BLACKFRIARS

BOOK SUPPLEMENT

AUTUMN READING.

THE FOURTH GOSPEL IN THE EARLY CHURCH. Its origin and Influence on Christian Theology up to Irenaeus. By J. N. Sanders. (Cambridge University Press, 7s. 6d.)

This very interesting study was designed as a contribution to the problem of determining what part the New Testament played in controlling the development of early Christian Theology. The author has limited himself to the influence of the Fourth Gospel, and by showing the extent to which this gospel was employed by the writers of the first two centuries, he doubtless intended to provide his readers with some unexpected discoveries. Unfortunately, he does not fulfil his promise: for in the concluding chapter where we might expect a summary of his findings, based on the texts he has examined in the body of the book, he disclaims any intention of giving "an explicit answer to the questions propounded in the introduction." Instead, he confines his remarks to the question of the authorship of the gospel. He is led to this action by the paucity of quotations from the Fourth Gospel, which, according to his theory, can only be explained by supposing that in the early Church, few except heretics, accepted the Fourth Gospel as canonical. The first people to quote the gospel as the work of an apostle were the Gnostics of Alexandria, whilst orthodox theologians such as Ignatius, Justin and Athenagoras, fought shy of it. When Irenaeus employed it later on and attributed it to John the Apostle, he only did so "for apologetic reasons," and it was only by his insistence that Rome and the Universal Church accepted it as canonical. Hence, the gospel seems to derive from some unknown writer of Alexandria, possibly acquainted with the Beloved Disciple (who was *not* Saint John) and writing in the language of the Proto-Gnostic theosophy.

To reach these conclusions, the author has constructed an astonishing number of hypotheses, based for the most part on mere possibilities and probabilities, few of which he could hope to have granted. For instance: "that Polycarp should quote I John is to be expected *if* he was a disciple of John the Presbyter, and *if* the Presbyter wrote the Epistles": "the beloved disciple *might be* Lazarus": "*if* the Bezan text is original etc." There

are also not a few inconsistencies which he seems to have overlooked and several facts that he appears to have forgotten. Harnack says, for instance, that Marcion already found the four canonical gospels on his arrival in Rome in A.D. 138. Tatian's Diatesseron presupposes their existence and their acceptance both in East and West. Montanus and his prophetesses already considered the fourth Gospel as scripture long before the time of Irenaeus. It is therefore neither probable nor possible that he should have induced all these people to accept the gospel as the work of Saint John. And in any case, how could Irenaeus be so absolutely positive about the origin and exegesis of the gospel, if up till that time it had not been received in the West?

As can be seen, this study is extremely interesting: but there are gaps in the reasoning and the hypotheses are too numerous.

HUGH TALBOT, O.CIST.

COMMUNION IN THE MESSIAH. Studies in the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. By Lev Gillett. (Lutterworth Press, 12s. 6d.)

St Paul wishes the Romans (Rom. xi) not to be ignorant of the mystery of the blindness of Israel: for it is a blindness that has happened in part to them till the fulness of the Gentiles should come in. Blinded for a time, the Jews may yet be grafted into the olive tree which is Christ, if they abide not still in unbelief. The majority of Christians appear to have forgotten this warning of St Paul against contempt for the Jews at a very early date and, though there have been noble exceptions, the general attitude has been one of intolerance and antagonism. Especially is this true of the Middle Ages in Europe, when Christian thinkers were so captivated by the strength, logic and lucidity of Greek philosophical thought, that they had little sympathy for the theological approach of the Jews. It is Fr Gillett's contention that the "mission to the Jews" should now make way for a "dialogue" between Jews and Christians, for during the centuries which have elapsed since the writing of the Old Testament, the Jews have developed a deeply spiritual theology on subjects common to our two faiths. The conversion of the Jews would be helped considerably if Christians first became familiar with this element of Jewish thought, and Christianity itself would be enriched by the contact.

Fr Gillet's approach to Jewish thought is deep and suggestive, and he raises many important problems in his discussion of such subjects as the influence of Jewish liturgy on the formation of the synoptic gospels, the Shekinah and the Incarnation, the Torah as a foreshadowing of the Logos doctrine in St John.

