

THE OTHER WORLD According to Descriptions in Medieval Literature. By Howard Rollin Patch. (Harvard University Press and Geoffrey Cumberlege; 40s.)

Great progress has been made of late in assimilating the significance of folk lore and myths in relation to Christian beliefs and practices. A century ago scarcely any one had considered the possibility of a fundamental link between these natural and supernatural spheres. Then came the modernist scare which made the orthodox run a hundred miles from comparative studies of the 'natural' religions and their counterparts in the Faith. Now that the scare has subsided we can begin to see how the whole world and all its religions bear some traces of that faith because it was all made in the Word who was eventually himself to be made flesh. *The Other World*, then, does not give us a summary of medieval theology concerning the beatific vision or the resurrection of the flesh, but begins with the oriental and classical descriptions of the Isle of the Blessed and takes the reader through the visions and legends which describe the finding of the Earthly Paradise. It is always across the water, and usually approached by some terrifyingly narrow bridge; at the centre lies the castle, the final stronghold to be won. This recording of all the different myths and their medieval versions is a work of scholarship and of interest to the student of medieval literature. But for the one who has considered the true Way to the Kingdom of heaven it possesses an added significance. The medievals for the most part did not treat these themes from a merely secular point of view. They are outward signs of a deeper meaning which Dante above all understood and described. Dr Patch's book is therefore patient of considerable mystical and spiritual interpretation and assists in the linking up of myth with the Myth which is the Mystery of the Kingdom of heaven.

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

JESUS AND HIS PARABLES. By J. Alexander Findlay, M.A., D.D. (The Epworth Press; 10s. 6d.)

This is a Methodist publication. Its author is concerned to show the 'humanism' of our Lord's parables. He views them as deeply sympathetic sketches of how men and women do in fact behave and of God's dealings with them, rather than as morality tales or matter for theology. Like so many Protestants, he readily ignores all the centuries of Christian interpretation that lie between us and Jesus Christ. Yet this neglect is partly counterbalanced by a freshness of approach, an evangelical familiarity with and love of the text itself, a catholic respect for even fallen human nature and a deep reverence for God made man.

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