

more clearly what this is doing in this context), to the Fathers and Creeds, to the traditions of the Eastern churches, to the Ecumenical Councils, to Christian iconography and its place in theology, and to the methods and aims of systematic theology. Experts may occasionally shiver at the somewhat cavalier and assured way in which some moot points are treated; they should however remember that the book is not for them (though few among them could not learn much from it), and that thoroughness and precision of detail, especially on difficult and delicate points still under discussion, are neither possible nor desirable in a work of 'initiation'. But even the beginner and the general reader should perhaps be warned that not all the book's assertions are of equal certainty, nor impervious to revision on further study and reflection. The tables include a Chronology from Abraham to the present day. (It even includes Elizabeth II of England, but the effect is somewhat spoilt by the fact that Her Majesty and her immediate predecessors are all included in the 'Maison de Hanovre'.)

The work starts in earnest with the second volume, which covers the subject-matter, and follows the order, of the First Part of St Thomas's *Summa Theologica*; Volumes III and IV will correspond to the Second and Third Parts of the *Summa*. We can have nothing but praise for the manner and method with which the various authors (mostly, but not entirely, Dominican) have approached their task. Again, we might query some points of detail. Perhaps not all the contributions are of quite equal merit. But the authors have succeeded in knitting their several contributions into an organic unity, and each presents his material with a refreshing straightforwardness.

Elementary though the work is, and is intended to be, it witnesses to a genuine theological renaissance in our time, for which the professional no less than the amateur theologian should be truly grateful.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

RELIGION AND THE DECLINE OF CAPITALISM. The Holland Lectures for 1949. By V. A. Demant. (Faber and Faber; 12s. 6d.)

As its name implies, Dr Demant's volume of Holland Lectures forms a kind of sequel to the now-famous first lectures in this series, R. H. Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, published originally in 1926. Tawney dealt, in terms which caused no little controversy at the time, with the social, economic and religious changes through which, by the peak of the Industrial Revolution, economic life as a whole had escaped from the control of the social and ethical sanctions formerly ruling it, and had attained its own autonomous standards, by which all things

worked together for good even to those who did not love God.

It is in this sense that Dr Demant uses the word capitalism, and he takes as starting point what he has named the great reversal. Economic activity is no longer autonomous, working by the beneficent processes of its own nature; it is once again very much under the control of social and political sanctions. These lectures are an attempt to assess the effect of this reversal. The economic autonomy of *laissez faire* has been, in Christian estimation, inimical to human living. It has dehumanised men because it separated man, as a person, from his own labour, treating it in isolation as a marketable commodity. The result was the creation of economic man, a unit to be dealt with, not in the context of human relationships, but as material for the operation of economic law. Will the great reversal, the return of economic life to social control, restore to industrial man his place as a person in society, of which the capitalist régime had robbed him?

Unfortunately 'what the decline of capitalism is making for is not what the rise of capitalism made away from'. Dr Demant subjects this complex and tangled situation to a close and acute analysis. He shows that the period of economic autonomy was a unique interlude in human history and that it owed its success to a unique conjunction of circumstances favouring its development. Moreover it was able to draw for that success upon character and virtues which were the product of Christian living in the pre-capitalist age. The circumstances have passed and the impact of autonomous economic life has largely disintegrated the character and virtue which existed before it and contributed to its success.

Something more is necessary than social arrangement and political management to secure in the future that our economic life shall subserve human needs in a truly human way. There was much that was true in Liberalism, and many of the values it fought for will survive, but its cardinal heresy was belief in man's self-perfectibility. An attitude of mind must be recreated which will give practical recognition to the fact that man is not self-sufficient and that he can only find full self-realisation in obedience to God's law—the law of love which is revealed in Christ.

In a short review it is not possible to illustrate the skill of Dr Demant's analysis or to give an adequate idea of the variety of the ground he covers in carrying it out. He is never dogmatic, his conclusions are often tentative, nor is he *simpliste*. His lectures leave the conviction that there is a key to these complexities and self-entanglements of human living; the key is theology applied. The book makes unexpectedly difficult reading, perhaps because the style has a cumbrousness in print which may not have appeared in the spoken word.

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