If Christians wish to bring the Jews to the crown of their own faith, they, too, must be aware of the Jewish grounding of Christianity. *Communion in the Messiah* is valuable to the Christian who is conscious of the need of this Jewish background to his religion: valuable, perhaps, rather as a compilation than as a source book. It is doubtful whether it will have equal value to the Jew who wants to understand Christianity, for Fr Gillet compromises the Christian position to a considerable extent in his desire to make the Jewish convert feel "at home." He apparently considers (p. 206) the possibility of a Jewish synagogue becoming Christian and yet refusing to be baptized. The convert Jew would seem also to be granted the right, by Fr Gillet, to decide whether or no he wanted the Sacraments and specifically Christian worship (p. 208) and would have free choice of Quakerism or the Episcopalian, Protestant or Catholic Church.

The Jews one generally meets are logical and clear-headed, and the Christianity that is to convert them will not be a weak and divided religion that is afraid of making up its own mind. True Christianity must shew its sympathy and respect for the Judaism which is its mother, but at the same time it must be, on all the main issues, both dogmatic and uncompromising.

VALENTINE WOOD, O.P.

THE LIVING GOD. By John Marsh.

CONGREGATIONALISM AND THE CHURCH CATHOLIC. By Nathaniel Micklem. (The Independent Press, 2s. each.)

The theme of the first of these books is the reality of God in the facts of history; the manifest and continuous protection given to the Jewish people in Old Testament times, the unfathomable generosity of the Incarnation, the intimate and effective causality of God in every human soul. We are urged to learn of God not only from what he has done, but from what he has said of himself. The approach is that of deep faith, made vivid by an extensive knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures. This very attachment to the Word of God makes the author a little impatient of human expositions of doctrine, as for instance, when he appears to set up a parellel between the human nature shared by a multiplicity of individuals and the one divine nature possessed fully and equally by each Person of the Trinity. And his distinction between proof and the production of evidence, taken together with his distrust of first principles, vitiates any attempt to defend the reasonableness of his faith. The book will be valuable only to those who already believe, but they will welcome such a definite and vigorous exposition of fundamental truth.

Dr Micklem's book will also be welcomed as an expression of the same deeply scriptural faith, and of the sincere desire of the author to understand the design of Christ for his Church. But it is also a saddening book, in that it makes catholicity something much more elusive, more remote from the clear promises of the Gospels as from the ordinary requirements of human nature, than the communion of all nations in Christ.

Yet the attitude of mind displayed is admirable. The author will have no compromise, no attempt to water down the Gospel to meet the weaknesses of our times. We have to return to the great primitive truths, humbly and in a spirit of penance:

"It would be better to say sorrowfully that we can no longer accept and believe the old supernatural Gospel of man's salvation by the Incarnation and Passion and Resurrection of the Son of God than dishonestly claim a place in Congregationalism while we offer to men an emasculated, thin and watery substitute for the Church's faith. . . We are called first to repentance in our churches, and that not primarily for the duties we have left undone but for our half belief in the Gospel we profess. Our supreme need is religious; it is for a more wondering faith, a more adoring love to God."

Christ is all in all, holding the universal Church in the spirit of unity, and extending his presence to the local church, which possesses all the signs of catholicity:

"But always the Church is not a mere aggregate of individuals who create it by joining together; it is Christ who created it and sustains it. The great Church catholic is prior to the local church which is but an out-cropping, as it were, of the Church of all climes and ages. As the local church, being the Body of Christ in that place, must act as a whole, so the great Church, consisting of all congregations, must also be able to act as one."

This is well said. The fundamental weakness of the Congregationalist position first becomes clear when the attempt is made to explain how the independent local church is truly catholic, and what is the spiritual bond which unites it to the Church "of all climes and ages." Dr Micklem quotes approvingly the definition of Mr D. T. Jenkins, to indicate how the local church is catholic:

"Where a church possesses Scriptures, Proclamation, the Sacraments, the Apostolic ministry and the Church meeting, it is equipped—under God—for God's service, for manifesting Jesus Christ to the world and walking in His Way, and no body can be more truly or more fully the Church than it. For it is these which are the marks of catholicity, and it through them alone that catholicity can be mediated."

