

life of sacrifice and supernatural love of God and neighbour. By refusing to deal with the specifically Christian effect of the Church on society, the Archbishop makes his denial of compulsion to enforce even this L.C.M. of human order a very doubtful contribution to future reconstruction. Surely we must use force to prevent a man from throwing himself under a train, even though we do not make the best use of our own lives. But that Dr. Temple has a far deeper idea of the relation of Christianity to the Social Order is seen in his other works. Thus in a small pamphlet on 'The Apostolate of the Laity,' written for the Christian Workers' Union, he insists that 'the work of the Church is the impact of the spirit of Christ upon the world.' Indeed, the Y.C.W. for Catholics and now this C.W.U. for Anglicans are excellent examples of the further implications of Christianity in the Social Order, and we would recommend readers to turn to such movements as these, in order to complete the picture, after concluding this excellent Penguin Special.

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

IDEALS AND ILLUSIONS. By L. Susan Stebbing. (Watts; 8s. 6d.)

An eminent authority on the theory of logic here shows that she has the art of it as well. Professor Stebbing bids us pause and look at our thoughts in the present welter of ideologies and catchwords. If we cannot be complete, at least we can be definite, discovering what we want above all and thinking it out steadily.

Though she indicates some of the principles of the good life, the place of conscience and the meaning of democracy, more useful perhaps is her success in dissipating two patches of cloud: one, grey about us, the idea that political morality is impracticable; the other, fleecy white on a mountain top, the idea that morality only has its force from a world to come.

Her logic is firm, but never ill-humoured, in exposing how thoughtless we are with the plain tommy of words and meanings. The moral philosophy on which she bases herself is like that of St. Thomas in being keyed in with the natural and philosophical sciences, though his wider certitudes are not referred to.

*Idealist* is often taken to mean one who would have politics influenced by considerations of morality, while a *realist* is one who limits himself to exploiting his opportunity. This is the first muddled contrast to be disposed of. In fact, the present exponents of so-called *power politics* seem to have a more clearly defined ideal and morality than do those who oppose them.

For having professed a lofty but rootless theory the moralists are themselves to blame when they are dismissed as utopian by the admirers of realist politicians. But they have counter-attacked and stress the utopianism of those who set hopes of happiness in this world. The future favours them. But Professor Stebbing is unfavourable.

What confusion there is when in contrast with *spiritual* the following words are used, often as equivalents: *natural, worldly, carnal, material, temporal*. Add *lay*, and the mischief is complete. Holding that moral good should not be cut away from other goods, she criticises the identification of spiritual values with other-worldly values, and their being set in opposition to this-worldly values, which are considered as purely material.

It must be admitted that a long tradition in religious literature talks as though ultimate good were hereafter (is not that, when you look at it, an insociable idea?) and preaches a totalitarianism in which moral good extinguishes every other good, sin every other evil. The spiritual writer should extol the heroism of St. Peter Claver labouring to save souls in the slave-trade, but not that he made no effort to stop the vile business.

R.N.

NOSTRADAMUS, OR THE FUTURE FORETOLD. By James Laver. (Collins; 12s. 6d.)

The diseased egotism of dictators is said to be susceptible to the flattery of soothsayers. The star-peddlers of to-day find on the whole, however, that whilst there is a wide private market for horoscopes, the best field remains the Sunday newspapers. Here astrologers who have never studied the stars, and seers who have only seen the editor, too often display the future in detail to their own profit, the policy of the proprietors, and anything but the public good. In the sixteenth century it was more profitable to practise to royalty, and the stars concerned themselves almost exclusively with court intrigue. There was no court fuller of mystical mountebanks than that of Catherine de Medicis, who had a retinue of astrologers, necromancers and off-colour characters who combined the goetic arts with straightforward poisoning. Of the predictors, the most famous was certainly Nostradamus. This man was born in 1503 at St. Remy, and was of Jewish descent. He studied mathematics, philosophy, and medicine. He was no doubt as capable a physician as the resources of the time permitted, and he gained a high reputation for combatting the plague, as well as by retailing love philtres, face-creams, quince jelly and prophetic almanacks. In 1535 he published the first edition of the *Centuries*—stanzas of versical predictions in a French which was mixed with Latin and the dialect of the Languedoc. Many of his contemporaries, and most orthodox literary historians, have thought them hopeless nonsense. Nostradamus certainly won a considerable fame, however, especially when one of the stanzas was interpreted as foretelling the death of Henry II in 1559. The seer himself died in 1566.

Generations of scholarly cranks—usually ultra-legitimist French royalists—have interpreted the *Centuries*, and have naturally discovered plenty of instances where the extremely obscure little tags