

We might single out the sermons on Health and on Catholic Doctors, which treat with delicate understanding the beauty of the healing art and the sacred responsibilities of its office. Then there are those on themes especially dear to His Eminence's heart, the Priesthood and the English Martyrs, and the English Saints—far less numerous these, as he notes with regret in an interesting and original passage on a national failing. There is the same insight in the talk on True Fortitude. The tribute to Newman is eloquent and touching, and the War sermons and that on Palestine are fraught with personal experience. The well known Easter sermon on Continuity needs no comment.

The French sermon is as interesting as it is unusual in the English Hierarchy. But we would have welcomed some foot-notes explanatory of the occasion. We are left wondering at the identity of the 'Eminence' and the 'Messeigneurs' present.  
A. de Z.

PROGRESS AND RELIGION. By Christopher Dawson. (Sheed & Ward; 10/6 net.)

'Europe to-day is waiting for its Augustus. It needs consolidation rather than revolution, but this consolidation cannot be the work of a military imperialism, as in the ancient world, it must be the fruit of social and economic co-operation between the different peoples and classes who make up the complex unity of European society' (p. 216). So Mr. Dawson puts the problem that confronts every thinking man to-day. We live in a period of competition resulting from the amazing control of nature achieved by science. To many it seems as if our civilization must fail and fall to pieces, destroyed by the very success of its material achievement, divorced as it is from any spiritual unity. With an impressive knowledge and sureness of touch Mr. Dawson reviews the genesis and growth of the belief in Progress that, though to-day shaken and somewhat discredited, was for so long the inspiration of our modern civilization. His early chapters deal with the idea of Progress in relation to sociology, history and anthropology. He shows how far from simple in fact the idea of Progress has been—for some a mere improvement in material conditions, for others an almost apocalyptic belief in the possibility of a complete transformation of human society. He shows how the modern historical school leaves no room for Progress and gives an extraordinarily interesting criticism of Herr Spengler's theories. Anthropology has ceased to be a *priori* and dogmatic and be-

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comes historical and empiric. There follows an interesting discussion of the material foundations of a culture. But perhaps the most interesting and important chapter is that dealing with 'the comparative study of Religions and the spiritual Element in Culture.' It may well prove to be the commencement of a new era in the study of the origins of civilization. Mr. Dawson shows how cultures differ mainly by the intellectual and the spiritual factors that underly and colour them. Religion, far from being an accidental and negligible factor, has been the controlling dynamic influence that led to their birth, dominated their greatness and, when failing itself, brought about their fall. This is indeed a reversal of much that we have been led to believe and must lead to a revision of much that has been written. Herbert Spencer's remark about primitive man that 'he thinks of nothing except the matters that immediately concern his daily needs' is shown to be as shallow as it is false. 'The ultimate barriers between peoples are not those of race or language or region, but those differences of spiritual outlook and tradition which are seen in the contrast Hellene and Barbarian, Jew and Gentile, Moslem and Hindu, Christian and Pagan. In all such cases there is a different conception of reality, different moral and æsthetic standards, in a word, a different inner world' (p. 76). This is the heart of Mr. Dawson's book and it is demonstrated and worked out with reference not only to the ancient but also to the modern world, and to the immediate problems of to-day. The subject is far too vast for a single work and we may hope that Mr. Dawson will give us a further book dealing more specifically with modern problems viewed from the same standpoint. It is a pleasure to repeat the words of Dean Inge that *Progress and Religion* is 'a great work.'

F. B.

### **THE FLAME OF LIFE. (John Murray; 7/6 net.)**

This is a volume of poems in a wide range of thought and manner by Lady Wentworth, who in her publisher's words, 'renews the poetic heredity of her great-grandfather, Lord Byron.' Here, one feels, is a Catholic poet who contributes to modern Catholic poetry a passion unsimulated and a smoothness of technique in which we are not rich. Here is nothing *manière*, no preoccupation with method. Simplicity and lyric quality are shown to be not incompatible with strength. Few of the poems touch directly on religion, but here and there a theme or a thought has been brought down by an arrow of