great achievements of the English monarchy that the two concepts have not proved contradictory but rather correlative. It was part of the same achievement to mirror the tastes and the family virtues of the nineteenth-century middle class and at the same time to be every inch a Queen who could 'sit beside an Empress (and that Empress one of the loveliest women in Europe) and make Eugénie, as was said, seem a parvenue'. 'I remember', writes Mr Cecil, 'a well qualified eye-witness telling me how much it had amused him to watch Lytton Strachey's face falling as, at the request