

in a single chapter and to include in it a critique of Dialectical Materialism.

With much that Dr. James is trying to tell us we are in hearty agreement, as well as with his main line of argument. Especially valuable is his interpretation of Nazism, of whose power to satisfy—even in poisoning—starved needs and cravings in the depths of human nature so few in this country seem sensible. Instructive, too, is his analysis of the origins and outcome of Protestantism and secularism, and his indictment of secular education and its results. Those of us who share the belief, urged by Mr. Middleton Murry, that the imposition of a national scheme of compulsory religious education at the present juncture would exacerbate rather than cure the disease, will find in Dr. James's plea for curricula in his own line of studies in schools and universities a valuable suggestion towards a way out of the dilemma. This book, for all its shortcomings and occasional nebulosities and inconsequences, will supply a rudimentary ground-plan for a course of studies of the past which will help to prepare the ground for a less God-forsaking and inhuman future.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

RELIGION IN SCIENCE AND CIVILISATION. By Sir Richard Gregory, F.R.S. (Macmillan; 12s. 6d.)

In his Preface to this book the late Sir Richard Gregory wrote that his main idea had been to show how religion and science are interwoven with the history of civilisation. (Under 'science' he frequently includes all rational thought, and under 'religion' he deals mainly with the mystical element.) He succeeds in this object; but much of the book goes beyond this programme and is largely vitiated by an outlook which is extremely confused on the relation of reason to revelation, among other matters, and calls for fundamental criticism.

Although the book abounds in criticism of orthodox Christianity, it is difficult to find any trace of an understanding of it. Indeed special praise is given to those enlightened elements who 'ask for nothing more than belief in a Supreme Being who created the universe, established laws which rule it, and watches the evolution of man upon the earth.' It did not occur to the author that Christians are characterised by belief in the Incarnation and the access to God thereby given to man. For this rejection of Christ-centred religion we can blame some of the characteristics of English scientific education in the late nineteenth century. First, there is much anthropology in this book, and nowhere has the author escaped from the presupposition

that studies in primitive religion have reduced Christianity to the level of other religions, and all of them to a level below the credence of educated men; there is no hint that he had any appreciation of an outlook such as that of Karrer's *Religions of Mankind*. He was so impressed with the numerous analogies between Christian and non-Christian beliefs, ritual, and art, that he failed to realise that the latter are based on myth, and represent gropings towards the former, the full self-revelation of God, based on solid facts and deeds. Again, his treatment of the Bible depends on a mistaken view of the doctrine of inerrancy, derived from the Puritan tradition. Again, there is complete indifference to the power of the intellectual approach to religion, and ignorance of the range of natural reason; along with this is a thorough-going relativism in ethics. And there is an immense optimism; a Pelagian belief in the power of unaided mankind for unending self-sustained advance: 'Doctrine and rituals . . . are only ancillary ends to a universal faith in the possibility of ascending towards the highest good by human endeavour.'

Perhaps it is in this optimism, with its vague talk of lofty ideals and devotion to progress, that we can find the best elements in Sir Richard's outlook. For it implies a whole-hearted respect for truth, a realisation of the need for self-sacrificing effort, and a sincere attachment to personal integrity and social justice. In this book we find natural science treated always as an adventure of the mind and not merely as a means to the control of nature. It is taken for granted that science cannot rightly be subordinated to politics nor exploited for propaganda. Further, we find, throughout, the conviction that men need for their happiness not merely material welfare but ideals, and ideals adapted to their culture but essentially unlimited. The author has certainly succeeded in showing that religious aspirations, rational thought and natural science have been integral parts of civilisation and have acted therein as leavening influences—in contrast to the view that economic factors determine culture. All these are truths that need emphasis to-day. None the less, they are here presented without a proper rational basis, without relation to the spiritual nature of man and to his creation and redemption; they are grounded only on a vague liberal tradition which retains little trace of its origin in a vigorous European Christendom.

It is unfortunate that a book which contains much useful data on social anthropology, primitive religion, and early science, so much material for the history of culture and the place of natural science therein, and which calls so sincerely

for the integrity of scientific workers and for a maximum of human effort at perfection, should be thus spoiled. A modern approach to the study of primitive religion, with an appreciation of the works of von Hugel, Maritain, and Christopher Dawson, would make possible an exceedingly useful work with the same object on sounder lines.

E. F. CALDIN.

WITCHCRAFT. By Charles Williams. (Faber and Faber; 12s. 6d.)

When the vulgar trappings of the romantic witch have been put away with Grimm's Fairy Tales and the Ingoldsby Legends, there remain innumerable approaches to the study of the cult: the metaphysical, the anthropological, the medical, and the severely rational. Mr. Williams is content to study witchcraft in relation to the Church, and does not attempt any precise definition of the origins of the machinery of magic adopted by the Satan against whom the Church contended. He outlines the mysteries which terrified the Roman world, but does not bother to analyse them as the degenerate forms, themselves, of Egyptian and palaeolithic sources. Perhaps, even, he does not feel that they were this. He acknowledges his debt to the masterly scepticism of Charles Lea, and the prodigiously informed credulity of Dr. Montague Summers. But Professor Margaret Murray and the Dianic cult are not even given space to be dismissed. Miss Murray is obliquely mentioned in a footnote, but, like Egypt, entirely escapes the index.

After a study of the classical world and the magic which faced the early fathers, Mr. Williams shows the development of the idea of the Devil, and the fight of the Church through the Dark Ages to combat 'malice'—a fight which intensified after the Crusading era and the battle against the external enemy, which meant (though this point is not made) that more attention could be paid to the oldest of the internal heresies. He gives accounts, fascinating and horrifying as they must always be, of the trials and the Sabbat. He examines the *Malleus Maleficarum*, Sprenger and Kramer's text-book of the proper conduct of the trials of witches: trials so sincerely conceived and in the majority of instances justly conducted, and so hideously lacking, in fact, in opportunity to allow innocence to escape. There is a separate chapter about England, emphasising the point that in law torture was not applied there (almost the only recorded instance is in fact the trial of the Templars) and that English witches, contrary to popular belief, were never legally burned, although he does not examine