

Religious Book Notes

COMMUNISM VERSUS RELIGION: The reports of intelligent world travelers are always interesting, and Professor Charles S. Braden, as an acknowledged authority on the religions of the world, knew whom he should interview if he wanted to discover just what impact upon the religions of the world has been made by the war and by the rise of Communism.

In "War, Communism, and World Religions" (Harper, \$3.50) he records the impressions formed as a result of interviews with religious leaders of all faiths, political big-wigs, educators, labor leaders, people of the right and the left. As Braden's travels took him to Japan, China, Indochina, India, the Moslem lands, and Israeli in a seven months' trip, a great deal of territory is covered in his account of what he saw and heard.

His book is discursive and the impressions gained often understandably contradictory in view of the present muddled state of the world. However, one fact stands out clearly in the entire story. The religions of the world have been profoundly shaken by the war, and even more so by the actual or threatened impact of Communism upon the life of their people.

Religionists around the world are confronted by an aggressive Communist movement which would cut the ground from beneath their feet. Few of the major faiths are countering with as clear-cut an ideology and a zeal as flaming as that proceeding from Moscow. Consequently, the outline given in the closing pages of the resources Christianity possesses to oppose the counterclaim of Communism is particularly valuable.

—KENNETH D. MILLER.

TERESIAN SPIRITUALITY: Father Marie-Eugène of the Child Jesus has a wide reputation abroad for the work he has performed in organizing retreats and conferences for various secular groups that desired to study the contemplative life of Carmel. Now he has published "I Want to See God" (Fides, \$5.75), the first of a two-volume series in which he will explore Teresian spirituality, based on his practical experiences of many years. Using the "Interior Castle" of St. Teresa as a model, he presents in "I Want to See God" the first three of the seven Mansions. This valuable synthesis demonstrates, as he says, that "the need and the time were at hand for a presentation in its integrity of the testimony and the doctrine of the masters who were the Reformers of Carmel." The title of the book comes from the inci-

dent when Teresa, as a child, was asked why she had tried to run away to battle the Moors and answered: "I went because I want to see God."

Father Marie-Eugène has composed a long but carefully organized exposition that should enable the intelligent but devout reader to come closer to the ineffable heights of Carmel. It is not aimed at those who already have reached those heights, but at the neophyte who has little knowledge how to begin.

—JOHN W. CHASE.

ROMAN CONVERT: "Before the Dawn," by Eugenio Zolli (Sheed & Ward, \$3.25), is the apologia of the former chief rabbi of Rome who in 1945, at the age of sixty-four, was baptized in the Catholic Church. It is less the record of a life than the history of a soul. In essence it is a testimonial of the mysterious ways of God's grace.

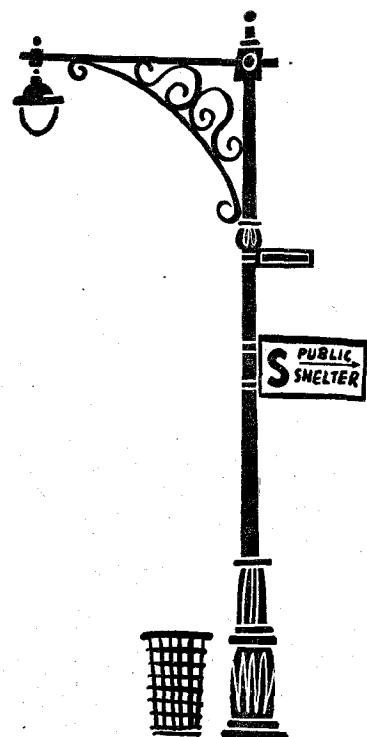
There was surely an indwelling of grace in the studious son of rabbinical ancestors who, in the little Austrian city where Jew and gentile lived together in harmony, prepared for life service as a rabbi. He was a sensitive child, moved by the poetry of snowflakes, the flame of *hanukkah*, the sight of a crucifix. At an early age he became an assistant rabbi, moved on to higher studies in universities and scholarly institutes, won international acclaim for saintliness and learning. At the time of the Nazi occupation of Rome he was head rabbi and rector of the rabbinical college there.

