

THE OXFORD DICTIONARY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. Edited by F. L. Cross. (Oxford University Press; 70s.)

The catholic intentions of this ambitious dictionary are proclaimed in its title. Edited by the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Oxford, with the aid of an overwhelmingly Anglican list of contributors, it provides, in its fifteen hundred pages of double-columned text, an objective and good-mannered guide to a vast variety of subjects, most of which contain the seeds of controversy and continuing debate. This needs to be said at the beginning, for whatever qualifications a Catholic may need to make concerning particular entries, it must be acknowledged with gratitude that Canon Cross has firmly imprinted his own impeccable standards of scholarship and courtesy upon a work which will obviously establish itself as an indispensable source for reference. The Preface claims that whatever apologetic purpose the *Dictionary* may have, 'it seeks to achieve it solely through the objective presentation of fact'. Few dictionaries reflect so consistent a style and emphasis: indeed the contributions are unsigned, the editor explains, for they have been subject to constant revision and editorial modification. The result is a unity of approach that makes the *Dictionary* easy to consult and pleasant to read.

The scope of the *Dictionary* is predominantly historical, and, in the nature of the case, the theological accent is positive rather than speculative. Biblical questions, while adequately treated, are not extensively discussed, since it is legitimately maintained by the editor that biblical commentaries and dictionaries are already easily accessible. Liturgical matters are very fully dealt with, and the details of contemporary Catholic devotion ('Fatima', 'Scapular', 'Therese Neumann') are as faithfully recorded as are the minutiae of Anglican daily life. The biographical entries are particularly well done, but here a certain parochialism is revealed: there are too many dim Victorian divines. For a work of such complexity, which was originally begun in 1939, the information is gratifyingly up to date. The Dead Sea Scrolls are adequately discussed; the definitive Roman liturgical reforms of 1956 are recorded. But one must deplore the lack of any serious treatment of those contemporary problems which present Christianity with perhaps the gravest challenge it has ever known. There are two columns on Arianism, but Communism is not even mentioned. There is much about Herbert Marsh (1757-1839), but not a word about Marx. There is no entry under 'Apartheid', and the article on 'Missions' is woefully weak in its failure to discuss the actual crisis faced by Christian missions in countries of Communist or Nationalist domination. The entry on 'China' ends with the Boxer rebellion of 1900. If, as the preface suggests, the intention is to provide, for the educated

public as a whole, 'as large a body of information as possible bearing on the Christian Church', then one would expect a much livelier awareness of the contemporary situation in which its work is to be achieved and, too, a far fuller treatment of the sociological and economic factors which it must take into account. Understandably, perhaps, the *Dictionary* is neutral on questions of morals (when they are considered at all), and the article 'Moral Theology' is simply a historical survey of the academic discipline of that name.

It would be ungenerous to complain of occasional inaccuracies or faults of emphasis in a work which contains on every one of its pages such manifest pitfalls. Where the bibliographies are so universally excellent and up to date (and this is perhaps the most notable feature of the book), one has a right to complain at the omission of Mgr Philip Hughes's magisterial work on the Reformation. And one is startled to find that Robert Hugh Benson's 'Life' is described as having been written in two volumes by his son! It seems unfair to dismiss Belloc's writings as being 'seldom contributions to serious knowledge'. And it is an incomplete account of the unhappy history of Arnold Harris Mathew to omit the fact that he was finally reconciled to the Catholic Church.

A nice distinction is made throughout between the 'Western' and the 'Roman Catholic' Church. This intriguing difference is reflected in such details as 'Humeral Veil' ('used in the W. Church') and 'Indulgences' ('Modern RC practice', etc.) The point seems to be that 'Western' is what is acceptable in Catholic belief and practice to modern Anglo-Catholics, while 'Roman Catholic' is the term of differentiation. But all things considered, one cannot imagine a more adroit handling of material that is so often intractable, and it is rare to find any evidence of a desire to be other than wholly fair and informative. With this *Dictionary* the familiar Oxford series acquires a notable addition. Admirably planned, beautifully printed, and—in a time of inflation—reasonably priced, it deserves, and will certainly receive, an enthusiastic welcome.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

THE RED BOOK OF THE PERSECUTED CHURCH. By Albert Galter.  
(Gill; 30s.)

This is a valuable summary account of the persecution of the Church in all Communist countries since 1917. Communist tactics have varied according to time, place and expediency; but the ultimate aim of all sincere Communists is the total elimination of religion. In this sphere, as in others, 'co-existence' can only be temporary, unless—as is historically possible—Communism in practice outgrows its