

among the Jews: the tension between Jewish universalism and Jewish nationalism.

Mr. Wood's theory in *The Prophetic Interpretation of History* concludes that there is a moral law evident in history, though contemporary judgment of morality may be narrow. The historian needs moral standards and judgments because morality is a factor in history and because he needs a criterion for his own judgments of history. This chapter includes an excellent summary and critique of Lord Acton's views of Butterfield's *The Whig Interpretation of History*.

The general defect of the book is that it leaves one wondering what precisely the Christian Interpretation of History is. The Christian theory of History is an integral part of the Christian Revelation, and this revelation is essentially an historic one. It is based on the solemn *berith* or covenant of God with Abraham and his descendants at a specific point in time. The fulfilment of this covenant was the Birth, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. Israel was the instrument of God's Redemption of mankind. The Crucifixion is the core of Christianity. *There* is the reality of God's marriage with man.

The Christian views History as the process of acceptance or rejection of this "New Life" in the world. Every action, every decision, has therefore an eternal significance. Eternity has entered into time. It is the drama of the struggle between the Kingdom of God and the world; the great events and persons in history are the instruments of God. Finally, the purpose of history is the completion of Christ's work, the final incorporation of the human race in Christ and offered through Christ to God. This is the specific Christian Interpretation of History. Mr. Wood has failed to observe this, or rather has confused it with the ordinary Providence of God in the world.

P. W. SINGLETON.

CHRISTLICHE EXISTENZ. By Erich Przywara, S.J. (Jacob Hegner, Leipzig; RM. 4.50.)

Fr. Przywara is likely to remain little known in England: English readers unused to philosophical German might well be so frightened by his style as to despair of understanding him. Those who have seen only his contribution to the *Monument to St. Augustine* may have received the same impression from the look of Mr. Watkin's translation; that piece of work seems to us to deserve all praise, but it serves to illustrate the difficulty of making Fr. Przywara accessible to an English public. For *Christliche Existenz* is a piece of Catholic Apologetic published at a popular price, and yet the whole construction both of thought and expression would need altering in order to bring its ideas

REVIEWS

within the grasp of any public an English publisher would care to cater for.

Now this is a pity, for the appeal is really much wider: to anyone who can delight in suggestions that illuminate without always convincing, whose heart is not set at rest by slick intellectual syntheses, anyone who has found this life not entirely satisfactory, who is not hardened with the veneer of self-sufficiency. Yet at first sight the book might seem to be written only for those with some background of technical philosophizing. To illustrate the impossibility of attempting any detailed summary, it may suffice to say that he uses his conception of Existence as the sobering thought that must hold man back from blasphemous and diabolical idealisms, and give him the right attitude towards God: but that this existence is a dark nothingness, a *doppelt Nichtshafte*, twice nothing sticking out from a past just gone but gone, waiting in suspense for a future that is only perhaps to come.

The Germans, he maintains, have always been conscious of this darkness, the soil on which our feet are set; they have soared, but only to crash against the bars of the cage; they have striven for the universality implied in the concrete nothingness ever present to them, for an ideal which is not the sterile abstract universal of Latin *Zivilisation* but the all-comprehensive whole towards which, consciously or unconsciously, vigorous *Kultur* must tend. He points to the Church as corresponding to the all-comprehensive *Reich* of German striving, and to the Kenosis as the explanation of this fleeting existence, God descending to our nothingness that we may be filled with the fulness of Christ.

QUENTIN JOHNSTON, O.P.

PETER AND VERONICA GROWING UP. By Margaret Beech. (Herbert Jenkins; 2/6.)

"Margaret Beech" is the pen name of one who deserves well of children and of their parents for her successful essays in attractive education. But she has never before, perhaps, attempted anything quite so difficult as her present task of discussing, in quasi-story form, the psychological problems of life from the point of view of the adolescent. Her courageous effort, nevertheless, proves remarkably successful. The many parents and others who made the acquaintance of *Peter and Veronica* in their earlier days, will be well advised to renew that acquaintance now that these two delightful and typical children have reached the age of (usually) unasked questions about life and its meaning. A knowledgeable and understanding uncle provides a natural approach to these questions and his answers provide both delightful and thoughtful reading. The material is very cleverly interwoven