

REVIEWS

THEOLOGY AND RELIGION

VON HÜGEL AND THE SUPERNATURAL. By A. Hazard Dakin, Jr., Ph.D. (S.P.C.K.; 12/6.)

THE MODERNIST MOVEMENT IN THE ROMAN CHURCH. Its Origins and Outcome. By Alec R. Vidler, M.A. (Cambridge University Press; 12/6.)

An immense amount of assiduous reading has gone to the making of the first of these two books. In reading it one has the impression of a mosaic made up of a multitude of quotations cemented together by remarks of the author. Most of the quotations come, of course, from Von Hügel's works, but by no means all. Indeed, one of the drawbacks of the work is that the author seems to have been unable to resist quoting any passage from anywhere that had any bearing on the matter in hand. Dr. Dakin hopes that 'this study of Von Hügel's concept of the supernatural, which involves an examination of his religious and philosophical position, may be useful to beginners as an introductory outline and to advanced readers as a reference manual.' It is more likely to prove useful for the latter purpose than for the former, for beginners will probably find it somewhat dull, and in any case Mr. Lester-Garland has already provided them with a better introduction in his little work *The Religious Philosophy of Baron F. von Hügel*. In spite of the book's title, Dr. Dakin seems several times to hint that he has no very clear idea as to what Von Hügel meant by the supernatural. It is true that the latter nowhere defined exactly what the word meant to him, but he took for granted the ordinary background of Catholic theology, and especially Thomistic theology; he even went so far as to say that on this question of the Natural and Supernatural 'St. Thomas is more complete and balanced, and penetrates to the specific genius of Christianity more deeply, than St. Paul and St. Augustine, with all their great directness and intensity.' A closer acquaintance with this Thomistic theology would have enabled Dr. Dakin to improve his book at several points.

In reading this digest of his works one realizes again that however much there was of modernism in Von Hügel, he put very little of it into his books. As Mr. Vidler notes in his very interesting history of the modernist movement, the leading part which Von Hügel took in that movement was not a literary one. From that point of view the title that Paul Sabatier gave him of 'l'évêque des modernistes' was not altogether inapt; certainly no one showed more fussiness in tending that strange

BLACKFRIARS

flock. But he was never a true modernist at heart : as Mr. Christopher Dawson has said, ' he whole-heartedly accepted the dogmatic principle of Catholicism—the existence of a divine Truth and a divine Authority to which the human mind and will must conform themselves.' Mr. Vidler's statement, then, that the later ' obscuring of Von Hügel's modernism was also due to the modification which, from about 1907 onwards, it did in fact undergo,' is hardly adequate. He would have been nearer the mark if he had repeated of the Baron what earlier he says so well of Newman, that ' his explorations never in his own mind involved a calling in question of traditional orthodoxy as an infallible revelation of absolute truth.'

Mr. Vidler's book is interesting and well worth reading, but what is surprising is his total inability to see that the Catholic—he would say the Roman Catholic—position has anything to be said for it. He speaks of ' the myth of an unchanging orthodoxy,' and thinks it self-evident that ' the new knowledge of Christian origins ' renders absolutely necessary, not merely a more careful statement of particular dogmas, but a new attitude to dogma as such. For the school to which he belongs, religious experience, not truths revealed *ab extra*, constitutes the data of theology. In spite of these crudities this account of one of the strangest episodes in the history of the Church will be read with profit. Really instructive for Catholics are the pages which the author devotes to the influence of the Modernist Movement on the Anglican Church.

LUKE WALKER, O.P.

RELIGION ET VIE. By Dr. Arnold Rademacher. Traduit de l'allemand par l'Abbé Delaisse. (Éditions de la Cité Chrétienne, Bruxelles; 20 fr. belges.)

Pas de rénovation des conditions extérieures de la vie sans une renaissance intérieure. Atomism, theoretic and practical, stands in the way of any reformation of a disjointed world. The strength of medieval philosophy lay mainly in its power of synthesis; in modern philosophy the emphasis has been rather on the side of analysis. A common creed gave to past centuries at least theoretically a common basis of unity; to-day, the variety of creeds, natural and supernatural, and the absence of creeds, make for disruption. But logically prior to these external divisions is the inner disruption of atomism. There is no synthesis. Accept the existence of both nature and the supernatural: you have at once a tension; the claims of life and of religion have both to be met and here there has always been difficulty. You can reject life, like the Manichees; you can reject religion, like the pagan