Throughout cruel personal trials and sorrows and in the course of erudite pursuits, Rabbi Zolli's thought never ceased to center on Christ's love. The dying flame of childhood's *hanukkah* had really lasted for sixty years, revealing no true cleavage between Hebraism and Christianity. It was this mystical irradiation and not, as some claim, the Pope's vast charity to Jewish victims of Nazi persecution, that led to the covenant with the Nazarene.

—ANN F. WOLFE.

FREUD FOR CATHOLICS: As psychoanalysis, psychiatry, psychotherapy, psychosomaticism, and a raft of other "psychos" become more and more a part of the modern American experience, it is of prime importance to Catholics in this country to understand, first, the meaning of these still rather mysterious phrases and practices, and, second, to obtain a clear picture of the Church's attitude toward such matters. There have been pamphlets, radio sermons, encyclicals, and several noteworthy books on this latter subject, but large gaps remain.

The appearance of "Psychoanalysis



and Personality" (Sheed & Ward, \$4), by Joseph Nuttin, a Belgian priest at the University of Louvain, is to be heartily welcomed as a most timely and valuable clarification of a difficult matter. He subtitles his book "A Dynamic Theory of Normal Personality," which is somewhat misleading as the first part of his study is primarily devoted to a convincing, impartial presentation of Freud and some of his followers. But it is obvious that the second half of this work is of deeper significance to those with technical knowledge; its aim is, he says, "to develop a conception of the dynamic structure of personality from the point of view of general psychology, in order to complete, positively, the one-sided pathological view which has been maintained by psychoanalysis."

A very fascinating book which no Catholic should miss if he wishes to understand the good and the bad in an increasingly important part of contemporary medical and psychological enterprise.

—J. W. C.

THE CHURCH BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN: While "The Church Under Communism" (Philosophical Library, \$2.75), a report to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, by a special commission of which George M. Drubrich was chairman, is beamed to the church leaders of Scotland, it contains a brief review of the status of the churches in Communist-dominated lands that will be illuminating to American readers. The survey of religious conditions in Russia, Bulgaria, East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugo-

slavia, and China provides ample documentation of "the tragedy that befalls society when religion is discarded and its moral sanctions flouted." But the report does not sufficiently bring out the fact that many of the churches brought these calamities upon themselves by their formalism and otherworldliness and by the irrelevance of their ministry to the needs of men today.

The commission does stress the point that "the strongest bulwark against Communism is a vital faith; the greatest peril a spiritual vacuum." Hence it pleads for more adult education in the Church of Scotland designed "to create a nucleus of convinced Christians able to strengthen the life of society and save it from the moral rot and social disintegration which secularism always brings." This would have been good advice to the churches of Russia, Hungary, and the rest. It is good advice for the churches of Scotland and America now.

—K. D. M.

THE CARMELITES' GUIDE: The revival of interest in Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, and the whole contemplative movement of Carmel is assuredly a deeply significant development of this century. By general consent St. Teresa herself is the chief figure, both as the practical guiding genius of the discalced Carmelites and as the most inspired, if not the most penetrating, of the mystic writers.

If ever there had been complaint that an up-to-date, full-length biography of her was lacking, it has now been thoroughly answered by Mme. Marcelle Auclair's "Teresa of Avila" (Pantheon, \$4.95). This is, indeed, a monumental biography, offering some of the most fascinating reading of our times—as well as pretty well disposing of this reviewer's long-held conviction that only a man could thoroughly understand Teresa's more worldly activities. The feminine view does show through fitfully, as on the occasion of Teresa's discovering that her confessor at Becedas was immoral and in love with her: "After this [the reformation of the priest] the two were united in a friendship that was completely blameless: it was not sin that had proved contagious but white-hot chastity."

