

the aridities of our own learned men. And such works are not written in Latin.

DANIEL A. CALLUS, O.P.

### HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY.

PROVIDENCE AND HISTORY. By J. V. L. Casserley. (Signposts, No. 11. Dacre Press; 1s.)

This excellent little book is a credit to the series, of which it is the eleventh, produced by members of the Anglican Church under the title of Signposts. It strives to give some indication of what a Christian should make of the history of mankind. It is granted that Christianity cannot teach us new facts of human history, but in as much as it tells of three facts which transcend history—the Creation, the Incarnation and the End of the World—it can teach much about the interpretation of history. ‘Apart from it the visible phenomena of history can certainly be seen, *but not understood*; accurately recorded, but not comprehended or interpreted.’ The presence of the Church of Christ in the world and its real temporal mission are repeatedly insisted on, but ‘the active presence within history of a Reality which transcends history is not a theme with whose fulness the historian as such is equipped to deal.’ Materialistic, fatalistic and cyclic interpretations of history are recounted and disposed of, and those modern aberrations conveniently included under the term ‘fascism’ are castigated. The author issues one warning which is full of salutary truth: ‘It is not the function of the Gospel to stabilise the West. The Gospel could stabilise the West, and please God it shall, but only a West which turns to the Gospel selflessly and loves it for itself alone.’ One might be inclined to quarrel with some of the paradoxes on page 63, but not without running the risk of appearing captious. Altogether it is really an admirable little book and very well worth reading. It is sure to do much good.

N.P.B.

RUSSIA, a Penguin Special. By Bernard Pares. (Penguin Books, pp. 256; 6d.)

It is not easy to compress the thousand years of Russia’s history into a slender book of some 250 pages, yet Professor Pares has achieved this with a measure of success and given a general outline of the political and social life of Russia throughout the centuries. Naturally the book is not infallible, and some inaccuracies are surprising in view of the writer’s knowledge of the country. Thus, as an instance, to say (p. 73) that ‘all was happy and confident’ under the reign of Czar Alexis troubled by

ceaseless warfare, the disaster of the great schism within the Church and the bloody rising of Razin and his cossacs, is scarcely correct, whilst the 'encouragement and help of the Soviets' for the *zemstvo* councils of self-government (p. 82) actually consisted in their immediate suppression by this Government! These, and a few other inaccuracies, possibly due to hasty writing, and the idle gossip of St. Petersburg's salons and newspaper offices naïvely accepted as 'history,' somewhat detract from the book's value as a reliable work, and this is regrettable, for certainly it does possess merits.

The historical rôle Russia played as Europe's bulwark against the invasions of sundry Asiatic hordes is well presented, as are also the general character of the country and its peoples' qualities and shortcomings. The same praise must be given to the chapters dealing with the years immediately preceding the last war and the war itself. The heavy sacrifices borne by Russia in 1914-17 and through the ensuing revolution make poignant reading and are dealt with by the writer with praiseworthy impartiality.

The Civil War, the part played by Lenin throughout the periods of militant Communism and the N.E.P. are also pictured without any bias; the great famine of 1920-21 is shown in its true light as the result of pitiless requisitioning of foodstuffs in the villages by armed force. We regret that, mentioning foreign relief, the author passes in silence the important Papal Relief Mission, though he speaks of the Quakers'. The second great famine, a direct result of Stalin's Collectivization, is also correctly judged as having cost the country some five million lives; but, whilst discussing the Collectivization itself, the writer fails to stress the economic stupidity of this measure and the abominable brutality with which it was carried out. An admirer of Stolypin's great land reform, the beneficial results of which he witnessed personally, Sir Bernard knows that the destruction of millions of individual farms has spelt ruin to the principal industry of the country for many years to come, yet he avoids saying this directly; he seems to have as a thesis the vindication of Stalinism as the development of Russia's national policy. Under a superficial veneer of Communism Professor Pares imagines he detects old Russia, and it is in the light of this illusion that he interprets all subsequent events. It is amazing, and once more witnesses to Moscow's cleverness, that even a man with so extensive a knowledge of old Russia and her language could have been hoodwinked so as to swallow propaganda wholesale, see what he was intended to see, and accept the show-places as representing the standard of Soviet 'culture' all over the country!

The writer has an implicit faith in Stalin's slogan of 'Socialism

in one country' and that his foreign policy is guided only by Russia's genuine interests. Though the description of events from the outbreak of the present war to this day is correct and the Red Dictator's words that 'revolution is not for export' are rightly reported, nevertheless the assumption that the tactics of Lenin and Trotzky to promote world revolution will not be repeated is wrong — witness the happenings in China, Spain, France, etc. The final plea that knowledge and understanding of Russia are essential for those who direct this country's policy is acceptable, subject to the reservation that Stalin is *not* Russia, and that, if British policy does not take this into account, it may have a rude awakening some day and realise it had been backing the wrong horse.

G. BENNIGSEN.

THE SCOT WHO WAS A FRENCHMAN. Being the Life of John Stewart, Duke of Albany, in Scotland, France and Italy. By Marie W. Stuart. (Hodge; 12s. 6d.)

The rôle of Regent is seldom either an easy or an enviable one. This is especially true when the country to be ruled is recovering from a major military disaster, in which the King and the flower of his nobility have been killed. It was to Scotland stricken by the tragedy of Flodden, when 'The Flowers of the Forest were a' wede away,' that John Stewart, Duke of Albany, was called to act as Regent for his cousin, the infant James V. Scotland was in too disturbed a state to be ruled by the Queen-Mother, the capricious and amorous sister of the victor of Flodden: the kingdom needed the firm rule of a man.

John Stewart, Duke of Albany, who had never been in Scotland, for his father, Alexander, had long been exiled after his treasonable conduct towards his brother, James III, was yet next in succession to the throne of Scotland after the posthumously-born Duke of Ross. It was natural that the Scottish Council should ask him to come and rule Scotland as Regent. 'Albany, however, was reluctant to leave France, which he loved, and to face that unknown land which had always proved so perilous to his family.' Jehan, as he preferred to be called, was entirely French in speech and manners, so that it is not surprising that he was unwilling to exchange the cultivated life at the court of François I for the uncertainties of a poor and faction-ridden kingdom. At last the persistent appeals of the Scottish Council broke down his resistance, and Jehan left France to become 'Lord Governor of Scotland.' There was great rejoicing at his coming and, after a magnificent ceremony of installation as Regent, Albany began firmly that work