

a community of interest in the face of the possibility of mutual annihilation.

But above all promise seems to lie in modern science, which by a strange cross-fertilisation at the Renaissance has inherited the vigour and some of the moral fibre of earlier Christianity. Far from 'converting' the so-called 'pagan' culture of secular science, it would be well to be converted by it; modern atheism itself can be rich in lessons for the believer; if we are to be worthy of the name of Catholics, we should begin by welcoming the universal diffusion of modern science which is the first successful catholicism, a spiritual good for the whole of humanity, of a lower order than the Catholicism to which we aspire, but nonetheless something intimately connected with the economy of salvation. The divine sonship is a present reality in the world in a much less incoherent manner than might be suggested by the membership of any particular church.

We must think again about sin. We must realise how it is not great individual transgressions, fitting easily into the decalogue, which are our problem, but rather the countless little weaknesses and inadvertences and failures of responsibility which modern civilisation accumulates with disastrous results; and perhaps our great failure as Christians is a failure of the imagination, an attachment to a servile and pre-redemptive attitude to God and to religion, and a failure to accept our freedom and our responsibility.

Nevertheless, humanity has made important moral progress; it only remains for us to grow up out of our ideological childishness, to 'de-theologise' politics, to cease to divinise some particular sociological pattern, and the present ideological deadlock between Marxist materialism and liberal materialism may well open up new possibilities of brotherhood in the face of enormous common tasks; if we learn the true meaning of what our Lord meant when He said that the Kingdom is not of this world, we may rediscover the intimate connection between the true love of God and the love of our fellow-men.

In this light, war to-day, as the opposition between two great opposing blocks, each possessed of the means of destroying the other, is in fact the principal rupture in that unity which the human race is seeking and which it could approach if the rule of peace could once be assured.

Dubarle's meat of course may be too strong for some stomachs; they would thrive better on a gentler diet. Both of these books however are good food for the international man, and both help to open a little wider the windows of the Church.

STANLEY WINDASS

**BREAKTHROUGH TO PEACE:** Twelve Views on the Threat of Thermonuclear Extermination, with an introduction by Thomas Merton; New Directions, New York; \$1.95.

This American collection of essays complements our own 'Nuclear Weapons and Christian Conscience', now also published in America. Written by twelve different people with diverse backgrounds and convictions (including such

eminent authors as Herbert Butterfield, Erich Fromm and Lewis Mumford) and originally published elsewhere, the essays are very diverse in scope and approach; but between them they provide much of the factual material under discussion in the other book, as well as comment from Catholic and other sources.

One need only enter into casual conversation about 'the bomb' to discover how few even of the most basic facts about the consequences of a nuclear attack are as yet commonly known or consciously realised. How many of us, for instance, realise that people in the strongest shelters are liable to be roasted alive or die of suffocation because of the raging fires which would be started off by a nuclear explosion? Among the most disturbing parts in this book are those which deal with the subtle propaganda coming from 'Defence Experts' like Herman Kahn: by talking about the loss of x million lives as 'acceptable' and suggesting that the social structure of America would survive such a loss, they have made nuclear war no longer unthinkable for Americans and have thus made its occurrence a good deal more likely.

Lewis Mumford makes a very fine contribution on moral attitudes to nuclear war. In an historical sketch he shows how incredibly quickly and completely the destruction of cities, previously regarded as a Nazi barbarity, came to be accepted without question by all sections of society as soon as it had become official policy, almost without anyone being aware that a change had occurred; so that there was hardly a murmur about the final horror of Hiroshima, and moral sensitivity has now atrophied to such an extent that we can read in another contribution about firearms to keep out the neighbours being standard equipment in nuclear shelters, and American civil defence groups in rural areas who are thinking of training militia to drive away the hordes expected to come from nearby stricken towns, searching for food. At least one Catholic priest seems to have stated publicly that there is nothing against Christian morality in defending one's shelter against the neighbours. Gordon Zahn's contribution too (a summary of his book *German Catholics and Hitler's Wars*, recently reviewed in this journal) should serve as a solemn warning to those who would put their conscience in commission and wait for their bishops to tell them when they have become involved in immoral policies.

It is to Thomas Merton's essay that the Catholic reader will turn with the greatest expectation, as it deals specifically with the challenge presented to the Christian conscience by the present defence situation. Unfortunately he touches on so many important topics and employs so many different kinds of argument that it is much too condensed and makes rather disappointing reading. If it were expanded so that the important arguments could be thoroughly worked out, it would probably make a very important book. In the present context its immediate aim is to persuade the American reader that 'the present situation makes it both logical and licit for a Catholic to proceed, from motives of conscience, to at least a relative pacifism, and to a policy of nuclear disarmament'. It should surely succeed in this.

The book ends with some discussions of psychological attitudes to war and

the possibility of changing them. (In this connection, Jerome D. Frank makes the interesting observation that Gandhi's and Martin Luther King's most significant achievement may be that they broke the link between destructive force and courage.) It has the inevitable weakness of this kind of publication, such as lack of unity, and a good deal of repetition. The most serious omission is a full discussion of the widely held view that a nuclear deterrence policy makes the outbreak of war extremely unlikely. This is, after all, held by many who are genuinely convinced of the immorality of actually using nuclear weapons; yet it is discussed only in Herbert Butterfield's excellent few pages on 'Human Nature and the Dominion of Fear'. His view is that, on the contrary, it is fear more than anything else which is the cause of war in the twentieth century.

Despite these weaknesses, this collection contains tremendously important material, and one is profoundly grateful for its publication in America.

ELIZABETH WANGERMANN

CULTURE AND LITURGY, by Brian Wicker; Sheed and Ward; 11s. 6d.

If Mr Brian Wicker had done no more than achieve his declared purpose—'to offer a contribution, from an explicitly Catholic point of view, to the debate on society and culture which has been going on in the weekly press and the paper-back bookshops for the past few years'—*Culture and Liturgy* would have been a remarkable enough book. But in fact he has achieved much more. As a committed Socialist, he has succeeded in driving home to his fellow Catholics the relevance and importance of the New Left's critique of contemporary society. As a committed Catholic, he has succeeded in taking this debate to a more positive and fruitful conclusion than his fellow Socialists have so far been able. And, as both, he has made an exciting and stimulating contribution, not just to Catholic or Socialist thinking about society, but to thinking about society as a whole.

His main theme, indeed, is breathtaking in its boldness; but the argument holds. The liturgy—he maintains—is the common way of life, the common culture, of the unique human society which God has called into being; it is precisely as this liturgical assembly that the Church is in and confronts the world; and so, if society at large is to be renewed and Christianised, the liturgy must be the model, and in a sense the means, for the common culture on which that new society will be based. Looked at from one angle, what Mr Wicker proposes suggests the outline of a practical programme for the Church's mission in the world; looked at from another, it gives tangible form to the idea of a common culture which Raymond Williams (for example) could advocate but not invest with any very clear or full meaning.

Needless to say, at the present time Catholics as a whole do not see the Church's mission, let alone show the Church's mission to the world, in this kind of light. And it would be easy to be pessimistic about the achievement