This reads very much like the view of St Augustine's opponent: *Acutum autem aliquid tibi videris dicere, cum Catholicæ nomen non ex totius orbis communione interpretaris, sed ex observatione præceptorum omnium divinorum, atque omnium Sacramentorum.* Which, logically, means that the Congregationalists, like the Rogatists, are the only true Catholics! We cannot refrain from echoing, in all charity, St Augustine's brief comment: *Da veniam, non credimus.*

Dr Micklem does not shrink from applying private judgment throughout, sometimes without even the appearance of basing it on the Scriptures. "Popes themselves have embraced heresies." (But who is to judge of heresy, if each local church is supreme?) He admires other denominations, but he adds, frankly, "We like our own ways best." (With the same logic the sinner remains in his abandonment, though he admits the attractiveness of virtue in others.)

Worst of all, this local church, whatever its characteristics, is not, in fact, united to the Church universal. And the reason is that the Catholic Church does not yet exist! "Is Christ divided?" asked St Paul. Dr Micklem does not hesitate to answer "Yes,": "We yearn for full unity in charity and truth with all the scattered, divided Body of Christ." Christ's prayer remains still unfulfilled, the Church is not a unity: "The unity of the Church will only come as Christians, forgetting their own prejudices, learn to suffer and to pray with Christ." Once again, we sadly recall the poem of St Augustine:

Venite, fratres, si vultis ut inseramini in vite.
Dolor est cum vos videmus præcisos ita jacere.

There is a Church clear and conspicuous to all, a city set upon a hill, in which Christ reigns from sea to sea, *a flumine usque ad terminos orbis terræ.* Within that Church there are many, including the reviewer, who will wish to rouse in themselves the prayerful spirit, the desire to know the will of God and the deep love of his written word which characterises Dr Micklem's book; but all will agree that there is one simple test of catholicity, namely, communion with the whole world: *Securis judicat orbis terrarum.*

EDWARD QUINN.

THE POLITICS OF THE UNPOLITICAL. By Herbert Read. (Routledge, 7s. 6d.)

These essays on art and society constitute the most interesting book Mr Read has yet given us; their range is wide, their insight is keen, their criticism is often devastating. They are difficult to summarise or to assess clearly because the lines of thought pursued seem to intersect and part again without final unifica-

tion. In discussing such work one naturally tends to stress one's objections and disappointments, but it remains more useful and more important work than much which attains consistency on a lower level of thought.

In the matter of art Mr Read has moved far from his early positions and in many ways has approached closely to the teaching of Eric Gill. "Art as a separate profession is merely a consequence of culture as a separate entity. . . It is this horrible distinction between art and ordinary things, between artists and ordinary men, which is the mark or symptom of the disease of our civilization. When we have put that civilization to rights, we shall be less conscious of our culture but we shall have more of it . . . An epoch of art becomes possible only when workmen are not concerned to make things beautifully, are not *told* to make things beautifully, but do so just because they don't know any *worse*." This thesis is well developed in many places, more particularly in the long essay, *To Hell With Culture*, which was published separately a year or two ago.

In his treatment of social problems Mr Read is at his best when he takes existing political forms and theories and subjects them to merciless analysis—analysis which must be about equally displeasing to typical partisans of the Left, to moderate Democrats, and to crusted Conservatives. Russian totalitarianism is as trenchantly disposed of as "proletarian art"; Democrats are reminded that Nazi Germany is in many ways more thoroughly democratic than England or the United States; while nothing that might be called conservative is allowed a moment's foothold. In short. Mr Read is in the very unusual position of judging all present governments by precisely the same standards; his politics are truly those of the unpolitical—"of those who have always striven, whatever their race or condition, for human values and not for national or sectional interests."

Among inconsistencies one first observes what appear to be survivals of highbrow "art-nonsense" ill at ease in the "normal theory" of art. This is noticeable in some references to poetic genius and in the disproportionate attention given to "abstract" and Surrealist art. Mr Read himself seems conscious of this, and attempts some justification of himself without great success. In particular one mistrusts his defence of Surrealism as discrediting the "bourgeois ideology" by its breaking down of conventional standards of reality; much the same might be said of conjurers, dope-peddlers, and the professional sophists of our ancient Universities.

