

authors of the synoptic gospels say that Christ is God, and Matthew and Luke adjust Mark's factual account of Jesus to try to convince people he is the Messiah, and that he has given them authority to speak for him. But there is no need to be taken in, and no reason to believe Christ rose from the dead. This myth has been accepted because of its value in releasing spiritual impulses latent in all human beings, capitalists and communists alike. Even in the post-Christian era a priestly religion with rituals, theological dogma, myths, ethical codes and institutional structures will survive and appeal to those who are less mature. But 'the reality which we encounter in (religious) experience is not dependent for its existence on our ability to communicate it to others; and the process by which we have become aware of it can be repeated in the religious development of successive generations' (p. 90). Farming and artistic expression enlarge man's sense of participation in the cosmic creative process, and he realizes man and the universe are no mere machine. Though nature is a hard task-master, creative work and a love inexplicable merely in terms of sex preserve man's experience of absolute freedom, prevent his mistaking religious symbolism for reality, restrain his tendency to escape into the immediate security of merely relative freedom, and stimulate an ever closer approximation to absolute freedom. Supreme self-fulfilment is not the self-assertion symptomatic of a sense of inferiority and guilt, nor egoistic identification with a particular group. The ideal of human perfection is not material, but thoughtful and active loving

identification with all mankind. One should not kow-tow to tradition, nor reject it out of hand, but rely on a sense of justice to remain sufficiently detached from political programmes to be able to suggest present improvements and guard against future failings. Although prophetic experience is a deep and essentially inexpressible immediate contact with the Absolute and beyond the comprehension of our finite minds, its reality is evident from its social, political and ethical effects. As the author reads Mark 8, 35: 'Whosoever will save his individual self shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his individual self for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it'.

Dr Loen's Barthian ecstasy derives its power from the underlying recognition of the supernatural order and involves a rejection of the errors of positivism, rationalism and liberalism. But while his view is plausible, I do not see how it can be established as true, let alone linked up with a historical Jesus Christ, unless more attention be given to the approach from philosophy, apologetics, and dogmatic theology to the assent of faith.

Mr Watson's personal statement is interesting but unlikely to commend itself to the scholar. His views on the relation between matter-language and spirit-language statements would require considerable development for him to be able to offer any plausible account of man's interior life, and his handling of history and exegesis is not scientific. The book is addressed to the ordinary reader and is a useful reminder of problems that must be faced.

COLIN HAMER, S.D.B.

LAND AND WORK IN MEDIAEVAL EUROPE, by Marc Bloch. *Routledge and Kegan Paul*. 30s.

The blurb of this welcome English collection of Marc Bloch's occasional papers says truly that he was one of the great historians of our time. It is long overdue—by about a generation. It seems to me that the point of what he was trying to do, and his success and his limitations, are not widely understood by English historians. This is well-illustrated by the present collection which is preceded by a decidedly unsympathetic preface by a senior English medievalist who simply hasn't seen what Marc Bloch was getting at. It is also shown by the odd title the book has been given. It is not about peasants or artisans but about society. Marc Bloch was a pioneer in using historical evidence to answer the sort of questions asked by sociologists. He was one of the earliest medievalists to be interested in the class-structure of medieval

society and much of this book is about the status-groups which existed between the peasants who provided everyone with their standard of life and the class of nobles who intermittently exploited and protected the peasantry. It was this class which distorted classical feudalism and was largely responsible for the making of the modern nation states. Now sociologists' studies are necessarily of societies studied synchronically, that is, extended in space. It is only comparatively recently, largely due to the influence of another great French scholar, Claude Lévy-Strauss, that the importance of diachronic studies, that is of societies extended in time, has been realized. Marc Bloch was again a pioneer here. There are some penetrating remarks on the reasons for resistance to technical change which

show very clearly that the historian has a very important part to play in supplementing the work of the sociologist here. There is, for instance, a very important question Marc Bloch asks here: How far do historians assume that the distance between social classes was the same in the past as it is in their own day? He thought that we commonly exaggerate this distance and that whilst medieval society was far from egalitarian, at least the different social groups were within hailing distance of each other. It is by continuing to ask questions like this that we shall come nearer to understanding our own as well as medieval society.

Marc Bloch had his weaknesses. His technique in the handling of literary sources was not so good as an English scholar of comparable standing would be expected to show. It is this fine technique that is the strongest side of contemporary English medieval studies. I think Bloch himself would not have worried very much about this. I don't think he was the kind of man to mind being found out in a mistake; I think he was much more concerned to be relevant and avoid the trivial. More serious then is that he was not diachronic enough. He was too influenced by the social science of his day with its emphasis on the synchronic. This comes out in his studies of early medieval social structure which would be much more penetrating if he had seen that the logical direction of his arguments was to stop talking about France and Germany, or the 'State', which is to impose later categories and confuse a similarity of names with an identity of things. It does not seem to help to speak of a man being ineligible for election to the German crown because he had not got German nationality. It is true people of this day do talk in terms of nationality. Abbot Suger thought William Rufus an Englishman, for instance, and Archbishop Lanfranc called himself one too. They clearly do not mean what, or anything very

like what, we mean when we use words like nationality. Again in the discussion of the history of the Empire it would help if Bloch had clarified what he meant by words like election. Of course, he was writing in the 30's mainly when it was inevitable that the differences between France and Germany and the significance of words like election should loom large in any scholar's mind. But, however excusable, by taking Germany and France as existing in the twelfth century, as being more or less *there*, he precluded himself from asking the key questions about the making of France and the marring of Germany that seem to be important. Otherwise I cannot think Bloch could have written as he does of the eastern frontiers of the Empire, 'which are not of interest to us here'. I do not think myself we can hope to understand much of the real legacy of the medieval world unless we pay more attention to the relations of Teuton and Slav.

Something needs to be said about the translation. Marc Bloch does not go easily into English and the translator has caught his style rather well. Unfortunately he is not a historian, apparently, nor has any historian vetted it, and several serious errors occur. On page 4 the 'kingdom of Eastern France' was obviously the kingdom of the Eastern Franks, i.e. Germany. On page 19 there is a terrible mix-up over Paschal III which I cannot sort out. Both these errors occur in a text not easily available in the original French. On page 29 Joachites should presumably read Joachimites and on page 38 Henry II is given for Frederick II and the mistake is confirmed in the index. It is not accurate to speak of the Common Law, especially with capital letters, in a continental connexion as we find on page 104. Nevertheless the book and its English version were very well worth while, warts and all.

ERIC JOHN

THE TECHNIQUE OF STAINED GLASS, by Patrick Reyntiens. *Batsford Books, London: Watson-Guptill Publications, New York. 84s.*

Mr Reyntiens's style is excellent and there is much interesting and informative detail on all aspects of his subject. The arrangement of the book is clear and it is easy to refer to the copious index. Moreover, all the topics discussed are dealt with in a personal and highly efficient manner deriving from Mr Reyntiens' own experience in carrying out such commissions as the Baptistery window at Coventry Cathedral (in painted and leaded glass) and the Lantern

at the new Cathedral of Christ the King at Liverpool (carried out in dalle-de-verre).

The traditional technique of stained glass in lead is dealt with very comprehensively and occupies 138 out of the 175 pages of text. Of especial interest are the contemporary techniques of painting (pp. 71-78). But space is also given to various modern techniques such as dalle-de-verre in concrete or epoxy resin; also to antique and fused glass set in polyester resin