

implicit in the whole approach. In his indictment of mechanistic materialism and of social injustice and other present evils, the author is often in far closer accord with Catholic teaching than might have been expected, and there is much in the whole presentation that is both interesting and stimulating.

ROSALIND MURRAY

RELIGION IN THE POST-WAR WORLD. Vol. I: Religion and our Divided Denominations. Edited by Willard L. Sperry. (Harvard University Press; Cumberlege; 8s. 6d.)

There was recently reviewed in BLACKFRIARS Dean Sperry's survey of American religion. That was specifically undertaken in order to explain American religion to ourselves. This is now being followed by a series which analyses the state of American religion for Americans. It makes somewhat sad reading. For while it concerns the denominational divisions which have gone to such extremes in the United States, it reveals that these denominations, with one exception, are deeply divided each within itself: that exception, of course, is the Catholic Church. Although the other writers are all more or less concerned about the denominational differences between one another, and within themselves, and are seeking for closer union, they are obviously shy and critical of Catholic unity. Yet here are statistics to be considered: the churches which are not only disunited from one another, but are in considerable disunion within themselves, number thirty-eight-and-a-half millions, and these numbers are divided into 243 denominations! The Church which is at unity with itself numbers twenty-three millions: now the largest united religious body in the States. The point is that the largest church is a united church: in short, *is a Church*. There is a lingering feeling observable, however, that Catholic unity is purchased at too great a price, while there is also felt to be something spiritually healthy about 'proliferous Protestantism,' for while it has gone to extremes, it is to be resolved by a kind of federal unity, which will really leave things pretty much as they are; only, none of those united Churches will exclude any other from their recognition, while greater forbearance will prevent them splitting up again over dogmas, ceremonies or social and racial distinctions.

The book is slight but suggestive. It has been compelled to group together only four constituent aggregates for examination. Dean Sperry, however, writes the introduction. He seems here to lament that, among other disadvantages of the denominational cleavages, they make it impossible to present a compact front against national religious decline, or to make a united impression on national government. These divided denominations have no *locus standi* in the thoroughly disestablished basis of the national constitution, which is frankly secular. It almost seems as if Dean Sperry would favour an establishment of some kind, at least for the purpose of bringing reli-

gion and government into some kind of unity. That is, however, impossible with so many denominations to consider, while American opinion would certainly be opposed to anything like the establishment principle; it is that which is feared as the one possible outcome of the threatened phenomenal growth of the Catholic ascendancy in America.

Professor McNeill speaks for the Protestants, and his article is largely concerned with showing what has been done towards reuniting Protestantism, which is now being more actively pursued in what is called 'The ecumenical movement.' It is acknowledged that this movement may owe considerably to the threat of religious decline and irreligious opposition, as well as to the weakening of some of the denominations, and perhaps a little, though it is not openly confessed, to the increase of Catholicism.

It is valuable as well as necessary that the two other contributors represent Judaism and Humanism. For the Jews are a considerable body in the States; but here also there are sad revelations of division and 'the impression of incredible confusion'. Professor Finkelstein reveals that not only are there three divisions in American Judaism, for 'Conservative' is now to be added to 'Orthodox' and 'Reformed', but that these cannot act together, save for philanthropic purposes, while all of them, taken together as embracing all believing and practising Jews, cannot, save for purely occasional and nominal acknowledgement, represent anything but a fraction of the Jews in the United States. Moreover, while retaining the Messianic idea, it now amounts to no more than the belief that Judaism will contribute largely to the religion of the future; 'Judaism is not a missionary religion and seeks no converts'. This marks a significant drop in hope, and that due to a drop in faith, and that is what they are all suffering from, Protestants and Jews, whereas Catholics believe that they may win all believers, and thus the world.

It was wise to include Humanism, for that has been one of the latest developments of American religion. It is not a Church, it is not a system; indeed it is revealed that Humanists are not agreed amongst themselves as to what Humanism means. Assistant Secretary of State Archibald MacLeish has been, however, selected to expound it. There is no confessed opposition to religion, save perhaps in the enumeration of the ills Humanism would cure, which are listed as, of course, 'dogma and superstition', but also 'bigotry and puritanism and jesuitry and vulgarity and Victorianism and the complacency of the bourgeois mind'. Is it politeness (or what?) that spells jesuitism with a small letter when Victorianism gets a capital? But what MacLeish does take Humanism to stand for is not just vague and idealised humanity, but the recognition of men as they are, with the 'characteristic perfection' of man, and he desires to obtain for man his rightful dignity, a due place in the universe and the right treatment of all men as men by their fellows. One would have thought it better to start off with man's characteristic imperfection, and then see what can be done about it. But if man is simply born

of the universe (and goodness knows how he was conceived) there is really no place guaranteed for him in such a universe. He may try to master it for his own ends; but his only ends will be to end himself, or, as now seems likely, to end the world itself. Humanism gives man a poor look out; it provides no origins or cause, and no end worthy of what man conceives himself to be. Only Christianity gives him any and all of these.

Father John LaFarge, editor of *America*, a Jesuit well known for his inter-racial work and honoured for his wide-hearted sympathies tries to explain that Catholic unity is not something imposed by merely human authority. It grows out of the Unity of the Godhead; it expresses the Mission of the one Christ; and allows for all the diversity that anyone really needs. It might have helped further if Father LaFarge had stressed even more that the whole of Catholic machinery, doctrinal, ecclesiastical, and sacramental, is to keep open and make possible for all mankind, *union with God*. It would also be more impressive if Catholics could show more concern for, and actual expression of, the real social unity that should flow from agreement in doctrine and order. But the article is written with the writer's characteristic meekness and humility; and that at any rate is an advertisement that the Catholic Church does produce, if not often enough, the very likeness of Christ, who is the Head of the Body.

W. E. ORCHARD.

SEX, LIFE AND FAITH, by Rom Landau. (Faber; 21s.)

Mr Landau's 'Modern Philosophy of Sex' is largely the fruit of his experience in being 'continually asked to help people in solving their particular problems', and he certainly reveals a lively sympathy for the sexual maladjustments of his correspondents. He is 'neither a doctor nor clergyman', and his conclusions are scarcely likely to be acceptable to either category, since he shows little regard for scientific investigation on the one hand or for the objective criteria of the moral law on the other.

There are serious misunderstandings in Mr Landau's treatment of Christian morality. 'In the eyes of Paul—and of the Church—evil and sex are practically identical.' Again, 'How fatuous it is to speak of moral standards and duties as though they had a general validity comparable to that of scientific laws'. While one may sympathise with many of his strictures against barbaric legislation as a remedy for sexual deviations, the reader is bewildered by a sentimental approach to the whole subject which by-passes the sanctions on which Christian morality depends. It is not enough to complain of the 'failure' of the 'Churches' and to substitute for their standards a vague 'religion of the spirit'. The virtue of religion is, in Christian tradition, a moral virtue. Mr Landau's bibliography shows serious gaps in the section called, 'The Christian Approach'. He might have found some relevant material in the works of von Hildebrand,