Secondly, there is the whole question of "mystical equality," complete freedom from government, otherwise "anarchy," which

is proposed as foundation for the "natural society" of the future. Mr Read sees so clearly the fallacies besetting the word "democracy" that one hesitates to attribute blindness to him over the word "equality," but much of his writing upon this point seems surprisingly ingenuous. It is one thing to defend the human person against encroachment by governments; it is another to deny the idea of government, rule or superiority in all political, social and human relations. If one admits the notion of hierarchy at all, one cannot avoid social implications, and in many things Mr Read does admit a hierarchy. He says we must put "first things first"; he considers some kinds of art and artists more important than others; further (and this is one of his troubles). he gives precedence to instinct and sensibility over intellect, to psychology over philosophy. All this means subordination as well as co-ordination, and one cannot conceive of any organic thing where the one exists without the other. Moreover, if human dignity and self-sufficiency is offended by being in any sense ruled or controlled by others, it should equally be offended by being obliged to others for services—of whatever kind; a society cannot be at the same time functional and anarchical. Mr Read reduces his position to an absurdity when he protests against the assumption by teachers of the "significant" title of *masters*, and asks that they should abandon "leadership" to become "guides and comrades." But if leaders are bad, why should guides be good? Why not abolish professional teachers altogether (their function implies superior knowledge) and let teaching of children be simply done by the children and for the children?

Finally, Mr Read's bright hopes for a "natural society" of the future seem scarcely reconcilable with his view of the present on the one hand and his view of permissible influence on the other. We have, as it is, a civilization which is almost wholly impotent and vulgar; someone might lead us out of it, but the only tolerable species of leadership is one which does not *impress* the group by assertion of authority but *expresses* the group by being susceptible to its existing thoughts, feelings and desires. A blind alley isn't it? WALTER SHEWRING.

THE PEOPLE OF ARISTOPHANES; a Sociology of old Attic Comedy. By Victor Ehrenberg. (Blackwell, 25s.)

During the last ten years the concept of history has been growing increasingly more wide in the majority of English Universities. It is a tendency apparent in lecture lists and in examination papers and in the attempt to co-ordinate the work of Faculties. Partly, at least, this may be attributed to the stimulus provided by the influx of continental scholars since the

first victory of the National-Socialist régime. The present study of Dr Ehrenberg, now a lecturer at Durham University and once Professor of Ancient History at Prague, marks a new stage in the process with the coming of a new technique. For in it he deals with the changing social structure of Periclean Athens in relation to Attic Comedy; literary sources are used as historical evidence, fresh historical evidence is used to illustrate the literary sources and at the end he has completed a chapter in the history of a culture.

Precisely because it deals with one of the most lastingly significant phases in the development of an European civilization, his work has an interest for many who are only indirectly concerned with the Greek classics. He treats in turn of the social divisions in Attica, the conceptions of the Family and of Property, of Religion, of Education, and of the relationship of the individual to the State. The close-packed details of his careful scholarship will be found to have replaced much current and facile generalization. In particular his treatment of Athenian morality is refreshingly well-balanced. In this, as in so much else, the tension of the ideals between upper class and middle class Athens recurs like a motif. The central problem that still remains is the extent to which that upper class was an aristocracy. It is a problem to which Dr Ehrenberg migh have given a still more detailed treatment. The evidence seems, at first, to be conflicting. For, as the oligarchic revolution of 411 shows, membership of the upper class was based on property qualification rather than descent; but it implied the acceptance of social standards and of ideals in personal relationship essentially aristocratic in their source. The *Kaloikagathoi* of the close of the century seem the conscious representatives though seldom the descendants of the aristocrats of ninety years before. It might be possible to draw a parallel with the ruling class in Victorian England. In some measure the *hetairia* and drinking parties may, like the great Victorian schools, have helped to preserve a continuity in social custom and preconception in an essentially fluid social structure.

Inevitably there are points to be amplified, and the conclusions reached have an occasional naiveté; "We may infer from Comedy that a good son tried to make his father's old age easy and pleasant" (W. 738ff). But the volume is the result of years of specialised research and is the work of a scholar of recognised distinction, yet it remains throughout lucidly clear in all its phrasing.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

THE BLACK PRINCE. An historical pageant. By John Cammidge. (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 18s.)

