Book Reviews

THE BETRAYAL OF CHRIST BY THE CHURCHES

By J. Middleton Murry. (Andrew Dakers). 5s. net.

At the same time there came to hand Sir Robert Vansittart's *Black Record,* and this book from the pen of Mr. Middleton Murry. That both can be published and read side by side is a striking tribute to the freedom of expression permitted to writers and thinkers even at a time when the nation is engaged in a life-and-death struggle against a bitter and unscrupulous foe. The one holds the essentially barbaric nature of the German race to be the *fons et origo* of the European upheaval. Mr. Middleton Murry in the other book appears to lay the blame for the present war catastrophe mainly upon our own country, and upon the failure of the Christian Church to control and influence the political and international situation, and of Christians generally to be true to their discipleship of Christ.

Mr. Middleton Murry is regarded by many as a prophet of our times. His ability, courage and sincerity at once arrest and challenge the attention, and his longing to see the spirit of Christ prevail in all human affairs stirs the sympathy. No more than many others does he find faith easy. It is " an unending, though intermittent, struggle against a profound doubt," yet he knows that " doubt and despair were overcome, once for all, in the death of Christ upon the Cross." He reckons himself, " in a modest way," a Christian, though he neither believes in the Church, nor believes as the Church believes.

He has at least this mark of a prophet—he does not prophesy smooth things. He is impatient, and impatience is only rarely a wise guide. He is a lover of paradox, and unless it be carefully used, paradox can distort as well as express truth. He proceeds to make a slashing attack upon the Christian Church and its leaders in this land, and upon organized Christianity as a whole. He finds them terribly wanting in this supreme hour of crisis. " The common man," he says, has by them " been intolerably let down."

Where shall we look for proof of this ? We are asked to consider Lord Halifax as a representative Christian statesman ; and arguing from a single action over twenty years ago, and from his Oxford speech with its " monstrous conclusion," Mr. Middleton Murry arrives at the astonishing results that " the origins of contemporary German youth are to be sought in Lord Halifax's own past ; their spiritual progenitor is Major Edward Wood, M.P., of the Yorkshire Dragoons," and concludes that all Christian Statesmen have failed. Ecclesiastical leadership is in no better plight. An address of the late Bishop of Ely to his Clergy is made typical of the subservience of the whole Church of England to the dictates of the State. A brief analysis of the general condition of Western Christendom to-day, in which the Protestant position is scarcely treated with justice, leads to the confident and reiterated assertion that the Spirit of Christ has left His Church, and the spirit of nationalism has entered in. " This

surrender of the Christian Church to the rising powers of nationalism is the major betrayal of Christ" (p. 92). So, "the Christian Church has betrayed man utterly" (p. 150).

The relation between Church and State is, and always has been, very difficult to settle and to define. That it has produced many scandals, and much spiritual tragedy, no student of history would deny. We know that the Church has often failed and given way to temptation to gain wealth and power. But it has had, too, its spiritual triumphs, and its Christian influence has been at work unceasingly, and in its darkest hours, in the leavening of Society and the building up of the faith of its individual members. There is a great deal to be said for the relationship with the State that characterizes the Established Church in our country. It by no means implies that the Church is the tool and servant of the State, or that it has so degenerated that the Spirit of Christ has left it and the spirit of nationalism possessed it instead. It does imply that the Church has an unique opportunity of influencing the nation, and of ensuring the supremacy of Christian standards in its life and laws, whilst it throws back upon its leaders and members the supreme responsibility of keeping ever alight the flame of personal faith, and undimmed the vision of the worldwide Church of its Master.

All the Churches of Christendom, which in the opinion of Mr. Middleton Murry have thus betrayed their Lord, are doomed now to perish, so it seems to him. He looks forward tentatively and gropingly to "a new Christianity." He becomes suddenly aware at the end of his book that "thus to generalize about the Christian Church is manifestly unjust to thousands of devoted souls within it." He sees the opportunity and the need to-day. "Never perhaps in history has there been a greater accumulation of religious potentiality, of religious responsiveness to the tragedy of a vast human situation, than is now pent up in the heart of mankind" (p. 189). He thinks the obstacle between the common man and Christ is the Christian Church. He sees clearly it would be "a disaster for mankind if ever there were established a new universal Christian Church of which the Head was believed to have in his keeping the Keys of a Heaven and Hell in whose reality men believed. With such absolute authority no man is, or ever will be, fit to be trusted" (p. 69).

