

is a necessary consequence of the first) which bears the most effective witness to Christ. 'Behold how these Christians love one another' was first an expression of genuine *admiratio* before it became a sneer.

Despite these reservations, there is much in this book to nourish the spiritual life of a Catholic. Indeed such a reader with his background of a living and unbroken tradition dating from N.T. times is in a privileged position to supply the deficiencies of this present essay, even in the precise sphere of *biblical* theology. The Christ whom we encounter in the sacred pages commands all history, and in a special way the divinely appointed communities, the two Israels, which radiate from him: the one, the old Israel backwards to the election of Abraham; the other, the new Israel, forwards from Pentecost to the Parousia. To understand even the biblical Christ, we must be in vital contact with both these communities. Such contact with the former is possible from reading the O.T. But the latter, full contact implies being *in* that community itself which now exists in unbroken succession from the Apostles.

RONALD TORBET, O.P.

THE MEDITATIONS OF WILLIAM OF ST THIERRY. Translated from the Latin by a Religious of C.S.M.V. (Mowbrays; 7s. 6d.)

No theoretical studies of our inheritance in medieval spiritual writing can be any real substitute for open access to the works themselves. The humble task of the translator is still for us in England a very necessary one, though of course it demands something more than mere conscientiousness. It is indeed strange that William of St Thierry, a Cistercian writer of a genius which, although distinctive, makes him comparable to St Bernard himself, should hitherto have attracted so little attention. His *Golden Epistle* has been available in English for some years, but nothing more. Those who have already found pleasure and profit in the translations of this Anglican Sister will need no special encouragement to acquire a new one. It makes no pretensions to scholarship, but it does its job efficiently and sympathetically. Anyone who has yet to make the acquaintance of this great monk with the penetration of a true theologian could not do better than begin here.

A.S.

THE NEW TESTAMENT BASIS OF PACIFISM. By G. H. C. MacGregor, D.D., D.LITT. (The Fellowship of Reconciliation. New and revised edition; 5s.)

This is an important book as it is perhaps the best exposition of the Christian pacifist case from a non-Catholic standpoint. On the whole Dr MacGregor presents his material in a careful and objective manner

with a readiness to deal fairly with objections and to acknowledge uncertainty where problems admit of no easy solution.

The chapter dealing with the relations of Church with State and the growth of the Just War theory contains over-simplifications and half-truths which mislead, however. Extracts from Patristic sources and the councils and constitutions of the early Church, culled mainly from Harnack and Cadoux, are quoted to show a gradual dilution of the full Gospel ethic and the subservience of Church to state. The careful distinction between counsel and precepts is overlooked, and the *vocational* character of certain ways of perfection is not understood, with the consequent conclusion that the Church recognizes a dual Christian standard—one for the world and one for the cloister.

This new edition contains an additional chapter, written since the recent war, entitled 'The Challenge to the Church', which deals with the grave moral problems arising from modern 'total war'. The suicidal direction of armed conflict today, with its deliberate breaches of international and moral law, and the justification of such transgressions on the ground of expedience or military necessity, leaves many Catholics in common cause with Dr MacGregor.

The mere avoidance or absence of sin is not in itself the life of charity but the necessary prelude to it. Similarly the would-be peacemaker's refusal to condone the deliberate destruction of the innocent or the mass fabrication of lies will only be of value if it leads him to discern his vocation in the work of mediation and reconciliation. In a Christian context this work will be related to the way of perfection which is imposed by canon law upon the clergy and proposed as a counsel to all the faithful—the non-shedding of blood. The history of the Church bears constant witness to the dedicated peacemaker's vocation. From Patristic times, through the Franciscan penitential Brethren of the thirteenth century, St Elizabeth of Portugal, Fénelon, to the life and work of Benedict XV, Dr Max Joseph Metzger, and others, a continuous tradition can be traced. Not in opposition to the legitimate demands of law and justice, but as the realization of an uncompromising total committal to the gospel of the Prince of Peace.

ROGER SMITH

THREE SHORT NATIVITY PLAYS. THE GIFTS OF THE CHRIST-CHILD.
THE ROSE OF CHRIST. LOVE, THE STAR. By R. P. K. Hallett. (Methuen; 2s. 6d.)

These plays contain beautiful descriptive speeches, and tell the story of Bethlehem very fully, with plenty of dramatic movement, and colourful, vivid presentation. I am personally inclined to like the more