"Historical pageant" describes accurately enough this very full biography of Edward, Prince of Wales, son of Edward III, known not to contemporaries but to posterity for reasons carefully explained by the author, as the Black Prince. His character in youth is set down: "Religion aside, he had an extremely superficial outlook, regarding warfare as the only business really worth attention, and life in general as an interminable succession of feasts and amusements"; as "did almost every prince of his time," and the nobility and gentry of England generally. Largely illiterate, what other employment could our knights and nobles find save war and tournament in that age of chivalry, feudal loyalties and plague and pestilence? War, paid for in the main by merchants and traders, in especial by the wool trade, and by grants of money from the clergy, brought spoils. The game was not to kill your royal or knightly enemy but to take him prisoner and make him pay a ransom according to his rank; and rich plunder might be looked for—if the countryside had not been already ravaged. War meant sport to the higher command and the knights who waged it in France and elsewhere; it meant unspeakable misery to the peasantry, their lands laid waste, their homes burnt by the invading hosts of chivalry. Prince Edward had all his father's aptitude for war and a genius for tactics. (Mr Cammidge has spent great pains over the campaigns in France and Spain, and the reader is greatly helped by the sketch maps).

The victims of war were altogether outside the mind of the Black Prince, pattern of chivalry that he was. Take the invasion of Aquitaine, his own duchy, held as the lieutenant of his father, where his rule was never acceptable to certain lords who preferred the sovereignty of France. "During forty-nine days of active campaigning, covering over four hundred miles, no less than five hundred towns and villages had been burned, with mills and vineyards beyond reckoning. As Sir John Wingfield wrote home, there had never since the wars began been such havoc wrought in any province as in Languedoc. In some villages the devastation was so complete the villagers could scarcely recognise their own dwellings among wreckage that would not shelter a horse. . . Yet save for numberless carpets and tapestries, caskets and chests of treasure, it was empty of real gain," this military expedition. As the author reasonably observes: "Had he—the Black Prince—a more thoughtful nature, he must also have foreseen the bitter hatred of all things English he had inspired in the dark-haired, light-hearted Southerners he called

his subjects." Laws of chivalry did not forbid the killing of prisoners too poor to be ransomed. In the raid on France in 1356 the Black Prince, being hampered on the march: "To ease progress many prisoners taken in the past weeks were knocked on the head." The pageant is full of colour, crimsoned by the colour of blood.

The Popes, resident at Avignon, made efforts to bring peace between Edward and the French king and many truces were from time to time agreed upon. But war was the profession of the Prince of Wales and, being always persuaded that his war was just a war, he must needs lead his army into Spain on behalf of the claims of that unspeakable ruffian Don Pedro the Cruel. Kings must stick up for one another and stand by the kingly order was Edward's principle; though Don Pedro lay under the Pope's excommunication it was, in Edward's view, a just war to keep him on the throne. Don Pedro, of course, promised to pay for the help of the English army, and equally, of course, evaded his promise on the departure of the Black Prince, whose military talent may be studied at its best in the passage of the Pyrenees and in that Castilian campaign of 1367. From the physical hardships of that campaign the Prince never recovered, though he lingered, a semi-invalid, for nine years, to die in England at forty-six. It was a very sick man who ordered the taking of Limoges, the sack and burning of the city, and the massacre of all its people, men, women and children alike. In all the horrors of the age of chivalry and feudal loyalties no event leaves a deeper shade than the authorised murder of the civil population of Limoges, a city in the Prince's own dominion of Aquitaine —"and France, all Christendom indeed, was shocked by it." But not Edward, Prince of Wales: "lying upon the pillows he was none the less well satisfied. He felt no pity for the innocent folk now charred bone and powdered ash." The author's verdict may stand: "the fate of Limoges was originated and sealed, coldly and deliberately, a good week beforehand, the product of an expert brain twisted by disease." He had his nobler side, the Black Prince, and practised many fine courtesies to royal prisoners; back in England, a dying man, he stood with the Commons against the party of his brother, John of Lancaster, the corrupt court party of Dame Alys Perrers and her gang. Had it been possible he would have done something for the ex-Servicemen, the discharged bowmen, heroes of Crécy and Poitiers, now penniless, homeless, crippled, feared and disliked on all the countryside. "Upon them, who knew no other trade but that of arms, had fallen the real weight of peace in all its misery. Discharged by their captains, hemmed in by guild rules

and similar mysteries, they wandered the land aimlessly, seeking the birthright for which they had fought." Treated as common vagabonds "it was no wonder that many of the vermin-infected crew in desperation took to the forests and turned robbers."

