

OUR CULTURE: Its Christian Roots and Present Crisis (S.P.C.K.; 5s. 0d.)

OUR EMERGENT CIVILISATION. Planned and edited by Ruth Nanda Anshen (Harper; \$4.50)

THE CHURCH AND THE CHURCHES. By K. L. Carrick Smith (S.C.M. Press; 7s. 6d.)

Our Culture is a collection of lectures delivered at Alleyn's College, Dulwich, in 1944 by Canon Demant, Professor Hodges, Christopher Dawson, Dorothy Sayers and Maurice Reckitt. The general theme is the tragic disintegration of Christian civilisation in the West. The analysis is in terms of a culture that has forgotten its roots: religion, philosophy, education, aesthetic and work—all alike need to be assessed afresh, in order 'to gain some insight into the Christian Religion by examining what has been its influence upon our culture, what is happening to our culture today, and what is required if the positive gains of that culture are to be preserved and developed' (Canon Demant).

If one finds Christopher Dawson's lecture on Christian Education the most penetrating contribution to the series, that is not to disparage the worth of the remainder, which are all alike animated by a realistic understanding of the gravity of our present situation. The importance of Mr Dawson's paper lies in its scrutiny of a territory in which optimistic technocracy has had its own way without serious criticism. 'The educationalists have not really faced the disconcerting fact that the more education has advanced, at least quantitatively, the more our civilisation has become secularised, so that the separation of our culture from its religious basis seems to be directly related to the spread of universal education'. A true Christian education is not a merely extrinsic baptism of secular knowledge. It should be 'an initiation into another world: the unveiling of spiritual realities of which the natural man is unaware and which change the meaning of existence. And I think it is here that our modern education—including our religious education—has proved defective. There is in it no sense of *revelation*'.

It is, therefore, only through 'the re-discovery of the spiritual world and the restoration of man's spiritual capacities that it is possible to save humanity from self-destruction'. Mr Dawson has penetrated to the core of the cultural anarchy of our time, and has, too, indicated the essential condition of its restoration.

Our Emergent Civilization is the fourth volume in the ambitious 'Science of Culture Series', and brings together such disparate writers as Professor Catlin, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Jacques Maritain, Julian Huxley and Professor Brand Blanshard in tracing 'the framework of a new unity of civilization and culture which is emerging beneath the apparent chaos of present-day ideas and ideals'. It might not be unfairly described as a manifesto for U.N.E.S.C.O., though it has no official connection with that body. The interest of the book lies rather in the capacity of its editor to discern a common

pattern beneath what are radically divergent views on man's nature and his destiny, than in any inherent unity of opinion revealed by the individual contributors. For Professor Montague, writing on 'The Future of Theism', 'to attribute to a God of Love the creation of the world of things as they are is blasphemy', and we must 'purge our religion of the immoral notion of divine omnipotence'. The analogy of God is Prometheus rather than Zeus, to be thought of 'not as a King of kings but as a Comrade of comrades, needing our aid as we need his in that unending pursuit of the ideal which for God no less than for man makes up the meaning of existence'. It need scarcely be said that M. Maritain, in dealing with 'A New Approach to God', is of another opinion (cf. the May issue of *BLACKFRIARS*).

It is perhaps not altogether just to single out such striking conflicts of opinion, though examples might be multiplied. The book is of the greatest importance as a mirror of our times, as a source-book for the religious and intellectual perplexities of a society that has lost the unitive principle that can alone resolve its divisions. Individually, the contributions are profoundly interesting. Thus what one supposes must be Ananda Coomaraswamy's last writing—'Art, Man and Manufacture'—reveals once more his unsurpassed clarity of judgment and his tireless insistence on the metaphysical implications of human work. And Werner Jaeger's 'Future of Tradition' has the authority we should expect.

Mr Carrick Smith, in *The Church and the Churches*, deals with the Christian bodies to which the previous books make frequent appeals for aid in the task of cultural restoration. His purpose is an admirable one: to show 'how differently Christians approach some of the vital questions of religion, and how fundamentally honest and worthy of respect these different approaches are'. Mr Smith sees no hope in the proposals made from time to time by eirenical groups which seek 'a common minimum of faith and order as a basis for reunion between the rival Christian churches'. 'It cannot be done' is his simple comment, and he provides instead a sincere and—in intention—an objective account of the churches and of the 'spiritual riches which men find and cherish in their own denominational traditions'. It is, of course, a delicate and thankless task. No reader will feel that his own tradition receives the treatment it deserves. On the other hand, no honest reader can feel other than grateful for a generous attempt at sympathetic understanding—the prerequisite of any work for Christian unity.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

THESE CHANGING YEARS. By Bernard Wall. (Harvill Press; 5s.)

The world in which we live is one that has become strange even to such comparatively young men as the author of this book. It is to them that immature minds look for enlightenment and the older generation for achievement. But what can they achieve in the midst of ruins, equipped only with tools of which they acquired