

I will—that can never happen to the angels however high they may be above me; and His Godhead is never so unattainable to me that I am not ceaselessly aware of Him in all my being'. Mechthild in her poetic manner certainly attains the heights: 'On this my soul was so swiftly in God that it soared up without effort and found itself in the Holy Trinity as a child finds itself under its mother's cloak and lays its head on her breast'. Some of the conversations between the three Persons of the Trinity are scarcely theological, but she is always saved from any active error by having her feet planted in the liturgy and the sacraments. For this reason the book makes an extremely interesting study in liturgical spirituality and Miss Menzies is to be congratulated on making it available and so easily readable to the English public.

JOHN CORSON

THE HOPE OF GLORY: The Atonement in Our Time. By Martin Jarrett-Kerr, C.R. (S.C.M. Press; 8s. 6d.)

Catholic theologians of recent years have been concerned mainly with two treatises: on the Church, and on the Eucharist. It is on these two subjects that most of the great books have been written by Mersch, Karl Adam, de Lubac, de la Taille, Masure, Bouyer, and by the Anglicans Thornton and Dix. With regard to the Church, the reason for this is not far to seek: the fact being that up to the present we possessed nothing on the Church comparable, for instance, to the classic treatise on the Redemption. And as for the Eucharist, it must be admitted that we have, since the Reformation, been fighting in theology a rearguard action preoccupied, in the first place, with proving the doctrine of the real presence, and secondly, with emphasising the sacrificial aspect of the Mass in a way sometimes which almost suggested a fresh immolation of Christ on the altar. It was important therefore that theologians should direct their attention to a new and more scholarly approach to these questions.

In doing so however it is important that what may be termed the wider implications of the doctrine of the Redemption do not suffer neglect. Rivière was concerned to maintain the balance by his monumental study *Le Dogme de la Rédemption*, and the author of the present work has also wished to fill a gap of the shelf devoted to shorter (by which we do not mean popular) books on the Atonement. He has particularly borne in mind the objections put forward by modern thinkers of the so-called 'existentialist' school and by the psychologists, maintaining that these two contemporary ways of thought need to be taken as seriously by theologians in this country as they have on the continent 'where a clear Catholic theology meets a scientifically precise knowledge'.

Since his intention is to discuss the Atonement 'apologetically' he starts from a consideration of man's condition as a result of the Fall, and rises

thence to the God who redeems, to the act of redeeming, and to its result. Finally he shows how the new life through the Cross and Resurrection is given to the Church in the sacraments.

Although, of course, this is too short a book (160 pages) to be a wholly adequate treatment of its all-important theme, yet it may fairly be said that the Vice-Principal of Mirfield has done an interesting and indeed a valuable work in writing it.

DESMOND SCHLEGEL

LIFE IS COMMITMENT. By J. H. Oldham. (S.C.M. Press; 12s. 6d.)

Dr Oldham welcomed the invitation to deliver these six lectures on 'The Meaning of Christianity Today' as a 'challenge to set down in black and white what I really believe'. The result is a very sincere statement, but one in which the opinions of his many friends of different denominations fill the foreground of the canvas, while the New Testament provides hardly more than the starting point of the discussions, and the Fathers and Catholic theologians are scarcely mentioned.

The author's principal purpose is to teach that one can only live fully in the measure that one commits oneself. Refusing to choose means drifting. Man, who is not only an individual but a social being, must definitely choose God and Christ. But when the author turns to the 'Church', by which he means the aggregate of Christians of all persuasions, he hesitates. Although the reasons for joining this aggregate 'possess undeniable cogency', he thinks that the actually existing 'Church' is the source of all his doubts and difficulties, especially for her exclusive and unreceptive attitude to the life and experience of those outside. Hence, he cannot urge all to join the 'Church'.

For the author none of the present forms of christianity is the same thing as the *ecclesia* of the New Testament, which is a 'fellowship of persons . . . that is a brotherhood, . . . and *nothing else*'. Yet this surely betrays a radical misunderstanding, as the Church of the New Testament is a visible body, organically compacted, possessing sacraments and a definite doctrine authoritatively taught. And from the day of Pentecost itself entry into the Church by baptism has been taught as necessary for all.

Perhaps the book's most interesting challenge to Catholics is not doctrinal, but practical—'Can a financier or a machine-tender really pray at his work today? Is he making something for Christ's sake?' If not, the Christian should 'give up his christianity or his activity in relation to money or the machine'. There is nothing new in all this; but the need for an integrated christian life, of which every element is redeemed, cannot be too often emphasised.

HUGH FARMER, O.S.B.