We are one with him in much that he writes. We, too, long to hear Christ speaking to our modern need, saving our modern world, though unlike Mr. Middleton Murry, we think it matters everything "whether he be, or be not, God." We, too, long for a Church purified and strengthened for its gigantic task, standing for the things of Christ amid all the conflicting elements of modern life. He is surely right in saying that only as the Church has the vision and the courage to follow the pattern of its Master will men turn to it again. We know also, and Mr. Middleton Murry may perhaps for his own help and inspiration yet discover, that the Spirit of Christ has not forsaken His Church on earth, and that in its fellowship the words of Christ, which he quotes so touchingly, are being constantly fulfilled. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." We do not think "the small communities of pacifists

now being formed by the compulsion of circumstances to work on the land " are the only nucleus of the new form of the Christian Church. This will consist of those Churches and their members that are now turning afresh to Christ in their " fiery trial," and are renewing their Evangelical life and fervour, and that, however imperfectly, have yet the true marks of discipleship in their work and witness. There is not enough Christianity in the Churches, but there is a great deal more than the writer of this challenging book thinks.

S. NOWELL-ROSTRON.

EUROPE'S APPRENTICESHIP :

A Survey of Mediæval Latin with Examples.

By G. G. Coulton, pp. xi. + 288. (Nelson & Sons.) 8s. 6d. net.

It is always a pleasure to review any work by Dr. Coulton, for everything that he writes is not only well worth reading but is stamped with the hall-mark of exact scholarship. To the many books with which he has enriched historical learning must now be added one more on a subject with which he is peculiarly capable of dealing. It is now many years since he delighted us with the way in which in case after case he caught the much " boosted " Cardinal Gasquet tripping over his Latinity—blunders which in spite of Dr. Coulton's exposures, were reprinted in subsequent editions ! So much then for Roman Catholic historical scholarship, never a strong point of that Communion.

Dr. Coulton now deals definitely with mediæval Latin in a charming study in which he exposes the old and popular fallacy that Latin was well understood by every educated person in the Middle Ages. It is the kind of generalization which is very easy to make and takes a lot of trouble to expose. But it is not the first popular fallacy to be destroyed by the devastating criticism of one who knows the facts and can substantiate, by documentary evidence of unimpeachable worth, every one of his contentions. But the process by which popular superstitions become well-established truisms by means of constant but uncritical repetition, even by those who should know better, must be extremely irritating to a scholar with so trained a mind as Dr. Coulton's. Hence he finds no difficulty in demonstrating by many examples that the contention that Latin was the *lingua franca* of the Middle Ages in Europe requires very serious modification. Naturally the Clergy would be expected to be better equipped in this respect than the laity, but unless the laity were better equipped than many of the clergy quoted by Dr. Coulton that contention must have been of a very limited character. For interesting examples of all this the reader must consult Dr. Coulton's book for himself. One aspect of the volume worth notice is the manner in which quite incidentally Dr. Coulton throws much light on what might be termed side issues. One of these has reference to the preservation of the Classics which, awkward as it may be for the champions of the old view of mediæval Latin, owed their survival in a comparatively exact and uncorrupted form to the ignorance of those clerical scribes whose Latinity was not sufficient to enable them to understand what they were copying. Much that the volume contains will be familiar to

those who are well acquainted with the author's larger works, but even so it is useful to have the evidence brought together into so compact a form; and some of his discussions, such as that on the well-known phrase *major et sanior pars* are peculiarly illuminating.

The third section of the book, however, marks quite a new departure for Dr. Coulton. Hitherto, what might almost be called his "source books" have consisted of translations without the originals. Now Dr. Coulton has given us an Anthology of mediæval Latin, small in extent but most useful to students. These extracts are taken from such varied sources as the Roman Missal, Augustine, Ambrose, Giraldus Cambrensis, Gregory of Tours, Matthew Paris, and many others, not forgetting the chatty and informative Salimbene. And they are accompanied by translations in an adjoining column. Hence it is easy to see that once more Dr. Coulton has laid us under a debt of gratitude for a most interesting and instructive volume.

C. J. O.

THE FAITH OF GOD.

