

the resources of a powerful pen, to rouse them from their lethargy.

M. Béguin appropriately calls his book *A Study in Impatience*. He analyses Bloy's thought under four headings, which turn out to be variations on the one central theme. 'Initiation into Suffering': in God's mysterious and loving dispensation Christ had to suffer; all suffering is a participation of the Mystical Body in his agony and must go on to the end of time—did not our Lady herself weep at La Salette? (We cannot overrate the importance of La Salette in Bloy's life). Only through suffering shall each individual achieve his 'identity'. 'Poverty, Money and the People of Israel': wealth for Bloy was an evil 'not so much because it spelt unfairness as because it dimmed the transparency of one's being and impeded that vision of the Truth which could be obtained only by renunciation of earthly possessions and by love of suffering' (p. 79). The mystery of the Jews will not be resolved until their conversion—destined to come about on the eve of the Catastrophe (for which Bloy longed with all his impatience) which will end temporal history: we cannot even indicate here the trend of his personal and visionary exegesis of the Scriptures as the key to history. 'The Symbolism of History and the Soul of Napoleon': Bloy's historical work is permeated with the idea that the greatest individuals like the least are only special cases of the realisation of an 'identity' symbolical of the hidden super-natural destiny of mankind. And that is also the case with nations—to wit France in her war martyrdom (Bloy was referring to 1914, but his writing is entirely apposite to this last war). One would like to quote here *Sanglot dans la nuit* (pp. 220-1); or in a different tone the pages (207-8) describing a Society from which God is absent; or again examples of Bloy's intensity of prayer. Instead we repeat once again his own words, famous words which sum the whole matter up: 'Il n'y a qu'une tristesse, c'est de n'être pas des saints'—there is only reason for being sad, not to be a saint.

MARY RYAN

THE DOUBLE IMAGE. By Rayner Heppenstall. (Secker and Warburg, 8s. 6d.)

DEATH, WHERE IS THY VICTORY? By Daniel-Rops. (Cassell; 10s. 6d.)

Ten years ago, writing of Mr Heppenstall's book of poems, *Sebastian*, the present reviewer complained that echoes of Gerard Hopkins, and an acquaintance with the lesser names of the Roman martyr-ology, have no meaning apart from the faith in which a Jesuit called Hopkins lived, and for which a pope called Anicetus shed his blood'. It is not always easy to defend a judgment, yet Mr Heppenstall's latest book—'a study of the Christian myth in the work of Léon Bloy, Georges Bernanos, François Mauriac, Jacques Maritain and Paul Claudel'—retains that knowledgeable interest in Catholic preoccupations, allied to a total rejection of their validity, which made *Sebastian* so baffling.

The author thinks his 'a good-tempered, a light-hearted, a strictly

neutral and perhaps a trivial book'. It is certainly trivial. To by-pass the serious critical problem offered by Bloy and his successors is no doubt a bright idea—the 'Double Image' is the double level of the Christian artist, the conflict between religious faith and imaginative integrity—but it needs a far deeper, a far more tragic, understanding than Mr Heppenstall reveals. Of Maritain we are told that he 'claims that the whole structure of Catholic theology can be deduced by logical operations'. A writer who betrays so naive an idea of the basic distinction between the truth that reason discerns and the truth that divine revelation alone secures, is scarcely able to approach his task with confidence. This is not to ask that Mr Heppenstall should *accept* a Christian synthesis, but a 'strict neutrality' requires that he should do justice to the views he criticises. Again, 'all metaphysic is based upon logic, and traditional metaphysic crumbles with traditional logic'. The easy generalisation disposes of the argument, and the whole structure of a natural theology, for instance, is made to stand or fall in a paragraph. Here is the fundamental weakness of the book. To deal with five major writers in just over a hundred pages, to give summaries of their main books (and, in the case of Claudel, this is excellently done), to apply wildly different critical categories (including the political: acceptance of Franco is a main touchstone): all this is to attempt the impossible, even though the author were to avoid the domestic jokes and bits of gossip that entitle him to call his book 'light-hearted'.