The author, doing his work with conspicuous thoroughness, is not content to give us lists of knights who attended and took part in the campaigns and battles, he enlarges on the various heraldic devices of all entitled to express the boast of heraldry. (But surely it would be a hundred years later before heraldry became of lively interest to English knights and squires?)

JOSEPH CLAYTON.

RELIGION IN SOVIET RUSSIA. By N. S. Timasheff. (Sheed and Ward, 6s.)

Many people have written and still write about Soviet Russia's social, cultural and religious situation. Each one is firmly convinced that he or she alone knows what is going on in Russia and understands the meaning of it. There is, however, hardly any book on Russia in English which is really satisfactory and gives an adequate picture of the complex issues of contemporary Russian life. This seems to be true also of the book under review.

Mr Timasheff begins by stating the inevitability of the conflict between Bolshevism and Christianity, and then describes the forms, methods, and phases of the Communist offensive against religion. Summarized in a sentence the position as viewed by Mr Timasheff is as follows. There have been six devices: (1) direct violence; (2) interference in Church life; (3) discrimination against the clergy and laymen; (4) eradication of religious education and propaganda ("cultural strangulation"); (5) inspiration and organisation of propaganda against religion in schools and throughout the country; and finally (6) the obstruction of pious customs proper to the "Orthodox way of life." The assault on religion has varied in intensity from time to time, and these measures have never all been used simultaneously; outright attacks were undertaken only during three short periods (1922, 1929, 1932). Some devices have now been abandoned altogether, others considerably modified.

If Mr Timasheff had confined himself to references to the available documents, this book would no doubt have justified its original purpose—to be "a thorough documented report on conditions to-day." Its misfortune lies, however, in that the author indulges his personal interpretations and conclusions to the full, and distorts the general perspective in favour of his subjective likes and dislikes. It is here that one is forced, on the whole, to

disagree with him. In view of the nature of the problems involved and their import on the understanding of the situation in Russia, I venture to dwell more fully on this matter.

The book has a specific "tone" of its own: and *c'est le ton qui fait la musique.* One is left with the impression that it was written by a foreigner or an inveterate *emigré,* to whom the whole spiritual and historical experience of post-revolutionary Russia is utterly alien and incomprehensible. If Mr Timasheff can speak of the religious problem in Russia as being dependent on the possibility of Germany's victory over her (or over the "Soviet Government," as he puts it, p. 161), or on American protests and admonitions (p. 158); if he can speak of the position of Metropolitan Sergius (head of the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union) as being one of "captivity" and "compromise" (pp. 126, 163); or even in such details as his description of the Soviet Government as the "ruling clique" (p. 64) and his persistent reference to Leningrad as Petrograd, he reveals a typically pre-revolutionary mentality and a complete incapacity to evaluate the events in Russia to-day. I am convinced that the propagation of such views tend to hinder the overcoming of atheism in Russia and obstruct the evident process of her spiritual recovery. So far as Russia is concerned, we are living at a time of vital post-revolutionary developments, in which the consequences of Communist atheism are being borne to the full and transcended. Mr Timasheff seems to regard the Russian revolution as a mere evil accident, a scandal or diabolic aberration. In point of fact, however, it is an intrinsic part of Russia's spiritual destiny; it has a positive message and revelation even to the Christian. It is significant that Mr Timasheff repudiates, without, unfortunately, substantiating his view, the idea expressed by some Russian Christian thinkers, that Russian Communism is one of the expressions (though no doubt a distorted expression) of the Russian national and religious spirit. The echoes of Christian thought in the mind of the anti-religious Russian ring so evidently, that anyone who does not recognise it is hardly capable of drawing an adequate picture of the religious situation in the Soviet Union. Russian Communist psychology has emphatically much that is Christian and Orthodox in its origin, and nowhere more clearly than in its vision of a Kingdom of God upon earth, of a transfigured universe made perfect for the ultimate fulfilment. This does not mean that the Russian Communists, as such, are Christian or are likely to became so to-day: but merely shows that living people and historical events cannot be judged by abstract ideologies, and that what is "ideologically" anti-Christian may, in fact, be due to definite Christian "residues," to Christian

trends of thought and patterns of life.

