

it. But the chief characteristic of the historical process is not that it confers on its participants a status, but precisely that it is a process which is also a progress—towards a goal. For those who seek after the meaning of history no impersonal formula or law of activity displayed in the succession of events ought to suffice. Historical fact, whether isolated or in a body, cannot completely explain itself, and to attempt to find some explanation without going outside of and beyond history can be neither a successful nor a properly metaphysical procedure. For the Christian this meaning is to be found in the struggle against and victory over death, that is to say the Redemption, effected by Jesus Christ and worked out and brought to fruition in his Mystical Body. The Church on earth, though set to work within the limits of history, is not confined to them any more than was her Head during his earthly life. The second part of the book deals with the historical person of Christ and his redemptive work, considering him as the central point of history and the permanent basis which alone gives meaning to the historical flux. Third comes an examination of the two types of Hero and Saint, the former but a shadow of the latter, foreshadowing him indeed, but himself overshadowed by the *umbra mortis*; struggling, though, to realize his potentialities for sanctity—striving towards God. At the close is an inspiring message for a civilization which manifestly feels the weight of years and the nearness of death, whose youth is disgustingly attempting to return by dubious paths to the unattainable state of innocence. “Der Welt, die unter dem Falle steht, *ist immer alt.*” But with the hours of darkness on Calvary, when Christ was old and near to death, old as the sins of mankind and its bondage to death from the opening to the close of history, “das ‘Alte’ ist vergangen: der ‘alte’ Mensch. Eine heilige Jugend bricht auf—Reben vom Weinstock Christi.”

The light of Dr. Bauhofer's thorough knowledge and wise use of Holy Scripture, and the truly philosophic understanding which he shows of many subjects, may tend to be obscured for English readers by the exuberant repetitions and circumlocutions which play so large a part in his explanatory passages. But Das Geheimnis der Zeiten, the book like the fact, is worthy to be pondered.

H. C. THOMAS.

DESIGN FOR TRANSITION. By Joseph Thorpe. (Jonathan Cape; 3/6.)

A small but, in many ways, valuable book, it should be read by those who can only think of politics in terms of slogans, mass movements and appeals for “broad united fronts” against other broad and united fronts. Mr. Thorpe points out persuasively and with reason that the solution of many of the social problems

of the present day is to be sought in co-operative effort on a regional basis rather than in so-called reforms imposed from above by a group of politicians and technical experts called, generally by way of euphemism, "The State." The author makes a useful attack on our present deplorable habit of "thinking in cartoons" and maintains—for which our best thanks are due to him—that "politics like charity should begin at home." Chapters II and III are valuable.

The great defect of the book is that the author believes that "the essential revolution is over." As those Catholics who have read *Quadragesimo Anno* know, it is in reality only just beginning, and in England even that can scarcely be said as yet. Mr. Thorpe does not appear to realize that, as society is to-day organized in this country, the excellent activities of himself and his friends will only be allowed in comparatively unessential matters. Let him once get down to his co-operative regional politics and he will be surprised at the well-organized and almost insuperable opposition with which he will be met. He sees that those standards of decency, of local responsibility and freedom are to-day increasingly menaced by the state. But he does not realize that this new servile state, which he rightly dislikes, is the inevitable counterpart of the contemporary economic structure of society which is in its turn firmly based on a thoroughly vicious social philosophy. And it will take a great deal more than countryside wardens and litter clubs to settle the matter.

Lastly, it is instructive to compare this book with a book of the same size from Ireland, *Economics for Ourselves* by An Gobàn Saor (Talbot Press).

T. CHARLES-EDWARDS.

MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL. By T. S. Eliot. (Faber & Faber; 5/-.)

As a play, this seems to me a success. The sense of expectancy and foreboding given by the first chorus and kept as an undertone afterwards, the contrasts of character and motive in the actors, the vividness of particular scenes, are admirably achieved; there is the psychological treatment which a modern expects—for instance in the episode of the four tempters—but it is economical, and does not disturb the general swiftness of movement or the directness of the whole. I think the finest thing in the play is the opening of the second part, where three priests enter with banners of St. Stephen, St. John and the Holy Innocents and recall the feast and introit of each in turn; then pause to ask:

To-day, what is to-day? For the day is half-gone . . .

before the entrance of the four knights. This is so dramatic a use of liturgical material that one is surprised to see the Archbishop's Christmas sermon lose something of its relevance by the use in