Mr Heppenstall should know (or should try to find out) what exactly 'liberalismus' means in the *Syllabus* of Pope Pius IX. To argue that the condemnation of 'progress' and 'liberalism' brought about the loss to the Church of the working-class (which Pius XI described as 'the great scandal of the nineteenth century') is convenient for a Marxist, but here again a critic ought to be careful about words. In a sentence, the 'liberalism' the popes have condemned is a secularist theory of the nature of man springing from the revolutionary movement of 1789 and after. It would be a bold spirit indeed who would want to rejoice unequivocally in that emancipation.

Daniel Rops's *Death, Where is thy Victory?* first appeared in France in 1934, and some indication of that fact would be helpful in the English edition, excellently translated by Viola Garvin. It is an impressive study in the redemptive work of Grace, and had Mr Heppenstall known of it he would doubtless have seen in this novel that obsession with sin ('what in a pagan novelist would pass for neurosis') which marks, too, the work of M. Mauriac. Laura Malaussène abandons herself to evil, finding in this single pursuit a pathetic and ultimately futile revenge for the injustice which wounded her as a girl. The instrument of her redemption is the very man who first invaded her integrity thirty years before. He goes to the Charterhouse, she to a Carmelite cell where *Igne me examinasti* provides a text for the explanation of her sufferings, of her sins even. M. Daniel-Rops faces his task squarely, and gives a minute and consistent

portrait of a woman's soul. His book is marred by those *longueurs* of analogy and commentary which seem endemic to French Catholic novelists and which perhaps explains why Charles Morgan is the most admired of English novelists in France. I. F.

**INTRODUCTION TO CONTEMPORARY CIVILIZATION IN THE WEST.** A Source Book, Vol. I, and accompanying Manual. (Columbia University Press; Cumberlege; 33s. 6d.)

From America comes this characteristically solid and even sumptuous 'volume of reading' prepared by the 'contemporary civilization staff' of Columbia University. It contains translations of documents to illustrate 'the making of contemporary civilization through the ideas and institutions which helped to make it'. The accompanying 'manual' (a 'fascicle' of 150 pp.) gives a sketch of European history, especially economic and social history, from the break-up of the Roman Empire to the end of the eighteenth century. The 'source book' itself is designed to introduce young Americans to the ideas or reflexions of the mind of Europe at different stages of this history; and here too the main emphasis falls on economic and political thought, with specimens of the moral philosophies implied thereby and an interest in the recurrent 'conflict' of faith and reason or tradition and criticism.

The outlook is rationalist or secularist: Christ is 'The Jewish Jesus of Nazareth'. No particular bias, however, appears in the field of politics and economics; and the comments on Christian institutions (monasticism for instance) are mostly fair. There are a few errors: St Bonaventure did not 'always condemn Aristotle'; and St Thomas's conception of Eternal Law has got out of perspective—but this is a fault due, probably, to the radically untheological and unmetaphysical standpoint of presentation. Everything is seen under a this-worldly and especially an institutional, political aspect.

To those who can cope with its point of view this compilation has much to offer. The translations are authoritative. The print is pleasant to read. K. F.

#### IN BRIEF

Those who missed Fr Gerald Vann's *Saint Thomas Aquinas* on its first appearance in 1940 will be glad to possess the reprint issued by Messrs. J. H. Dent at 7s. 6d. Douglas Organ publishes a useful re-issue of Dr. J. C. Heenan's *Priest and Penitent*, a popular discussion of the sacrament of Penance. From the same publisher comes a novel, *The End*, by Hugh Venning (9s. 6d.), set in the year 2045, and described in the blurb as 'the most moving, penetrating shot into the future ever published'. Peter Lunn's *Evil in High Places* (Methuen, 9s. 6d.) is a well-devised thriller, in which a triple murder is committed against the background of a Swiss skiing hotel. The latest 'Contact' Book, *Grand Perspective* (5s.) has articles by Harold Nicolson, Clive Bell, Peter Quennell on such diverse subjects as the future of British Industry, Mayfair, Redbrick University, and Mass. Observation on Religion.