

jects as divorce and birth control quite without taking clerical pot-shots at those who hold opposing views. This book would seem to address itself more directly to the Catholic reader than the author's best-selling "Peace of Soul" and "Lift Up Your Heart," but the non-Catholic, though he may occasionally be given pause by the book's elaborately aphoristic manner, will find its matter a helpful finger-post to "the community of love."

Religious Book Notes

THE TRUE BELIEVER. By Eric Hoffer. Harper. \$2.50. It is necessary to say at once, and to say without restraint, that this little book is the most penetrating analysis of mass movements in the entire corpus of sociological literature. One may call the roll of all the sociologists of our era, including those who have specifically addressed themselves to Mr. Hoffer's subject, and find in their works nothing quite so profound, nothing quite so clean and clinical and clear. The wonder of it grows with the realization that the author was blind until his fifteenth year, never spent a day in school, and spent much of his life knocking around the West, first as a gold miner, then as a migratory laborer (with a library card in dozens of railroad towns), and, since 1943, as a longshoreman on the Pacific Coast.

"The true believer" is the fanatic, the man without whom a mass movement would be impossible. He is a frustrated man, a man who has no faith in himself, a man who seeks freedom from the responsibility of individual decision. His cause is immaterial, so long as it enables him to lose himself in it and to call it holy. It may be Nazism or Communism or Fascism or Catholicism or Americanism. Indeed, the fanatical Communist and the fanatical Catholic hate each other as only brothers can, for they are brothers under the skin, and neither has anything in common with the sober and skeptical liberal. This is only one of a series of observations, all quotable, on fanaticism, on suspicion, on doctrine, on leadership, on propaganda, on coercion, on action, and on other aspects of mass movements. The book is more than a unique achievement. It is required reading.

—ROBERT BIERSTEDT.

BEYOND EAST AND WEST. By John C. H. Wu. Sheed & Ward. \$3.50. Judging by Lin Yutang, Jade Snow Wong, and now John C. H. Wu, the Chinese write autobiography as naturally as the Irish do poetry. In "Beyond East and West" Dr. Wu, Lin Yutang's

friend and a leading international lawyer, tells his life story with the humor-laced contemplative charm that we have come to recognize as characteristically Chinese. No doubt his book will be called a Chinese "Seven-Storey Mountain," for it describes a spiritual odyssey in the course of which the author was converted from Methodism to Catholicism.

However, while he reports events of public interest, such as his post-Pearl Harbor flight from Japanese imprisonment and his appointment as Minister to the Vatican, Dr. Wu lays more stress than Thomas Merton does on the purely spiritual aspects of his confession. For example, in the account of his friendship with Mr. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Dr. Wu affords us a unique look into the mind and heart of the great American jurist. When he touches on his dissolute hours among the sing-song girls, it is to point up the potential sanctity in the souls of the unfortunate prostitutes. If he mentions his translation of the Psalms and the New Testament, it is not to call attention to the fact that it has become the standard Chinese version, but to bring out its spiritual impact on his own life and that of others. His confession, in fact, is persuasively dedicated to the conclusion that Christianity, being of East and West, is beyond both.

—ANN F. WOLFE.

DEMOCRACY AND THE CHURCH. By James Hastings Nichols. Westminster Press. \$4.50. All churches claim that they are the strongest bulwarks of democracy. Are such claims justified? Professor Nichols endeavors to answer that question, writing as an historian and not as a pamphleteer or special pleader.

His answer, based on a study of European and American life in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is that some churches have indeed undergirded democracy, but others are generally found upholding autocracy. He divides the churches into two groups. The first group he calls "Puritan Protestantism," in which he lumps together Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Unitarians, Quakers, Disciples of Christ, the Salvation Army, and the evangelical party of the Anglican Church. These he finds to have effectively supported liberty, democracy, and brotherhood.

The second group, consisting of Roman Catholicism, Continental Lutheranism, and the high church party of the Anglican communion, has generally been antagonistic to liberal democracy, he contends.

Professor Nichols frankly admits that he writes as a liberal Protestant



SATAN

Edited by Father Bruno de Jesus-Marie

This enormous book of essays on the devil covers his personality, activities and recreations rather completely. The devil in art, in contemporary literature, in the Divine Comedy, in Milton and Blake, in Gogol and Dostoevsky; possession, pseudo-possession and dream demons are a few of the subjects treated. Anyone with a professional or amateur interest in the Prince of Darkness, indeed anyone who knows enough to take evil seriously, will realize the value of the book. 525 pages, 24 illustrations \$5.50

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by Kate O'Brien

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by Caryl Houselander

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and that therefore he cannot be neutral although he can and does aim to be objective. He certainly will be charged with bias, particularly by Roman Catholic readers rendered sensitive on this subject by Paul Blanchard's attacks.

Of course, a historian can be objective only in the gathering of the facts. Inevitably his own personal interpretation of those facts will become a part of his presentation. As a good historian Dr. Nichols has been fair and objective in his presentation of the facts. This reviewer also agrees substantially with his interpretation of the facts, but recognizes that others will disagree violently with his interpretation, as is their privilege.

