

with a readiness to deal fairly with objections and to acknowledge uncertainty where problems admit of no easy solution.

The chapter dealing with the relations of Church with State and the growth of the Just War theory contains over-simplifications and half-truths which mislead, however. Extracts from Patristic sources and the councils and constitutions of the early Church, culled mainly from Harnack and Cadoux, are quoted to show a gradual dilution of the full Gospel ethic and the subservience of Church to state. The careful distinction between counsel and precepts is overlooked, and the *vocational* character of certain ways of perfection is not understood, with the consequent conclusion that the Church recognizes a dual Christian standard—one for the world and one for the cloister.

This new edition contains an additional chapter, written since the recent war, entitled 'The Challenge to the Church', which deals with the grave moral problems arising from modern 'total war'. The suicidal direction of armed conflict today, with its deliberate breaches of international and moral law, and the justification of such transgressions on the ground of expedience or military necessity, leaves many Catholics in common cause with Dr MacGregor.

The mere avoidance or absence of sin is not in itself the life of charity but the necessary prelude to it. Similarly the would-be peacemaker's refusal to condone the deliberate destruction of the innocent or the mass fabrication of lies will only be of value if it leads him to discern his vocation in the work of mediation and reconciliation. In a Christian context this work will be related to the way of perfection which is imposed by canon law upon the clergy and proposed as a counsel to all the faithful—the non-shedding of blood. The history of the Church bears constant witness to the dedicated peacemaker's vocation. From Patristic times, through the Franciscan penitential Brethren of the thirteenth century, St Elizabeth of Portugal, Fénelon, to the life and work of Benedict XV, Dr Max Joseph Metzger, and others, a continuous tradition can be traced. Not in opposition to the legitimate demands of law and justice, but as the realization of an uncompromising total committal to the gospel of the Prince of Peace.

ROGER SMITH

THREE SHORT NATIVITY PLAYS. THE GIFTS OF THE CHRIST-CHILD.
THE ROSE OF CHRIST. LOVE, THE STAR. By R. P. K. Hallett. (Methuen;
2s. 6d.)

These plays contain beautiful descriptive speeches, and tell the story of Bethlehem very fully, with plenty of dramatic movement, and colourful, vivid presentation. I am personally inclined to like the more

'biblical' type of play; but these plays introduce outside people to quite good advantage—after all, the shepherds did go out to tell the glad news, and it is good to be reminded of the people who heard, and to imagine how they reacted to it.

The idea of the old toymaker giving the Gift of Love, through God's hungry children, to the Christ Child, and the rewarding joy of the vision of the Nativity which she received, is charming and gives valuable moral point to the story. But these plays should have some 'grown-ups' in the casts, to give them dignity and reality. They are well worth time and trouble in casting and production; there is certainly atmosphere in them; and if well produced, they will 'get over' to the audience in an effective way.

I recommend them, especially the first two, to people looking for worth-while plays of short duration.

MARJORIE LEECH

EXTRACTS

EVANGELISER for May-June gives the text of a conference given to seminarians in 1946 by the late Père Sertillanges. His subject was loyalty to the Church, which he had the courage to show as something absolute yet quite other than a hidebound clerical conservatism. One of the classic examples of a Catholic firm in his loyalty, despite unjust attack and condemnation, and finally vindicated in our own day is, of course, the great biblical scholar Père Lagrange. This and other examples are given by Père Sertillanges, not in any party spirit or to dwell on old sores. Rather he draws from them the useful moral that we must be constantly on our guard to sharpen our appreciation of both the divine and the human elements in Catholic teaching and indeed in the Church itself, or we shall confound them. Submission to authority must be unequivocal; at the same time we must not be guilty of the scandal of denying or attempting to disguise the human side—with its human failings—of the Church. Though this conference was given eight years ago its appositeness at the present day and particularly in his own country will not be missed. But it is well for us too to ponder the same truths while enjoying perhaps a calmer atmosphere in which to do so. Then we shall be less likely to be caught unawares in times of greater stress.

PÈRE J. BONDUELLE writes in *La Vie Spirituelle* for July on the subject of Christian consolation. He points out that whereas the Bible, both Old Testament and New, is full of references to the consoling of creatures by God, there is no question here of a consoling by creatures of God,