

## REVIEWS

to spontaneity, it emphasizes contrast, it maintains the faculty of surprise. Indeed it seems to possess some of the qualities of a detective story as we laboriously trace the clues which might explain some unexpected triumph or débâcle. And it is perhaps the only form of prolonged dialectic which will appeal to an English public. All these merits and some of these defects could be illustrated from *Science and the Supernatural*.

A single line of argument can be traced through 29 of the 31 letters; the nature of the scientific method—the extent to which it is employed by modern scientists—the test case of “Natural Selection.” At times the line is seen to curve, at times it is observed by charges and counter charges of irrationalism and by the quick feints of Professor Haldane at Celibacy or at the Problem of Evil. But it remains and gives consistency to the volume linking the smaller eddies of discussion on the onus of intolerance and on the scientific attitude to the miraculous or to the *quinque viae*. Throughout, Professor Haldane defends and counter-attacks with a sporadic and perhaps embittered talent. Letter XVI is an example of compressed triumphant refutation, and yet it becomes increasingly apparent that Mr. Lunn is making the better case. A fault in tactics may partly explain this disappointing defence of a naturally strong position; Professor Haldane never retreats. It is natural and rather gratifying that he should quote St. Thomas often. It is natural and very pardonable that he should misinterpret him; for his references at times indicate an unfamiliarity with the text of the *Summa*, and his use of such technical terms as *genus*, *differentia*, *forma substantialis* suggests that he was unaware of their definitions. But his dogged efforts to maintain these misinterpretations quickly sap our confidence. It is not his failure to name the Martyrs of Science but his endeavour to cloak that failure that is a dialectical disaster, while Mr. Lunn is winning the sympathy of all his readers by the buoyant admission of some trivial error. For Mr. Lunn’s supreme competence in debate is emphasized by his refusal to be pontifical. His arguments are illuminated with a sense of the comic and his technique is all the more national for being pugilistic. His letters have provided us with a handbook to the art of English controversy. GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

VISCOUNT HALIFAX. By J. G. Lockhart. Part I: 1839-1885. (Geoffrey Bles, London; 1935; 12/6.)

This well-written book is but a Prelude. For the real interest of Lord Halifax’s life lies in his later years, when he had become a much loved and respected leader, busied about the desired recognition of Anglican Orders, and the memorable Conversa-

## BLACKFRIARS

tions at Malines. All this is reserved for a second volume. Here we have only the years of preparation.

Charles Lindley Wood was the son of a Victorian Whig statesman, and might have played such a part in political life himself. But that he put deliberately aside. In childhood he was deeply religious, with strong half-conscious Catholic leanings. From his Oxford days he walked in the steps of the Tractarians, and fell under the influence of Pusey and Liddon. All through his life he was that rare type, the ecclesiastically minded layman. He was the soul and the inspiration of the English Church Union, the champion of the victims of the ritual prosecutions under the Public Worship Regulation Act, and the centre of a hundred controversies long forgotten and indeed hardly intelligible to the present generation. He never seems to have had a doubt of the soundness of his own position, and his personal piety and deep spirituality were recognized by all; while the background of his social and domestic life was almost perfect and very attractive.

No one can read this first instalment of Lord Halifax's biography without interest and admiration. And if we cannot but deeply regret that such a man was not of our own Communion, we are sure that although Lord Halifax remained to the end outside the Church's visible unity it was through no conscious fault of his own. Everything in this book tends to the deepening of that conviction.

ROBERT BRACEY, O.P.

## NOTICES

THE PROPHET CHILD. By Gwendolen Plunket Greene. (Longmans; 6/-.)

Two graces of these reflections, quiet and the sense of kinship with all creation, are uncommon in contemporary Catholic writing. The mind moves easily to the source mysterious *sapientibus et prudentibus* and thence returns to mix into the whole abundance of life. Here is not the grown-up infantilism proposed by some spiritual writings; on the contrary, sound philosophy and theology, not gaunt and bony, but clothed with living sense.

We are meant for God complete and fresh, and so may find him outside the cloister. Possible disagreement with the author's judgments on the sectarianism of some forms of what is technically called the religious life will not find support in the classical theology of the vows.

For my part I will give only one hint of difference, chiefly a matter of taste, though a principle is involved. Is the nature more hidden from the cockney than from the country child, the *Nature* of the Lake Poets or the *natura* of St. Thomas? It is to the latter that the supernatural is given; the latter that includes