Nichols is in effect saying, "Let us be done with charges and counter-charges couched in generalities. Let's look at the record." This he has done in a calm and scholarly fashion, and the book deserves a reading of like kind. However, it is more apt to generate a heated discussion than to win a judicial appraisal of the presentation on its merits. —KENNETH D. MILLER.

THE HIGH GREEN HILL. By Gerald Vann, O.P. Sheed & Ward. \$2.25. Father Vann, one might say, is England's Fulton Sheen, or it may be the other way around. In any case, the English Dominican is a popular preacher and retreat master and exercises considerable influence as the author of many books for the spiritual guidance of the layman. In "The High Green Hill" he has collected a number of his recent essays, sermons, and BBC broadcasts.

Most of the chapters in this book suggest simple, positive approaches to the creative service of God. From sources as widely different as Dostoevsky, St. Augustine, D. H. Lawrence, and a pastoral of the Dutch Reformed Church, Father Vann illustrates his variations on the theme that life, if it is not to be lived merely on the surface, needs religion's dimension of depth. He is in a sense the devil's advocate, for he warns that turning Satan into a scapegoat "is the perfect form of self-stultification." His explanation of the Mass should prove of particular interest to those who see in it only "empty mummeries." In Confession and Health of Soul, while admitting that "an immense amount of work, of study and cooperation between psychologist and theologian remains to be done," he blueprints the penitent's vital role in the modern world. He defines the social responsibility of art, whose true purpose is "to keep alive the souls of men, revealing to them the mystery and wonder that lie at the heart of all created

things." Cut off from its supernatural roots, modern art, "often esoteric and unintelligible to the many," can only fail in its social responsibility.

—A. F. W.

CHRIST AND CULTURE. By H. Richard Niebuhr. Harper. \$3.50. The problem of defining the true relationship between Christianity and civilization has been occupying the minds of some of our greatest contemporary Christian thinkers. John Baillie, Karl Barth, Nicolas Berdayev, Emil Brunner, T. S. Eliot, Reinhold Niebuhr, Jacques Maritain, and Arnold Toynbee have all written important essays or major books on this subject.

Professor Richard Niebuhr of Yale, renowned as a first-rate scholar in the field of Christian ethics and sociology, has joined the ranks of the theologians and historians who have dealt with this basic problem, and his book proves that he is by no means out of place in their company.

Niebuhr identifies five viewpoints on the subject that are represented in the Christian thought of the past and present. First, Christ is set over against culture; Christians must separate themselves from the world. Secondly, Christianity and civilization are identified as in the church of the middle ages, or as the equating of Christianity and democracy today. This is the "Christ of Culture." Thirdly, Christianity is set above culture as in the thinking of Thomas Aquinas. Or, fourth, Christianity and culture are thought of as in tension or in paradox, which Niebuhr claims was Luther's position. Finally, Christianity is conceived as transforming culture, exemplified by Augustine and Calvin.

Niebuhr denies that any of these solutions is the true Christian answer, nor does he offer one of his own. There is truth in each position which will be helpful to the individual in finding his answer. There is a relativism and an existentialism in Niebuhr's position which will not satisfy dogmatists or

souls craving certainty. But a reading of this book will reveal how many and varied are the considerations necessary for working out a Christian philosophy today. —K. D. M.

THE REVOLT AGAINST REASON. By Arnold Lunn. Sheed & Ward. \$3.25. Arnold Lunn, an English Catholic convert, has written here a greatly expanded version of "The Flight from Reason," which he published some twenty years ago. His thesis now, as then, is that nothing save a recrudescence of Catholic Christianity can prevent the total collapse of Western civilization. This view, of course, is held by others. What makes Mr. Lunn's presentation of it at least interesting is that by a familiar semantic device he identifies Catholicism with rationalism, a reliance upon reason, and all contrary doctrines with fideism, a reliance upon faith. Thus, Hilaire Belloc is a rationalist, Julian Huxley a fideist. And only a Catholic can conduct a free and impartial examination of miracles because, unlike the secular investigator, he is not required to subscribe to the "priestcraft of orthodox science." This is a transvaluation of values with a vengeance!

Mr. Lunn, in short, wants to show that everything opposed to Catholicism is not only unreasonable but also irrational. Irrationality, on this reading, becomes a residual category and has to include such otherwise disparate things as post-Cartesian philosophy, Lutheran theology, Darwinian evolution, both behavioristic and Freudian psychology, Marxian economics, logical positivism (really "illogical negativism"), surrealist painting, most of modern science—and Gertrude Stein. I admire the author's dialectic (except when he aims below the belt: "It is not fair to imply a close resemblance between Luther and Hitler"), and I would not disturb his faith—or reason—or whatever he wants to call it. I even recommend his book. Catholic and non-Catholic



—By Clare Leighton for "The Book of Psalms, The Book of Proverbs, The Book of Ecclesiastes."