

REBUILDING FAMILY LIFE IN THE POST WAR WORLD. Edited by Sir James Marchant, K.B.E., LL.D., F.R.S. (Odhams Press, Ltd., 2s.).

This booklet, styled "an enquiry with recommendations", contains a series of reports on the decline in population and the break-up of family life during the last fifty years. Naturally, in such a collection, there is some divergence of views, but it is possible to discern two main conclusions. Firstly, that the decline in population is the result of an increase in the practice of contraception; secondly, that widespread contraception is the outcome of the raising of educational standards, coupled with economic force of circumstance. These, in no way profound deductions, are supported by a wealth of statistical and technical evidence compiled by doctors, scientists, economists and educational experts. Nevertheless, these progressives still maintain a particularly benign attitude towards contraception. Dr. Elliot Slater writes:—" . . . on the whole it is to be welcomed, as it gives mankind a powerful weapon for the control of its own destiny" and " . . . contraception is one of the major blessings that science has won for humanity". Dr. Margaret Hadley Jackson recommends:—" . . . more efficient medical services to carry the knowledge and means of sound birth control to the unfit and overburdened are urgently needed". It is made quite clear that the "experts", far from attaching any stigma to contraception, commend it, and confronted with the alarming prospect of an "old" population can offer no solution to the problem; unless mild rebukes for "the abuse of contraception" can be considered a worthy answer.

With the exception of the Moderator of the Church of Scotland the contributors to this volume seem indifferent to the Christian ideals of Marriage and family life; the spiritual aspect of the problem is scarcely mentioned. In fact, if we are to rely on the bulk of these recommendations, we can cease to consider the future of family life; it will be, rather, a subject for reminiscence. What hope is there of effecting a reconstruction if the plans are made by those who lack the knowledge and understanding of what has been destroyed.

MAURICE McLOUGHLIN.

THE APPROACH TO RELIGION IN THE CLUB. (Hamilton House, Bidborough Street, W.C.1.; 1s.).

This is a booklet produced for Club Leaders by the National Association of Girls' Clubs and Mixed Clubs. It is the result of the deliberations of a group consisting of four members of the Church of England, a Jewess, a Methodist, two Congregationalists, and a Presbyterian. Some of the views expressed will, therefore, not be such as Catholics can set their seal to. The first part is introductory, and deals with the general question of the place of religion in club life. The second, "attempts to give the Club Leader some

indication of the lines on which it is possible to tackle the most common questions asked by young people". It will be of little help to Catholics working with Catholic boys and girls in Catholic clubs. But the authors have in mind, not the Church club, but the "open" club, whose members have all sorts of faiths, or more often no faith at all. And the unpleasant truth is that, while some of us could not subscribe to all of the suggested answers, the questions given are indeed the questions which are not infrequently on the lips of our boys and girls, many of whom have reached their teens in utter ignorance of the first principles of religion. If they do not yet know the answer to the first group of questions, which have the general title, "Does God Exist?", they are not likely to get far towards answering the others, on Church-going, prayer, morality, and the value of suffering.

It would be interesting to see how a Catholic, experienced in youth work, would deal with the many and delicate problems and questions which are constantly cropping up in the open youth club, to some of which this booklet suggests a useful line of approach. For the Club Leader's responsibility in this matter is a grave one, and he wields by his words and example a far greater influence than he generally realises.

F. BENNETT.

**THE LITTLE PRINCE.** By Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. (Heinemann; 9s. 6d. net.)

The simple charm of the drawings—also by the author—which portray an episode and hint at eternity, the inconsequence of the narrative and the spontaneity of thought, make this a perfect child's book. As such it can be wholeheartedly recommended by a reviewer who had the experience of trying it on a group of children of ages ranging from eight to twelve; clumsily attempting an extempore translation from the French until Miss Katherine Woods' sympathetic and felicitous rendering came to hand, he was so far successful as to be signed on as a regular story-teller to the group.

It is much to be hoped that other grown-ups will read the book aloud to children; it will be good for their adult souls. For this is more than a children's story: it is an allegory. Travelling without visible means of locomotion from planet to planet, the Prince comes across the fundamental types of modern man in all his stupidity. The lamplighter who lights up and extinguishes his lamp every minute because he has not the wit to adjust his position to the changed speed of his planet, the business man who thinks he possesses the stars because he can add them up—and even in French the word is, significantly, *businessman* and not *homme d'affaires*—the geographer who has no vision for the lovely world he charts, all these are so many occasions for an examination of conscience. And if the wisdom of the fox only becomes explicit towards the end, his profound thought is behind every line of text and of drawing: "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye . . . You become responsible, forever, for what