As to Mr Timasheff's strictures of the "Soviet Government," it is high time to realise, at least from the Russian national point of view, that but for the strong and organised Soviet Government Russia would have broken up and been utterly dismembered by foreign powers. Divine Providence works even in this Government; and there also works in it the national instinct of self-preservation for the better future of Russia. . .

To sum up, then: in as far as Mr Timasheff's book is a faithful collection and systematization of facts regarding the situation of religion in Russia, it is of undoubted value. But, in as far as it is meant to enlighten the reader on the meaning of this situation, it is singularly misleading and one-sided.

E. LAMPERT.

ISLAM TO-DAY, edited by Arberry and Landan. (Faber, 12s. 6d.)

There are elements in Islam which appeal to some of the deeper strains in human nature and which account, no doubt, for its perennial vitality through so many centuries. Here, in *Islam To-day*, is one more proof of this vitality and of the attraction exercised by Islam on many cultured minds in the Christian West.

The book is referred to by the editors as an "Anthology"—a not very accurate description of a collection of studies of Islamic countries by a number of writers, some of whom are authorities in the subjects they treat. There is great variety in the manner of treatment. Some of the essays plunge us at once into a summary of modern developments in the political or commercial sphere (*e.g.* the essays on Aden and Afghanistan). Others (*e.g.* Miss Freya Stark's essay on Iraq) give us journalistic impressions of recent events. Others, again (*e.g.* Sir Arthur Wauchope's study of modern Palestine) give a clear, careful and attractive picture of a situation which the writer has calmly and keenly observed over a period of years. One (by Sir Richard Winstedt) gives us a learned and very fascinating account of the spiritual and intellectual adventures and experiments of Islamic freelances in Malaysia. Another (by "Meleager"—can this be M. Louis Massignon? In any case a highly competent and cultured observer) presents a very carefully balanced picture of Syria as a favourable field for the interchange of ideas and influences between the Christian and the Moslem Middle East. There is a record (by William Hichens) of the civilising achievements of Islam in East Africa, which will fascinate many to whom the history of this part of Africa is a sealed book. There are also

subtle studies of Islam in their own countries by Moslem scholars and publicists like Dr Taha Hussein (Egypt) and Sir Hassan Suhrawardy (India).

In some of these essays it is easy to discern the fanatical enthusiasm of those to whom Christianity has made little appeal and who turn to exotic cultures and religions for the religious romance they have missed in the West. Such writers exhibit a quasi-mystical exaltation when they stress the power of Islam to unify varied races and classes and to inspire material civilisations with a spiritual impulse. While we deplore their exaggerations, we may nevertheless, take what is true in them as an admonition, bidding us strive for the rebuilding of a Christendom, suppler, fairer and grander than the Islamic *bloc*, where the leaven of the Gospel will reveal its effects in civilisations dedicated to the highest glory of the spirit.

CYPRIAN RICE, O.P.

DONNE: A SPIRIT IN CONFLICT. By Evelyn Hardy. (Constable, 10s. 6d.)

A new study of Donne, whether biographical or critical, could have fulfilled an important function at the moment; but what Miss Hardy has written cannot strictly be called either of these things: it is rather a case-history in purely reductive psychology. Having produced a neurotic temperament in her hero through derangement of his relations with his parents and teachers ("probably" Jesuit), she then allows this to work out in his adult life. The book, especially in its earlier parts, is filled with conclusions drawn from premises beginning with "almost certainly," "probably," or "may have"; and, indeed, this is all that the evidence produced justifies. But whether the confident conclusions apply to the historical Donne is another matter. The test must be the extent to which the book makes the reading of Donne a richer experience; and Miss Hardy's study seems more likely to distract. The uniqueness of Donne, after all, does not lie in his having a spirit in conflict, but in the way he grappled with that conflict; and the origins of it can add nothing to this, even were they available. In fact, we possess no work by Donne which offers the psychological evidence of, say, *Wuthering Heights* or *Hamlet;* and attempts to analyse those works can hardly be called illuminating. "It is, of course, possible," as Jung says, "to draw inferences about the artist from the work of art, and *vice versa*, but these inferences are never conclusive. At best they are probable surmises or lucky guesses."

