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supersensible knowledge two steps must be taken in moral progress." There is, too, a necessary technique through which we come to realize, and enter into conscious enjoyment of, the "etheric" and the "astral" body, consciously capturing the sub-conscious. But all this is of no avail without high and selfless love and devotion: "Selfless love and devotion may often be rewarded by the reception of absolutely true impressions from the so-called dead. And when these are allied to spiritual training and self-discipline, then free and unshadowed intercourse with the dead may be obtained."

The essence of the process which adapts us for spiritual intercourse is "Initiation," an experience of "mystical death," where-in the awakened soul is mystically united to the powers of resurrection inherent in all existence. This "mystical death" the author, in another passage, declares to be brought about "through the long process of the transformation of our thinking, feeling and willing."

The occultism of Steiner is at once spiritual and scientific, inspirational and experimental, poetic and exact. While we admire the spiritual and intellectual energy it displays, may we not complain of the large assumptions we are expected by its exponents to take on faith and ask that the dogmatic basis of Anthroposophy be at least as positively and securely established as that of Christianity?

We have endeavoured to give an objective account of some of the main features of Miss Merry's book. We found her style somewhat diffuse. There are, here and there, traces of a certain naïveté, as for instance when she says (p. 65): "People are fond of remarking: 'Man is a microcosmic image of the Macrocosm.'" This remark is rarely heard in our suburb. Maybe the gentle reader is more fortunate (or unfortunate). But one must not cavil at an earnest attempt, in the wake of Rudolf Steiner, to challenge Spiritualism in the name of the Spirit.

CYPRIAN RICE, O.P.

THE REVIVAL OF PASCAL. A Study of his Relation to Modern French Thought. By D. M. Eastwood. (Oxford University Press; 12/6.)

The period of French thought and letters which is covered by this book is, for practical purposes, the last decade of the nineteenth, and the first of the twentieth, centuries; or, in other words, from the end of the "Reign of Science" to the late war. A first and rather surprising impression which the book produces is that this period has "dated" even more decisively than the positivist period which it superseded: which prompts the reflection that the generation which was thought to be extinguished by Bourget's

Disciple may prove to have possessed a Phoenix-quality. The most recent of the important works to which Miss Eastwood refers—Maritain's article, *Pascal Apologiste*—exhibits many symptoms of the decried scientific temper.

The tragic life, during whose short term Miss Eastwood gave such conclusive proof of the highest intellectual distinction and mental energy, was curiously like that of Pascal himself; and a further, interior, affinity with his mysterious and strenuous spirit has enabled her to reach a position in Pascalian criticism which is practically impregnable. From the point of view of pure scholarship, indeed, we may regret that the subject of her thesis leaves little room for a direct interpretative study of the *Pensées*: and more, that preoccupation with William James and André Suarès should have persuaded her into an almost uncritical acceptance of modern elaborations which completely distort the "historical Pascal." "Console-toi, tu ne me chercherais pas, si tu ne m'avais trouvé" is an excessively slender basis for a theory of Pascal's mystical theology.

However, Miss Eastwood's subject was not Pascal, but his *succès* with the generation of 1900. As regards "influence," she is, on the whole, admirably cautious; her claim to have proved a real indebtedness of Duhem and Le Roy to the thought of the *Pensées* may be considered established; and, while she does not justify so well her own conviction of a real influence of Pascal on Blondel (which would, incidentally, be very interesting if it could be proved), her case is still strong. Apart from direct influence, she observes two less effective relationships: cases where Pascal was felt—by Bergsonians, etc.—to have anticipated modern philosophical tendencies (without necessarily contributing to initiate these); and *correspondances* which may now be traced between the attitude of pre-war French writers—whether they were aware of it or not—and the characteristic positions of Pascal. The result is a profound analysis of the thought and *Geist* of France in the fin-de-siècle and pre-war period.

Once it is recognized that this, and nothing else, is the aim and function of Miss Eastwood's book, it remains only to record—in a spirit of *pietas* as much as justice—that this aim has been triumphantly fulfilled. The men for whom Poincaré, Bergson, Blondel or La Berthonnière were oracles and prophets are neither so far removed from us, nor yet so like ourselves, as to make impossible a sympathetic and objective appreciation of their mind. Intrinsicly, their age possesses unique interest and importance. Miss Eastwood has revealed some of the strongest mental forces then at work, and interprets them to us with extraordinary skill and delicacy. Her work is rigidly selective, and the reader must make his own application of the principles which

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she discovers to such personalities and works as lie outside her scope—hoping for some equally gifted guide to neo-Thomism, military tactics, comparative religion or anthropology, to name a few of the other fields in which the Frenchmen of this period astonished and terrified a torpid world. NIGEL ABERCROMBIE.

HISTORY

EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION. Its Origin and Development. By various Contributors under the direction of Edward Eyre. Volume IV: The Reformation. (Oxford University Press; 18/-.)

I cannot remember who it was that said that the perfect history of the Reformation could only be written by a Moslem or a Buddhist. By this it was inferred that even the most unbiassed Western historian would find it impossible to find the detachment necessary to produce a narrative that was entirely free from prejudice. Although such an ideal standard is not to be found in this book, one can find in it an accurate account of the Reformation in Europe ably stated and pleasantly written. Being the work of several authors, its standard varies from chapter to chapter, but when observed as a whole it seems certain that it will remain for some time useful to the layman interested in the period.

The opening chapter is the work of Professor Cristiani of the University of Lyons and deals with the Continental Reformation. Professor Cristiani's narrative is influenced by a strong and very visible bias which pervades his essay; his subject matter could have been more skilfully arranged so as to spare chronological acrobacies to the reader; his account of the English Reformation is unnecessary as this is dealt with elsewhere, but the blame for this is to be laid rather upon the editor than the author. Mis-statements have, moreover, crept into Professor Cristiani's contribution. Thus, to give one example, the Aragonese dynasty is made to start their rule in Naples in the sixteenth century (p. 15). I do not know whether this part of the work was written directly into English or whether it is a translation: the meaning of some of its passages is often rather ambiguous or even unintelligible. On the other hand it cannot be denied that M. Cristiani provides us with a reasonable though biassed bird's-eye view of the Reformation in Europe.

It is followed by Professor Powicke's essay on the Reformation in England. Here we are confronted by a brilliant analysis of the structure of the Reformation in this country. Professor Powicke's chapter is not a mere sequence of facts but a fine description of the motion of the political and legal machinery carrying through the change from the old order. He shows us to what an extent the lay power interfered with the spiritual within the field