

Perhaps this should be connected with the statistics from mission countries where, as in Japan for instance, the proportion of conversions to missionaries has fallen steadily as the missions themselves are 'better organised'—which probably means, 'have fewer ordinary direct contacts with the people'.

God is Always Greater is a dreadfully embarrassing book, naive and ill-translated.

'You children of mankind, watch out,
It is the latest hour,
And there is little time to watch!'

The story of the founding and growth of the Ecumenical Sisterhood of Mary at Darmstadt is meant to arouse our awe and admiration. God works 'miracles' regularly and the perfervid Lutheran emotionalism is appallingly humourless. *Toute est providence* is a fine working motto but not if every material success is seized as proof that one was right all along. It is hard for a Catholic to accept the drawing of texts for guidance. It is impossible to accept what Mother Basilea says about the suffering of God (pp. 71-72). At the same time we cannot escape the admonition with which the passage ends . . . 'the ecumenical assignment . . . should move us to the depths of our very being and should impel us, through love of Jesus, to do all that we can to heal those wounds (the disunity of Christendom) whatever it costs'. Perhaps too, all those 'miracles' should deepen our grasp of what we Catholics mean by 'faith' and hence deepen also our gratitude and fraternal charity.

M. C. EDWARDS

CHRISTIANS AGAINST HITLER, by E. H. Robertson; S.C.M., 6s. 6d.
ISRAEL MY CHOSEN PEOPLE, by M. Basilea Schlink; Faith Press, 6s.

A characteristic of the renewal of theology today is that it faces real situations, not the abstract examples of a text-book, situations of an anguish which has had to be borne and for which a Christian attitude, if not a Christian solution, has had to be worked out—the brutality of nazism, the divisions of race and colour, the threat of nuclear war. The Nazi oppression led, especially in the German Protestant churches, to a profound searching of heart for the springs of Christian thought and moral action. The first of these books is a useful introduction to the history of their struggle with the Nazi régime. It is a narrative of movements and events, of the conflict among Christians themselves, of martyrdom and near-martyrdom. It does not however go at all deeply into the theological and ecumenical revival which sprang from the conflict, though it does include the text of the famous Barmen Declaration which set the key for a great deal that followed.

Part of this renewal has been a realization among German Christians, of whatever Church, of their share in the guilt of the whole people towards the Jews. It has led Mother Basilea Schlink, of the Ecumenical Sisterhood of Mary at Darmstadt, to write this book. Her community itself is a living example of this new life in German Protestantism; it grew out of a semi-clandestine bible

class which she was running in Darmstadt towards the end of the war, the members of which survived the bombing of that town and banded together to serve other survivors in the ruins. One cannot help admiring the spirit of devotion, humility and penance which has moved her to write this book, the theme of which is the theological significance of the State of Israel. For her this is the fulfilment of prophecy, or at least a stage towards that fulfilment, that is, the return of Israel to her land as a stage of her return to her true messiah. Nevertheless there is something which makes one uneasy in this too facile application of scriptural texts to political events; one remembers the fate of others in the past who have proceeded by this kind of illumination. The German people must not forget Auschwitz and the Warsaw ghetto—neither must the British forget Dresden, nor the Americans Hiroshima—and it is true that these memories ought to be occasions for our grasping the horrors to which our sins can lead, but it is also necessary to examine carefully the reactions to which our sense of guilt may impel us. One injustice, however terrible, cannot be righted by another. The Arabs too may have a case which should be heard and judged in theological terms.

BENET WEATHERHEAD, O.P.

THE BIBLE, WORD OF GOD IN WORDS OF MEN, by Jean Levie, S.J.;
Geoffrey Chapman, 30s.

This work falls into two parts which complement one another. The first is historical and ably traces the slow evolution of Catholic exegesis from 1850-1960. Some of this history seems remote and strange to us nowadays who live in the light of *Divino Afflante* and all that has obtained since. The realist and archaeological approach which has done so much for sound Catholic exegesis, is well set out; and there are copious bibliographies which should be of great help to those who would pursue these fascinating studies further. A valuable section is given to the analysis and exposition of *Divino Afflante*; this leads naturally to the conclusion of part I and prepares for part II which is a more theological treatment of inspiration and Catholic exegesis. All this section repays close study. Our author convinces by his measured exposition and has incorporated a great deal of the best work of e.g. Rahner, Benoit, and other exegetes and theologians. Chapter x had already appeared as a lecture and deals with the question of 'proofs from Scripture'. The whole subject is admirably handled in a practical way by considering some of the more telling texts and by pleading that we read these in their living contexts. And then, having hammered out possibilities and modalities, the book ends, as it must, with the words, 'Increasingly the experience of Christian life confirms this dogmatic truth: the holy Scriptures which are to accompany mankind throughout the centuries, are not self-sufficient. They can only be understood as God wishes them to be, if they are constantly interpreted by the Church' (p. 301).

There are some corrigenda in this generally well-produced book:

p. 121, n. 6: for 'R.V.' read 'R.B.'