

times, and his entire position rests upon a very personal interpretation of these texts. Wesley is clearly an example of the true 'Bible Christian' for whom: 'Religion is the most simple thing in the world. It is only "we love Him because He first loved us"; so far as you add philosophy to religion, just so far you spoil it.'

Dr. Sangster considers at some length the exact nature of the 'sinlessness' to which the fully 'sanctified' laid claim and is at pains to emphasise that Wesley himself repudiated the notion that this final sanctification implied any immunity against future sinning with the resultant antinomianism. Here too there seems in Wesley's testimony a curious confusion of thought, an instinct sounder than his own ideas. The extracts from contemporary testimonials with which Dr. Sangster illustrates his argument are vivid and very often moving; the simplicity and sincerity of the 'witness' cannot be doubted and there is a striking unanimity as to the experience which they recount. In many cases, though not all, so we are assured, the experience of sanctification was accompanied by a corresponding change of conduct. That Wesley was convinced of the reality of this sanctification in his followers seems clear, but it is enlightening to discover that he never claimed the experience for himself. Replying to an attack on this very point, he says: 'I tell you flat, I have not attained the character I draw.' Is it too paradoxical to suggest that it was the actual virtue in Wesley which prevented his making such a claim himself?

Dr. Sangster's approach to his subject is sympathetic, yet somewhat detached; he is familiar with the New Psychology and with modern Protestant authorities, but there is in his book an astonishing lack of background; it is not merely that he appears to be unacquainted with the main stream of Catholic teaching, but even the earlier 'reformers' are barely touched on. We are left with the impression that the whole question of grace and sanctification had been almost entirely ignored until the middle of the eighteenth century. We do not see Wesley's idea of Perfection in the setting of the whole Christian tradition of sanctity, as one attempt among so many throughout the ages 'to find the way to Heaven,' but merely as an isolated theory peculiar to one group of people, at one moment, and this unnatural absence of perspective impoverishes the presentment of a fine subject.

ROSALIND MURRAY.

LIGHT BEFORE DUSK. A Russian Catholic in France, 1923-1941. By Helen Iswolsky. (Longmans; 15s.)

In 'Light before Dusk' Helen Iswolski speaks of people she has known and worked with, of movements in which she has taken part, of ideas which she has held and holds; in short, of a life which she has shared. It was the life—essential but very little known—of

France in the period between the two wars, and particularly in the decade before the 1940 armistice. The mere enumeration of some of the chapter-headings give an idea of what this life embraced: 'Union' (of Catholics and Orthodox); 'The House of Meudon' (Maritain and his circle); 'The House of Clamart' (Berdayev and his circle); 'Youth' (the different specialised youth movements); 'The Encyclicals' (the struggle of 'social Catholic' for the application of the principles of 'Rerum Novarum' and 'Quadragesimo Anno' in face of the opposition of 'Action Française' and the other 'right' reactionaries); 'The Pope and the Cardinal' (Pope Pius XI and Cardinal Verdier). The three final chapters deal with the period between the outbreak of war, September 1939, and the date at which the author left France, nearly a year after the armistice, in May 1941. She is thus in a position to afford a personal witness to the attitude in adversity of the people and movements whose earlier strength and enthusiasm she had shared.

The people of whom she speaks range from manual workers and peasants to intellectuals and philosophers, from priests to politicians, from 'technicians' of every category to 'men in the street,' from young to old. Between them there was—there is—'a common trait, namely, that their moral and social outlook has been developed along spiritual lines.' This is the central point of the story of the French Catholic revival of this period, and accounts for the 'integral humanism' which is so much more than a theory 'invented' by Jacques Maritain. These 'élites' of every age and walk of life are realistic about the spiritual life; they see it as the participation, through prayer and sacraments, in the infinite charity of the Blessed Trinity. Hence there could and can be for them no departmentalising of human life. Hence their preoccupation with justice in the 'social question' (which for those who objected to reform meant that they were 'red'); hence their preoccupation with honour in 'politics,' which accounts for their inherent opposition to the Vichy parody of a Christian revival based on perjury.

But Helen Iswolsky's book suffers from the defects of its own merits. To those of us who have been privileged to share to any extent her own experiences, her book is inadequate. It is impossible, in a few pages, to give a real idea of the richness and humanity of people whose grand ideas are not the fruits of leisured dreams and pleasant discussions, but of painful work in the service of God and man, painful because of the need to combine moral integrity with the support of one's family (incidentally, I think Mme. Iswolski should have mentioned that precisely in the circles she describes, the tremendous number of marriages of young people and the abundance of children was in marked contrast to the general denatality). And those readers who did not know this life may regard Mme. Iswolski's picture as too idyllic and too 'intellectual.' Indeed, one is tempted

to ask what was the intrinsic value of so much discussion, even of manifestoes which applied Christian principles to current issues. All unconsciously, the author herself tends to ask this question; for she announces triumphantly, for instance, that in Maritain's 1934 declaration (after the February riots in Paris) 'we see for the first time these principles (Christian principles) applied to concrete events in political life. They cease to be an abstract formula and they are turned into flesh and blood.' Was there then more flesh and blood on them when they were stated in terms of politics than when they were stated in terms of theology or of philosophy? The question is one which, in our extremely materialistic age, urgently requires an explicit answer. A book like this was an opportunity for giving it. One would have wished greater stress to have been laid on the one hand on the *object* of the intense intellectual work which she describes—Truth, *per se*, independently of all political and social preoccupations; on the other hand, on the practical result at the present time—material resistance to Germany and Vichy and the formulation of something like a theology of liberty. It is, of course, true that the book finished in December 1941, in America, and that it was only at this time that the clandestine 'Cahiers du Témoignage Chrétien' and the best of the resistance papers began to appear; but the essence of their attitude was long before formulated in the personalist teaching of Maritain, of Mounier, of the weekly paper 'Temps Présent'—whose influence, as Mme. Iswolsky rightly says, increased enormously, particularly among the fighting forces, because it gave men of good will a clear idea of why they were at war.

It was an almost unavoidable consequence of the universality of the subject that the author has not been able to draw out enough of the implications of what she describes. There is another consequence which was unavoidable—generalisations which tend to become inaccuracies. In particular this applies to what she says about present-day youth movements. She speaks of the 'Chantiers de Jeunesse' and of the 'Compagnons de France' as forming, alongside of the 'Camps de Jeunesse' and the 'Jocistes' the 'four main groups' of 'the present-day'—i.e. 1941—youth movement. But the 'Chantiers de Jeunesse' is merely the civilian substitute for the compulsory military service incumbent upon every young French citizen when France was free. And the 'Compagnons de France,' both in numbers and in influence, are vastly inferior to the Scouts and Guides, for instance, who are not mentioned. Finally, the 'Camps de Jeunesse' can hardly be called a distinct 'youth movement' at all.

These, however, are details. This book is not a reference book, and cannot be used as such. It is a survey, wide and loving, of a terrain rich in treasures for every taste. It will undoubtedly stimulate further exploration.

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