

In the discussion of Tyrell's view it is a pity that the fact (so revelant to present-day difficulties) that we believe not in a creed but through a creed is not brought out more strongly. And on p. 85 a sentence seems to suggest that you may commit a positive action which your conscience tells you to be sinful, if the alternative means allowing, negatively, a greater evil to take place. G.V.

THE OBEDIENCE OF A CHRISTIAN MAN. By Edgar P. Dickie. (S.C.M. Press: 6s.).

It is a far cry from Tyndale to Dickie, from the kingly tyranny which was of such comfort to Henry VIII to the call to godly obedience which so many moderns will find uncomfortable. There is a world of thought in this little book, Christian values, reason and belief, grace and nature, animism, positivism, most of them but half thought out and dealt with all too summarily. The main theme is the obedient will as the organ of the knowledge of God: worship and obedience give the attitude which is the pre-condition of such knowledge. The author quotes often and fully from Kierkegaard "objections against Christianity come from insubordination and unwillingness to obey."

He does not however make it very clear to whom or to what this obedience is due—to God, directly speaking to man's soul—to the Bible—to the Church as the mouthpiece of God. He declares that no one possesses absolute authority over man except Christ Jesus His Lord. Yet conscience alone is to be distrusted (p. 83). He dislikes St. Ignatius' unquestioning belief in the Church, and seems unaware that St Ignatius regarded the Church as a divine institution. Yet he admires the unquestioning obedience of military discipline.

Perhaps the best chapter is that on religion and action, in which he shows that action has been characteristic of religion from the beginning (a moot question on which he joins issue with Fraser). Rightly he speaks of the Christian's responsibility of attacking injustice wherever it appears; of the Church's attitude to unemployment "which strikes at the dignity of man *as a child of God*." It is a pity that he does not develop the thesis on the reconditioning of German youth. This needs saying, and might well have been said at the expense of the anecdotes and political quotations with which the book is too amply larded.

As a whole it lacks *thew and sinew*. It lacks above all a final definition of the Church more comprehensive than the 'Colony of Heaven' proposed by the author. E. PULLEN.

PRAYER AND THE SERVICE OF GOD. By Daniel T. Jenkins. (Faber: 5s.).

This is a stimulating and readable examination of the grounds or reasons for prayer rather than an analysis of prayer itself. The four key words are God, the soul, the Bible and the Church. It is refreshing to find a theologian of the classical Protestant school laying such stress on the part played by the Mystical Body

of Christ in the prayer of the Christian. The sense of 'community' is one of the signs of the times, but Mr. Jenkins makes it quite clear that he is not talking of just any kind of association, but one of responsible persons ('subjects') related to God, the absolute subject. This relation, he argues, is set up in the act of Christian faith; the self surrender and obedience of the whole man to God as revealed in Jesus Christ. Our rebirth at redemption by Jesus Christ, the High Priest, gives rise to the Church, the spirit-filled community and it is in and through their common membership of the Body of Christ that Christians must pray. Such is Mr. Jenkins's thesis and he argues it well, with great, and at times moving sincerity. Occasionally, however, an argument well begun loses itself in a burst of rhetoric and fails to convince. There are a few obscurities which might lead to misunderstandings, such as the rather curious expression Mr. Jenkins gives to the Doctrine of the Trinity. We feel also that Mr. Jenkins would find his analysis of the act of faith enriched if he pondered St. Thomas' Tractate on Faith in relation to what he has himself said about "justifying faith."

Finally with regard to this and many other books Catholics must face the question: Why is it that so many Protestant writers, who wish to know Catholic doctrine, only appear to be able to receive it in a distorted form?
IAN HISLOP, O.P.

THE FIRST EXILE. By Robert Farren. (Sheed & Ward, 8s. 6d.).

This epic poem, or series of poems, on the life of Saint Colmcille (Columba to the uninitiate) is a brave essay in a difficult medium. Mr. Farren has shown, in earlier collections of his verse—notably in *Thronging Feet*—that he has a simple lyric strength which is admirably suited to his purpose: for he speaks of the faith flowering in a single world, an Irish world of earth and stone and sky.

The seventy sections of *The First Exile* are an elaborate counterpoint of rhythmic contrasts, with the figure of Colmcille as a constant theme. The concrete sense of created things takes away the blurred edge of legend and hagiographical convention.

"Bring the green shoot
up through the red sod,
bring the full fruit
of the corn on the stalk.
Bring it to ripeness
through yellow to whiteness."

Useful footnotes and a full glossary of Irish words add to the value of a poem that is wholly Catholic in inspiration and achievement: Catholic, because Mr. Farren has realised that sanctity is the perfecting of the whole of man.
I.E.

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