By Andrew Glendinning, M.A. (*Allenson & Co., Ltd.*) 5*s.*

"Three hundred millions of Europe's population have reverted to paganism. That is the outstanding fact of the modern world." The Preface goes on to add that this book is written "to show that the theological background of the Church's teaching is responsible for the debacle." No one can read these pages and not admire the virility the minister of the parish of Broughton, Peebles-shire, puts into his Barthian thesis. There are points to be made and our author can make them. "To lie in bed on Sunday and listen to the wireless is *ipso facto* a sacramental act. So why should the Church complain when its instruction in divine immanence and the sacramental theory of nature is so literally carried out." This Barthian manifesto is expounded in such chapters as "The Religious Situation," "The Supreme Question," "The Christian Life," "Unconscious Goodness," "Christian Experience," "Authority in Natural Religion," "Authority in Revealed Religion," "Christian Freedom," and "The Wider Providence," and throughout the author never loses touch with the grim realities of the modern world.

While we are innocent of even any desire to defend the all too immanentist tendencies of the theology of the recent past—and liberalism as such has been increasingly out-moded by the tempo of the modern world—at the same time we are entirely unconvinced that so violent a swing of the pendulum as Barthianism has the quality of permanence. The robust Evangelical note in our Anglican theological tradition reminds us that there is no ultimate contradiction between the "kergma" (message) of New Testament Revelation and the full, free, exercise of the ever-questing spirit of man. One happy result of the Barthian reaction has been to give the Supernatural that place in religion from which it has been too slickly dismissed. We need a theological theology as well as a philosophical theology, but in these days of political reaction we dare not add the theological reaction which denies the opening verses of the Gospel of St. John.

A. B. L.

HONEST RELIGION

By John Oman, D.D., F.B.A. (*Cambridge University Press.*) *7s. 6d.*

Dr. John Oman, formerly Professor of Theology in Westminster College, Cambridge, was a great gift of God to the Christian Church. As might be expected from a Presbyterian divine of such sapient originality his conclusions are of the utmost importance to the cause of modern Evangelical Theology. No theological thinker in modern times has built with more consistency or with profounder insight upon the major premise of all Evangelical thought that man's response to God is primarily a personal response and that " reverence, freedom and sincerity " are not only ultimate categories for religious experience but also for theological thought. With a scholar of such penetration there was little popular appeal. It is therefore a happy chance that this posthumous work, based as it is on various addresses, approaches the integral massiveness of Oman's theology by the relatively easy and practical approach of *Honest Religion.*

From an acute analysis of " The Situation " to-day we pass to chapters on " Finalities," " Prophetic Revelation," " Inspiration and Criticism," " The Father," " Faith and Freedom," " Jesus and the Kingdom," " Salvation by Faith," " Power to Forgive Sins," " The Fellowship of the Spirit," " Wisdom and Understanding," " The Catholic Faith and the Confessions," " The Church and the Churches," " Outward Freedom." It is difficult to do justice by a book of this scope but we can best illustrate its spirit by the following quotation :

" Theology should be systematic thinking, not to force everything into a system, but to set forth in order the relations as well as the significance of our highest intuitions. For this, Jesus is the ultimate authority because the truth is so manifested in Him that it needs no other appeal, and not because we should set Him among outward authorities, even if it were over them."

At a time when Anglican theology is swinging between the non-committal liberalism of the Doctrinal Report and the austere intellectualism of modern Thomism, this small work is of real significance. " All Oman's distinctive teaching is here," and an Introduction by the Rev. Frank Ballard and a Memoir of the author by the Rev. George Alexander and Dr. H. H. Farmer do much to enhance that commendation. Not everyone will agree with its contentions. Though less than two hundred pages it is in its own way a seminal work and worthy of the author of " Grace and Personality " and " The Natural and the Supernatural." It should not be missed.

A. B. L.

CITIZEN AND CHURCHMAN.

By William Temple (*Archbishop of York*). (*Eyre & Spottiswoode.*) *3s. 6d.*

This is the Archbishop of York's Lent Book for the present year. There is, however, no reason why it should be regarded as a book which is only suitable for Lenten reading. The matters of which it

