

this book, a glimpse of the cultural interests of this distinguished circle of Jewish philosophers and humanists.

JOSEPH BOURKE, O.P.

THE CHURCH IN THE DARK AGES. By Henri Daniel-Rops. (Dent; 42s.)

As an historian M. Daniel-Rops has been compared to Mr Hilaire Belloc. The present volume is a translation of his *L'Église des Temps Barbares*, published nine years ago and his most important single contribution to history. Like the rest of his studies in the history of Catholicism it will primarily appeal to those who hold that the Faith is Europe and that Europe is the Faith. Some who read it will be depressed by the occasional factual inaccuracies, the odd omissions and the flights of pure fancy. But no one can doubt the literary skill shown in the splendours of French rhetoric, the unflagging verve, and the determination to put most stress on those truths most commonly neglected. With all this there goes a repeated emphasis on the significance and the responsibility of the individual. It is all in fact a great contrast to Mr Dawson's *Making of Europe* which covers very approximately the same period. Still, fortunately, the unity of Catholicism has never implied a uniformity in historical approach.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

HELLENISM: THE HISTORY OF A CIVILIZATION. (Home University Library; Oxford University Press; 7s. 6d.)

All scholars will be encouraged by the fact that this book was commissioned and planned in the spring of 1914 and finished in 1958. Dr Toynbee has always had his detractors and at the moment they seem to be in the fashion. But this small book shows him once again as the greatest of living historians. In 234 pages he surveys Hellenic civilization from about 1000 B.C. to the conversion of the Roman empire. Inevitably when the scope is so vast there is plenty of room both for disagreement and criticism. For example, I should challenge the statement that the Christian martyrs 'were recruited surprisingly from the lower middle class'. In fact they would seem to have been drawn primarily from the town proletariat (including the slave proletariat) and from some of the upper class; *Felicitas* and *Vibia Perpetua* are a perfect example of this combine. Again I should hold that the descent of Lincoln or Cologne from the Greek city states through a Roman *colonia* is a very tenuous one. So too many other readers will make parallel criticisms from their own lines of interest. But no one who studies this book without bias can fail to recognize its massed erudition, its concise charity and its wise maturity.

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