

## REVIEWS

### EDUCATION

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND EDUCATION. By M. O'Leary, with an Introduction by Christopher Dawson. (Burns Oates; 5s.)

In the hurlyburly of contemporary educational dispute it is almost impossible to maintain a clear vision of the ideal for which Catholics are striving. In the welter of parliamentary debate and the kaleidoscope of 50 per cent., 75 per cent., and 100 per cent. it is to be feared that we shall forget what we are looking for: not money, not efficiency, not good sanitation and lighting, except as means to an end, and that end *Christian* education. For this reason the hundred or so pages of clear thinking which Mother O'Leary has given us are invaluable. Yet opportune though the appearance of this book is it must not be considered as a polemic tract composed merely to deal with Mr. Butler: it covers the whole field of culture from the infant school to the research library, and Mother O'Leary shows from the Scriptures, St. Thomas and the Papal Encyclicals what the Church thinks about education, or rather what the Church demands of education. The purpose of education is to be found in the words of Christ, 'that they know Thee, the only True God.' The Catholic school exists to produce Catholic *persons*. 'To be educated in a truly Christian manner is to be built into a great and living temple as a stone is built into a cathedral, or to develop as an ever more effective member of a corporate personality of which Christ is the Head.' The acceptance of the Headship of Christ means, as has been clearly explained in the recent encyclical *Mystici Corporis*, the full blossoming of our own personality in Christ. The loss of dogmatic religious principles at the Renaissance meant the loss of this ideal and led to the disintegration and dehumanisation of modern education with the manifold complications which still disfigure it. A boy or girl now leaves school with a smattering of innumerable unrelated subjects, a bit of Latin, a bit of science, a bit of history, a bit of biology, a bit of French, but with no idea how to use these bits because he has no idea what he was made for or how he is to get there. It is this tragedy which the modern world seeks to remedy; but its search will be in vain if it co-ordinates and organises all this material of learning without any sign pointing where it is leading. The symbol of the failure of the modern school is the modern headmaster who instead of having the status of paterfamilias, spends his whole day signing chits for empty milk bottles and sending in attendance returns. Here Catholics have an important contribution to make. 'Can we, even in adverse circumstances, teach our children respect and due appreciation for personality? Can we still give them standards of truth and honesty, modesty and clean-living, of gentleness and chivalry? We who in this generation have spent so much time and

thought on scholastic methods, on the minutiae of teaching, can we not make it our business to study in fullest detail the ways of Christian life and how to practise our children in them?' The answer is that we can because we have been taught the purpose for which man is made: but in the past we have succumbed to the atmosphere of a hostile materialistic world and lost sight of this purpose in a confusion of methods and technique. Are we still succumbing? It is to be feared that we are not reacting vigorously enough and that we shall be content to fight only for the means of maintaining the status quo. How many of us would dare to admit that 'the Catholic educator is ready to make heavy sacrifices of money, advancement, even of a certain kind of efficiency, to guard against the exploitation of man by man'—the slavery of the mind. This we may have to do if we are to show 'the figure of Christ as the originator of a New Order breaking in upon the Old in the midst of desolation.' To-day Catholics have to maintain the greatest cultural tradition ever known, and because of its greatness and otherness from the world of business and war there is a grave danger that they will not do it justice. Here is a book which does justice to this tradition and at the same time reaches the ordinary man who has to carry on the struggle in factory and workshop and, above all, in his own home with his own children. More than ever before do the times demand of the rank and file of Catholics hard thinking combined with prayer and a life lived close to the Person of Jesus Christ. This is the finest thing of its kind given us for many years and should be in the hands of all Catholics, for the business of education is the business of all, but especially of parents and teachers who are 'to prepare the world for the outpouring of grace by the Holy Spirit of God.'

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

BEYOND THE WHITE PAPER: an Evangelistic Programme for Education. By Reginald Lumb. (Dacre Press; 3s. 6d.)

Those who despair of the Church of England as an ally in the schools-battle ought to read this little book, which is a vigorous reaction against what seems the uncertain and compromising policy of the leaders of the National Society. The author has every right to speak, for he has been prominent in the movement to improve the quality of religious teaching. On page 40 is a tragic-comic picture of what happens when some village school is to be 'surrendered.' Mr. Lumb is all for an evangelistic (*i.e.* missionary) spirit, and for the Church Catechism as against agreed syllabuses; he thinks the clergy ought to be trained as teachers, and has other constructive suggestions to make also—good luck to him.

F.H.D.

SCOTTISH UNIVERSITY. By J. H. Burns and D. Sutherland-Graeme. (The Darien Press, Edinburgh; 7s. 6d.)

Two students have written a book about life in a Scottish University, drawing chiefly on their own experience at Edinburgh. The