

lukewarmness—supported by concrete examples and adequate statistics—of our time and in the light of the Encyclical on the Mystical Body urges the adoption of the only possible remedy: We are saved by his Passion we shall only get out of our present *impasse* by sharing in it as co-redeemers—with obvious limitations, but after the pattern of Mary and permitting nothing but the inescapable limits to restrict our ardent charity. It is both practical and illuminating as may be expected from the author's long experience of Catholic activities and his earlier books. But one could have wished that he had said more about the necessity of solid instruction and the duty it imposes on his fellow priests. He does indeed mention 'the confraternities now established in parishes, the one for the teaching of doctrine as applied to the Christian life, the other in honour of our Lord in his most holy Sacrament'; but the fact is that the Christian doctrine confraternity is not established in numerous parishes—it ought to be, but it is not. And neglect of instruction is such that there are many who would have greatly profited by this book, but who will be unable to appreciate many of its most telling and comparatively simple points.

EDWARD QUINN.

GOD AND GOODNESS. By J. W. C. Wand, P.C., D.D., Bishop of London. (Eyre and Spottiswoode; 5s.)

This is a kindly book. Dr Wand addresses himself to the modern world in terms expressive of his own wide sympathies, calculated to obtain a fair hearing for the lessons he wishes to inculcate. Scientists, humanists, politicians and 'bright young things' are treated with respect, and offered a simple dosage of warm approval mingled with gentle remonstrance. There is nothing of brutality in his presentation of Christian doctrine. God is described as 'so richly personal that we cannot speak of him as a Person, but only under the figure of multiple personality'. In the same spirit, many problems of morality are dealt with by reference to the 'mind of Christ', without mention of the Ten Commandments.

Doubtless, Christianity is a powerful force in politics, in social life, both national and international, in the field of culture and education, in the sanity it confers on the mind and whole personality of the individual; but the very use of such arguments, lends support to the not uncommon idea of Christianity as a utility, an element of life, a department of state. There is all the difference in the world between the approval of an infant for its parents, and a benevolent uncle's patronage of a favoured nephew.

ROMUALD HORN, O.P.

CHRISTMAS IN THE VILLAGE SQUARE. By Henri Ghèon. Translated by Sr Marie Thomas, O.P.

The original of this little play must be a superb piece of spontaneity and freshness. A strolling band of gipsies, camping in the village square on Christmas Eve, find themselves the centre of a group of interested spectators, and decide to perform an extempore

play of 'The Sacred Mysteries of the Childhood of Our Lord'. Chinese fashion, we see the preparations and backstage work, and each member of the company simply and ingenuously presents his own conception of the various characters he portrays. The story, from the Annunciation to the Finding in the Temple, is based on the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary, and is told, in a simple and straightforward manner, without any unnecessary additions. In spirit and in manner of presentation it very closely resembles the miracle plays, and, like them, is essentially suitable for presentation by amateurs.

Its material demands on the amateur group will be slight, for props are reduced to a minimum, but it will demand sincerity and conviction in the acting, and here the players will need to be amateurs in the strictest sense of the word: lovers . . . lovers of acting as a means of Expressing their Faith.

Henri Ghèon wrote the original for such a group: 'Les Compagnons des Jeux': which he had founded for this type of work, and who gave up much of their spare time to rehearsals, and to performances in many parts of France.

The American translation of this play was made primarily to be acted by members of Rosary College Illinois, and only later, it would appear, was it published in book form. While it doubtless makes a convincing and attractive play, to one who has read the English translation by Eric Crozier, it just misses that quality of poetry which makes the latter a joy to read as well as to see and hear. (This version was presented many times in England during 1943 by the Canterbury Pilgrim Players, the play being produced by Eric Crozier.) Perhaps it is that the English tongue finds the American phrases a little stiff and pedantic, but somehow they have not got that tang of vividness which must characterise the speech of so colourful a people. The gipsy boy who describes the girl in the crowd as ' . . . the young coquette, who is laughing with her face in her neckerchief . . . ' has less life and character than his English counterpart, who wheedles his way into the hearts of the onlookers as he tells them of the same girl: ' . . . Sweet-and-twenty, with her kiss curl, giggling into her shawl. . . . '

But that simple and delicate charm so characteristic of the French, must always be hard put to it to survive translation, and while we applaud Dr Marie Thomas for an attractive and very able piece of work, can we blame her if she is not also a poet?

R. HEDDON.