However, there are few blemishes in this magnificent biography and Mme. Auclair can rest content that her ambitious project has been so fruitful. Equally pleasant are the fine design of the volume and the many lovely photographs—as well as the relatively low price. Just what André Maurois's preface adds to the book except a feeling of annoyance, this observer knows not.

—J. W. C.



NEW EDITIONS

The Architect and the Dimensions

THE third, revised and enlarged, edition of Siegfried Giedion's "Space, Time, and Architecture" (Harvard, \$12.50) is a large, handsome book packed with interesting facts and fine photographs. It is also a book with a thesis. Mr. Giedion believes that the equilibrium of an epoch, a civilization or a culture, may be measured by the "degree to which its methods of thinking and feeling coincide." He believes that we are suffering from a schism between thought and feeling, and have been for a hundred years; that we are living in a transitional age of great confusion. But he thinks, or would like to think, that "in spite of the seeming confusion there is nevertheless a true, if hidden unity, a secret synthesis, in our present civilization." He seeks to discover this hidden unity, which has not yet become "a conscious and active reality," through the study of our architecture; he looks to architecture for a reflection "of the progress our own period has made toward consciousness of itself—of its special limitations and potentialities, needs and aims. Architecture can give us an insight into this process just because it is so bound up with the life of the period as a whole. . . . It is the product of all sorts of factors—social, economic, scientific, technical, ethnological."

How well Mr. Giedion does with his argument each reader will decide for himself. I find him more successful as historian than as philosopher. I find him considerably less of a philosopher than was Heinrich Wölfflin, his teacher, whose "Principles of Art History" was noticed here some time ago. The "secret synthesis" that he seeks and sees does not become apparent to my eyes. But his survey of our architectural inheritance, beginning with the "organization of space" in the early Renaissance, is masterly, selective, and instructive. In his treatment of individual architects he calls a famous roll, and leaves us with a clear impression of the significance of each man's work. The scope of his book is large enough to include accounts of Sixtus V's evocation of baroque Rome, Haussmann's radical reorganization of Paris, Robert Maillart's beautiful bridges, and the revival of town planning after it had been set back a century and more by the forces of the industrial revo-

lution. This is a big book, and one that no reader will exhaust quickly.

Authoritative, readable, well illustrated, and innocent of philosophical pretensions, Talbot Hamlin's "Architecture through the Ages" (Putnam's, \$10) is the work of an objective historian—a work that has been called, by Lewis Mumford, "the most adequate summary of architectural history with which I am acquainted."

Behind the architects stand the construction engineers, and behind the engineers stand the mathematicians. (Perhaps it would be more accurate to reverse the order.) Indeed, mathematics is now so ubiquitously important—from our conception of the universe to our invention of cybernetic monsters—that our age may well come to be known, not as the atomic age, but as the mathematical age. As Tobias Dantzig declares in the fourth edition of "Number, The Language of Science" (Macmillan, \$5): "Mathematics is not only the model along the lines of which the exact sciences are striving to design their structure; mathematics is the cement which holds this structure together. A problem, in fact, is not considered solved until the studied phenomenon has been formulated as a mathematical law." This being so, those of us to whom mathematics is hardly more familiar than the Eleusinian mysteries may be glad that there are men like Professor Dantzig who are capable of writing books like "Number—A Critical Survey Written for the Cultured Non-Mathematician." With their help we can at least glimpse what goes on behind the symbolic curtain.

"Poems and Letters of John Keats" (Scribner's, \$1.75), edited by James R. Caldwell, joins The Modern Student's Library. Here is the best of the poetry, and enough of the letters to whet the appetite for more. Not for hypochondriacs—Morris Fishbein's "The Popular Medical Encyclopedia," revised (Doubleday, \$4.95). Recommended—Rachel Carson's "The Sea Around Us," and "Basic Selections from Emerson" (Mentor, 35¢ each); "The Pocket Book of Modern Verse" (50¢), edited by Oscar Williams; Dos Passos's "1919"; "Great Essays," edited by Houston Peterson; and "Winston Churchill," by Robert Lewis Taylor (Pocket Books, 35¢ each).

—BEN RAY REDMAN.