

soporific affecting popular opinion comes from the belief we all innately share these days to the effect that the marvels of modern technology can solve any of the riddles of life.' Elsewhere he makes the pertinent remark, 'Ingenious as man is he cannot create life'.

The 'mystery of life' is a romantic illusion. Man in his own estimation has become the demiurge of the cosmos. He has lost all sense of dependence: his universe is a closed universe dependent on himself. The final principle on which all other assumptions rest is that of formal idolatry. That illusion can only be shattered by death—either in the spiritual or the physical order. It needed the catastrophic warning of 'that dramatic day when the dust clouds from the Far West hid the sun from the Capitol in Washington and darkened the Eastern cities' to initiate action within the sphere of soil erosion. Without such a warning books and educational reforms remain very ineffective—for they may perhaps gain a notional assent from the mind but do not engage the will. The only other source of permanent hope is the recognition of and submission to the truth that the cosmos, 'nature' and all things are indeed subject in the order of reality, of being, to the law of relativity—they are relative in relation to an Absolute by whom they are, move and have their being. The recognition of the fact that the Absolute *is* and that 'nature', the cosmos, man, *have* being, is the basis of religion, which St Thomas defines as a relation of order to God considered as the first principle of the creation and of the government of the world, and of prayer which is the cry of the creature to its creator expressed through worship. It may well be true, however, that only the crushing consequences of our refusal to respect the inter-relationship of all secondary causes and our dependence on them, will lead men to acknowledge the First Cause, on whom the latter depend. Mr Osborn has however presented us with a valuable insight into the inter-relatedness of those secondary causes as revealed by the findings of the sciences of biology, ecology and agronomy.

P. W. SINGLETON.

THE ANSWER TO COMMUNISM. By Douglas Hyde. (Paternoster Publications; 1s.6d.)

As a brief survey of the part played by Communism in this country, of the methods employed by the Communist Party, and of the theories underlying its activities, Mr Hyde's book is to be recommended. He recognises Communism as constituting a threat to all spiritual values as an undermining of family life with the ultimate object of setting up the all-powerful State in the place of God. Although Communism appears to be in the vanguard of every effort to crush the Capitalist system for the general benefit of the working classes, Mr Hyde is now convinced that the ideals of social justice are very far from being the driving force. Rather is it the case that social injustices are exposed, not in order that they may be the more quickly remedied, but in order that they may

be used for the achievement of Communist aims. In discussing these aims Mr Hyde concludes that although Marxist writers have dealt fully of the way in which they will be attained—revolution, dictatorship by the proletariat, etc., the form Communism will take after the success of the revolution, which is stressed as being of the utmost importance, will be most elastic. In fact, the long-hoped-for Utopia of a classless society finds its expression in a variety of ways, according to the particular desires of individual Communists.

Having regard to the materialistic conception of life adopted by Communism, and of Mr Hyde's long association with the Communist Party in this country, it shows remarkable intellectual honesty on his part that, once he began to question the foundations of his beliefs and found them to be lacking in substance, he should reject those ideals to which he had devoted the greater part of life, by becoming a Catholic. Maintaining that the problem of Communism is a spiritual one, that men turn to it in order that they may satisfy their desire for spiritual sustenance, Mr Hyde finds the answer to Communism in renewed activity on the part of Christians, and in particular Catholics, in whose hands lies the real answer. To combat Communism it is necessary to show the zeal exercised by the Communists, and to demonstrate that the Catholic Faith has a real meaning and that the Papal Encyclicals contain within themselves the basis of a really just social order.

The difficulty, of course, is that so few people do in fact see any spiritual problem. They may well be suffering from lack of spiritual direction in their lives, but are quite unaware of the existence of any other but purely material needs. This, of course, is the real problem, and it will not be solved, as Mr Hyde rightly points out, by superficial criticism of Communism or anything savouring of Communist activity. No mere denunciation of Communism as being a kind of un-British subversive organisation sponsored by a foreign power will carry weight. What is needed is the realisation that Communism is fundamentally wrong, and that no matter what good it may appear to be doing on the surface, if allowed to be carried to its logical conclusion, it will bring into being a society founded completely upon a false conception of the purpose of man's existence.

It is here that Christians must take up the challenge, but as Mr Hyde emphasises, only by their being aware of the nature of the force they are combating will they be able to make men realise that there is an answer to materialism; that Communism is not the solution to economic difficulties, and that Christianity is not, as is so often maintained, a reactionary force in the present day world.

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