L.T.

DOSTOEVSKY. By Janko Lavrin. (Methuen, 7s. 6d.)

It is said that Turgeniev was once entertained by Dr Jowett at Balliol and was asked by his host what he thought of Dostoevsky. "He is no good," came the answer. "He is all schlimm schlamm and vish vosh, vat you call Brod Church." The story is representative of the no-nonsense attitude of Dostoevsky, the novelist of hysteria and sham religion, of epilepsy and pseudo-mysticism.

Certainly no novelist is superficially so easy a target for senior common room wit. Professor Lavrin's book is a valuable corrective, alike for adulation and debunking. An analysis of Dostoevsky's complex character, violent and paradoxical as it was, prepares the reader for a judgment on his work. "Most of Dostoevsky's psychology was a struggle . . . in which he was compelled to explore the inner world in all directions simply in order to find an outlet for himself. His favourite ground was that fluctuating area where the rational passes into the irrational, the conscious into the unconscious, the actual into the 'fantastic.' He was a supreme connoisseur of that region of the soul where nothing is fixed and firm; where 'all contradictions exist side by side'." (p. 43.)

Professor Lavrin's method is the only possible one and is free from that desiccated criticism which looks for everything other than that which really matters, namely "how did this man come to write as he did?" Dostoevsky's significance just now, at a time when so much that he foresaw has come to pass, scarcely needs emphasis. This study can, then, be warmly recommended not only for its understanding of one of the greatest of novelists, but for its analysis of what is a fundamental crisis and its resolution—"My hosanna has passed through great whirlwinds of doubt." I.E.

SOLDIER'S TESTAMENT. Maxims on War. By René Quinton, translated by Douglas Jerrold. (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 2s.)

This is a new edition of a work first published in English in 1930. The translator, in his preface to the new edition, tells us that the book was originally "received with a torrent of abuse," and that it is "a matter of dubious satisfaction" that the loudest critics of the book have now been "converted to sanity and decency"; *i.e.* from pacifism to an approval of war. If I had seen this book in 1930 I should have said of it then exactly what I say of it now—that it is a morally pernicious and dangerous work. For it is an attempted justification of war, not on the ground that it may be a necessary (physical) evil, but on the ground that it is, in Mr Jerrold's own words, the outcome of

"a fundamentally social instinct" and of "biological necessity."

The author, we are told, was, besides being an artillery commander, "a biologist of distinction." But although several pages of information are given about his very gallant military career, we are told nothing about his qualifications in the field of biological science. However, his thesis certainly cannot be reconciled with the higher science of ethics, and it is also contradictory to the findings of anthropology.

The translator seems to have done his work very well, even if to read Quinton's French after his own English is, as he says, "to exchange the bludgeon for the rapier." Many of the aphorisms translated are of a high quality; they have an astringency and sometimes a mordant humour that are indeed admirable—"Neutrality, gazing at the spectacle of nations at each other's throats, always contrives to collect entertainment tax." "There is one supremely peaceful element in battle; there are no women there." And, as Mr Jerrold says, in so far as these Maxims are "a challenge to the philosophy of individualism and the doctrine of ease," "they assume a practical importance."

Men and women in the Services will find much in this book to brace their spirit—"The resources of men in war-time are inexhaustible. Fatigue is a defect of the will." "The indulgences of the flesh are the mortification of the spirit." "Soldiers pay with their lives for mistakes in promotion." "Men only return voluntarily to places where they have suffered. There are no pilgrimages to rest camps."

But that I have not over-estimated the dangerous teaching contained in this book, the following will show: "The primary mission of the male is not to reproduce himself but to kill and be killed." "The search for happiness is impious." "It is not blood but breeding that makes heredity. I should always wish to chastise my child because in that chastisement I impress my will upon him, I form him in my own image." "Philosophers may go on propounding the ideal of peace and tranquility. Men will always have other aspirations." "Hatred is the natural business of life."

MICHAEL SEWELL.

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