treats are vital to the whole of Christian life and more especially to that vast and important part of it which concern the Christian in his relations with the State. As is well known the Archbishop does not subscribe to the slogan so popular in certain quarters: "Win the World War and build the New World afterwards." He has put forth an amazing amount of creative thought in this and in other books, lectures and sermons. His knowledge is profound and this is noticeable in the present volume. On the very first page many readers will ask: "Who is Bodin and what did he say about the Church?" Others may recall that Hobbes, who is also casually mentioned on the same page, insisted on the subordination of the Church to the State. The Archbishop knows these things and assumes that we all know them. There are times when a great intellect must condescend to the less gifted. We are not enamoured of "notes" in a book but we think this book would be greatly improved for the average Churchman if some explanations had been added. There is an admirable summary at the end of Chapter I, on "The Medieval Experiment." The book deals with the inevitable problem of the State and the Church, their close relationship and interlocking and their meaning for the Christian who is citizen as well as Churchman. Canon A. E. Baker has contributed a valuable Appendix, containing questions for Group Study which will make it possible for study circles to discuss the book in about five weekly gatherings. The Archbishop believes that for the Christian, human personality has a status, worth, and dignity quite independent of the State, and superior to that of the State itself, but that the right of the State over the Christian is limited only by his conscience and his obligation to live in the spirit of fellowship with God. It is not possible to divide human interests into two categories—the material and the spiritual—and to assign the former to the State, the latter to the Church. He draws attention to four main theories which have been held concerning the relation of the Church to the Kingdom of God, and his last chapter in which he discusses the contrasted yet related functions of Church and State may prove to be the most helpful and informing to many readers. This book is a worthy successor to Dr. A. D. Lindsay's book, *The Two Moralities*, which he wrote as the Archbishop's Lenten Book last year. It should be read eagerly by the clergy and by all Churchmen.

A. W. PARSONS.

THE WEAPONS OF A CHRISTIAN

By Bernard Clements. (*S.C.M.*). 1*s.* 3*d. net.*

These twelve Broadcast Talks are models of what such talks should be. They are happily phrased, aptly illustrated, and pointed with brevity and directness. They contain simple teaching designed to catch the ear, to hold the attention, and to edify. We cannot endorse everything that is said (e.g. about sacraments) but matters of doubt are dealt with in a way which shows restraint and understanding. We are sure that much practical good must come from these messages.

H. D.

MAN ON HIS NATURE

By Sir Charles Sherrington, O.M.. (*Cambridge University Press.*) 21s.

Theology has often been accused—and in our judgment rightly—of an aloof ignorance of science, though we hasten to add that such a relationship is reciprocal! Be this as it may, we are now without excuse or pretext if we do not know something at first hand—and the latter qualification is crucial—of the modern biologist's philosophy of Nature and of Man. Let us say at once that the book which gives us this is a notable one, as delightful to read for its scientific interest as for its literary grace and one that must have a place in the library of those who know the adequacy of the Christian faith to front the challenge of modern thought and science. It is no hazard of prophecy to say that it will long be regarded as a classic in its own field of survey.

It is interesting to find another Gifford Lecturer underlining—as Professor John Laird did so incisively on philosophical grounds in his Gifford Lectures "Theism and Cosmology"—the limitations of Natural Religion. It is worth while to quote the words:

"If religion has to stir the world, let alone to stir man to conflict with the world, the appeal to a Deity which is personal can go far to harness for its purposes the whole dynamism of the psyche. It is equivalent to establishing a 'value' which for its followers resumes all other 'values.' But this source of emotional strength Natural Religion is without, for it sublimes personal Deity to Deity wholly impersonal. In a manner the *Theos* of Aristotle is that which it re-approaches."

This clear recognition by a noted philosopher and a distinguished scientist of the limitations of the candle light of reason should do something to clear away that woolliness of mind which so far from recognizing the distinction between religious experience and theology, is not yet able to distinguish between theology and science or theology and philosophy!

His scientific temper leads Sir Arthur Sherrington—following closely the trend of Hume's *Dialogues on Natural Religion*—to criticize teleology on the ground of such facts as the plasmordium of malaria and the tubercle bacillus. "True, life is the supreme blessing of the planet; none the less it is also the planet's crowning curse." At the same time he gives us solid ground for his prophecy that 'predaceous man' should neither be man's final destiny as it need not be Nature's last word." "It would seem that *homo præadorius* is in a backwater unreached by the tide which set in some millennia since. The great revealed religions bringing their altruism are evidence of that new tide. It may be that the reason why the tide of altruism set in, was as a step toward a re-ordering of life upon the planet. The ascendancy of *homo præadorius* would spell ruin to man's prosperous leadership here. And man must lead or go."

It is difficult to do justice by the timeliness of this book for modern apologetics, we have clearly indicated that it is no present for Dr. Goebbels!

A. B. L.