

## REVIEWS

the gospels has made it impossible to regard Jesus as no more than one teacher (albeit the greatest) among others in history concerned to inculcate 'social ethics.' The centre of His 'Gospel' was religious rather than ethical." (p. 26.) Assertions made with fear of contradiction are commonly known as *opinions* and this is the note struck at the beginning of the chapter entitled *Jesus Christ*.

The selected passages indicate the author's own standpoint on the supernatural character of the Christian religion, but the chapter which should have been the best has perhaps the least convincing effect. It would have been more effective to omit the preoccupations of Dr. Kirk in favour of a more thoroughly theological introduction to a subject that is itself intimately connected with Sacred Doctrine. History is not the primary standard of Christian sociology.

CEOLFRID HERON, O.P.

**COMMUNISM AND MAN.** By F. J. Sheed. (Sheed & Ward; 5s.)

No-one but Catholic apologists, as the Catholic apologists themselves complain, is willing to state what he believes about MAN—to say, "Such I believe him to be and thus I will treat him." The apologist is left to infer concepts of human nature from whatever indications his opponent's writings offer, and so he frequently both formulates and attacks his opponent's case. Marx, as the present writer points out, never defines what he means by "matter" or what he means by "man" sufficiently for the purpose of refutation. Marx indeed had little use for any conception of the human essence "as a dumb internal generality which merely *naturally* unites the many individuals" (*Theses on Feuerbach* vi). Impatient of the apparent ineffectuality of metaphysical contemplation, he sidetracked the philosophical problem of universals into the social problem of revolution. The skill with which he did so has been a stumbling-block to his critics.

Three lines of criticism seem to be available, the first practical and matter-of-fact culminating in "So you see what Communism leads you to," the second expository and doctrinal setting the teaching of Marx against the teaching of the Church and assisting the reader to make comparisons and draw conclusions; this is the line taken in the present book. About half is devoted to explaining what Marx taught, about half to explaining the Church's teaching on the nature of man and of society and the dependence of both on God. A short final section, *The Remaking of Society*, is heavily loaded with quotations from the social Encyclicals. The book is happily free from the blind impetuosity of so much anti-Marxist literature. We are urged not to forget, and the author himself never quite forgets, that the Marxist (not always, it is true, but frequently enough) is a man who has seen

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a vision and can be won only by a vision more burning than his own.

The third line of criticism, which we still await with prayers, is that, simply, of vision. For unless we have burning minds it will avail us little to have an appreciative ear for what the author names the "deadly criticism," the "fierce indignation" of the encyclicals and the "burning words" of the Pope. And, with whatever care we warn our readers, we shall not easily avoid the fatal error of patronising those who have taken to themselves the name of enemies of Christ.

BERNARD KELLY.

PEACE AND PACIFISM. By Humphry Beevor. (Centenary Press; 5s.)

The confusion engendered by divergent types of pacifist argument and programme, and by attempts to prove sound theses by the aid of unsound arguments, has greatly increased the difficulty of the real problem, the problem of the morality of modern war, itself; and there was every need for a sane and sober ordering of the whole field of inquiry. The author of this book has supplied it. He dismisses as useless the attempts to build up a thesis, one way or the other, on isolated Gospel texts; for isolated texts can be made to prove anything; he examines the claims of absolute pacifism in the light of the spirit of the Gospels, and finds them unsatisfactory; he then goes on to deal with the traditional theology of war and its contemporary applications, and shows the practical impossibility of the conditions for a just war being fulfilled to-day. This is only the first part of his work of clearing up confusion. He next proceeds to examine types of peace movement, shows the weakness which necessarily follows a lack both of dogmatic background and of constructive policy not for a problematic future but for the present. The duty of preventing war is one which lies upon us here and now: how are we to set about it? "Work for peace and work for social justice cannot be regarded as belonging essentially to different departments . . . for the achievement of social justice is an essential precondition of any true and permanent state of peace. And neither peace nor social justice will ever be achieved apart from the rediscovery of the full implications of the Christian religion."

At some points in the book a statement or an approach seems to call for challenge; but these, though sometimes important in themselves, are only incidental to the main argument of the book; and for that argument, its lucidity, and its sobriety, we can only be deeply grateful. It is more than time that a greater unity of thought were achieved among Christians on this pressing problem. This study must surely prove a powerful influence in bringing it about.

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