

for men who must have felt themselves just as threatened by forces every whit as overwhelming.'

We return then to the proven path of inward communion with God, to contemplation which overflows into action. There only is man's true liberty won. 'When God,' says Winstanley, 'sets you free from your bondage, you shall find the Spirit in you, and in the midst of these national hurly-burlys, though you lack riches and food and clothes and even the communion of good people, you can rest quiet in God.'

There is much one might criticise in this lecture. Catholics will find gaps in the theology and will distrust a social philosophy in which an undefined 'equality' is treated as a good in itself (justice is the fundamental thing, implying the rightness of certain kinds of equality and the wrongness of others). But it would be impossible to close this notice in any controversial tone. Integrity, humility, spirituality are deeply impressed on the book, and the reader's dominant feeling must be of admiration.

WALTER SHEWRING.

CHRISTIANITY, POLITICS AND POWER. By Gerhard Leibholz. (Christian News-Letter Books, No. 15; Sheldon Press; 1s. 6d.)

The Church can and must concern itself with politics; it cannot to-day (as it could in former ages) withdraw itself from the world without signing its own death-warrant; modern pagan totalitarianism is the climax of a process of secularisation which started at the Renaissance—an attempt to fulfil collectively what the individual is unable to accomplish; therefore 'the present crisis cannot be overcome by the attainment of purely political aims,' 'the issue is a deeper one': there is left 'only the alternative of Christianity or paganism, of Christian renewal of political life or nihilism.' There are signs which indicate that the hope of a new Christendom (solving, *inter alia*, the problem of planning *v.* freedom) is not unfounded:—the world's need of unity and a philosophy of life, the fact that Christianity can speak with authority, the Church's ability to meet her challengers because of her full acquaintance with 'the reality of matter and evil in life' and her realist readiness to work with non-Christians who pursue similar objectives (though, alas, one wonders whether this last contention is not too optimistic). An immense multiple task waits; education, social justice, international order, and behind these a reformation in the life of the Church itself—'in the end all depends on whether the Churches take on the revolutionary character of which we have spoken'—beginning with confession of guilt and ending by bridging the gap which separates her from the world to-day and becoming again 'a truly living force capable of realising her totalitarian political claims and of creating the political ethos which God demands from the political order.'¹ Thus the au-

thor's argument. It is a pity that the style and manner are not on the same level as the matter.

G.V.

THE PATH TO RECONSTRUCTION. A brief introduction to Albert Schweitzer's philosophy of civilisation. By Mrs. Charles E. B. Russell. (A. and C. Black; 3s. 6d.)

Mrs. Russell has set herself to give ordinary people some idea of the life and teaching of Albert Schweitzer. She herself worked with him in Africa, and is therefore particularly qualified to speak of one of the most remarkable men alive to-day. She writes with understandable enthusiasm, and though she modestly disclaims any competence in philosophy, comparison with her sources will show that the work has been well done. Perhaps the outstanding quality in Schweitzer is courage: courage to translate conviction into action at whatever cost, courage to face with scrupulous honesty the full implications of the truth as he sees it. The truth as he sees it is bleak, and the philosophic basis for reconstruction which he offers is inevitably disappointing to those who see differently. But his respect for personality, his stress on the necessity of thought, his diagnosis of the ills of our civilisation, show striking agreement with the thought of men of widely differing theological schools. The chapter in this book called 'The Decline of Civilisation' would by itself make its publication worth while. There is that unhappily rare accompaniment to a popular book, a good bibliography, and three photographs taken by the author.

A. E. H. SWINSTEAD.

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS.

DEAR SIR,—There is a deal of difference between the gift of compunction, for which Miss Graef appeals, and the vice of self-centredness, which Miss Underhill condemns.

Yours, etc.,

GERARD MEATH, O.P.