

There is, of course, much more to the book than that—there are chapters on the nature of the Church, on the development of doctrine, on the nature of infallibility and so on. By reason of their brevity these chapters are little more than summaries of the essential Catholic position (the important point of the infallibility of the *Church* might have been examined more fully), and many of those who do not accept that position will perhaps remain unconvinced. I lent this book to a Baptist minister who in fact remained unconvinced by the exposition, but he did note the spirit of Christian love in which the book had been written, and this spirit makes an impression. A spirit of pride or contempt, a lack of love, never attracts—this is a lesson we all of us have to learn more profoundly. Dom Columba's book is one of the signs that consciousness of this need is abroad and growing. Such signs are undoubtedly most heartening for the future.

E.M.J.

GOD THE UNKNOWN AND OTHER ESSAYS. By Victor White, O.P., S.T.M. (Harvill Press; 18s.)

I have read this book twice, the second time with greater pleasure and admiration than the first. All the topics treated are interesting in themselves and most pertinent to the relations between Catholic and contemporary thought, whether the latter be non-Catholic Christian, Evangelical and Greek, or Hindu. The book, however, is important perhaps as much for the spirit in which it is written as for what is actually said—though so many good things are said that one despairs of doing justice to Father White's penetration and balance in a review necessarily so short.

The book is divided into three parts: God and Our Knowledge of Him; The Incarnation, Atonement and Grace; The Church and Her Relations with Non-Catholics. The titles of the essays, if merely read in the table of contents, might suggest a collection of occasional essays; but there is an underlying unity of approach which makes the book one real whole. This unity derives largely from Father White's different illustrations of the need of delicacy and balance in theological expression.

The first part of the book has five essays: 'The Theologian's Task', 'The Unknown God', 'Talk about God', 'Prelude to the Five Ways', and 'The Platonic Tradition in St Thomas'; the first four in substance face the difficulty: 'If we cannot know what God is, as we cannot, how can any reasoning establish that God exists?' To give Father White's satisfactory answer, drawn from St Thomas, would deprive readers of the book of the pleasure of following as neatly argued a bit of interpretation of St Thomas as they are apt to find anywhere. The last essay

in this section shows that St Thomas was more platonic than is often imagined.

The next five essays are 'Incarnation and Incarnations', a study of Hindu conceptions of 'incarnation'; 'The Atonement', a fairly full and topically documented account of St Thomas; 'The Word of God and Natural Law', a concrete illustration of 'grace perfecting nature'; 'The Concept of Justice in St Thomas', again illustrating from another point of view the relations of nature and supernature; 'Western and Eastern Theology of Nature and Grace', a commendation of Western developments to our Eastern Orthodox brethren.

The last three essays deal with the 'ecumenical' question: 'The Meaning of the Church Unity Octave', 'Membership of the Church', and 'The Background to Papal Infallibility'. On these subjects Father White is 'eirenic' in the best sense, able to enter into others' points of view with understanding and sympathy, without disguising differences or slurring over obstacles.

A true piety runs through the whole book, that kind of piety which gives the service of the mind to God without chilling the heart. Here and there one might question an assertion or two, for instance, Father White's account of Apollinaris and of St Anselm; but it is characteristic of the spirit of the book that everywhere Father White succeeds in enlisting the desire to agree with him. A book to recommend to libraries and to give as a most acceptable present, perhaps especially to priests.

BERNARD LEEMING, S.J.



## NOTICE

We are glad to welcome *Tertiary Annals*, the revived Third Order Periodical designed to keep Tertiaries in touch with the Order. There will be six issues a year. Subscription 4s., post free. Single copies 6d., plus postage. Editor: Mr B. J. Downey, 8 Lyndhurst Avenue, N.W.7, to whom orders should be sent.