

Blackfriars

comes historical and empiric. There follows an interesting discussion of the material foundations of a culture. But perhaps the most interesting and important chapter is that dealing with 'the comparative study of Religions and the spiritual Element in Culture.' It may well prove to be the commencement of a new era in the study of the origins of civilization. Mr. Dawson shows how cultures differ mainly by the intellectual and the spiritual factors that underly and colour them. Religion, far from being an accidental and negligible factor, has been the controlling dynamic influence that led to their birth, dominated their greatness and, when failing itself, brought about their fall. This is indeed a reversal of much that we have been led to believe and must lead to a revision of much that has been written. Herbert Spencer's remark about primitive man that 'he thinks of nothing except the matters that immediately concern his daily needs' is shown to be as shallow as it is false. 'The ultimate barriers between peoples are not those of race or language or region, but those differences of spiritual outlook and tradition which are seen in the contrast Hellene and Barbarian, Jew and Gentile, Moslem and Hindu, Christian and Pagan. In all such cases there is a different conception of reality, different moral and æsthetic standards, in a word, a different inner world' (p. 76). This is the heart of Mr. Dawson's book and it is demonstrated and worked out with reference not only to the ancient but also to the modern world, and to the immediate problems of to-day. The subject is far too vast for a single work and we may hope that Mr. Dawson will give us a further book dealing more specifically with modern problems viewed from the same standpoint. It is a pleasure to repeat the words of Dean Inge that *Progress and Religion* is 'a great work.'

F. B.

THE FLAME OF LIFE. (John Murray ; 7/6 net.)

This is a volume of poems in a wide range of thought and manner by Lady Wentworth, who in her publisher's words, 'renews the poetic heredity of her great-grandfather, Lord Byron.' Here, one feels, is a Catholic poet who contributes to modern Catholic poetry a passion unsimulated and a smoothness of technique in which we are not rich. Here is nothing *manière*, no preoccupation with method. Simplicity and lyric quality are shown to be not incompatible with strength. Few of the poems touch directly on religion, but here and there a theme or a thought has been brought down by an arrow of

faith from heights of theology which are crowned with untrodden snows. I shall not forget her 'Dog's Epitaph,' nor the sonnets where passion is not spoiled with small sensualities.
T.O.S.F.

THE NEW CATHOLIC DICTIONARY. London: The Universal Knowledge Foundation, 1930, price two guineas.

This substantial volume of more than a thousand large, double-columned pages, yet well-bound and handy to use, is described in its sub-title as a 'complete work of reference on every subject in the life, belief, tradition, rites, symbolism, devotions, history, biography, laws, dioceses, missions, centers, institutions, organizations, statistics of the Church and her part in promoting science, art, education, social welfare, morals and civilization.' It will be granted that that is a comprehensive programme, and a mere reviewer might well be excused if he quailed before the task of examining the finished product.

The Dictionary has been produced under the auspices of the editors of the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* and 'is largely the work of the American clergy who have contributed most of the articles in it gratis.' Let us give all praise to such generosity, and yet not forget the chief contributor whose initials appear in every column: C.E. i.e. the *Catholic Encyclopædia*. Evidently, therefore, the work of other contributors has been mainly a work of condensation, and the book may be described, for far the greater part of its substance, as a digest of the larger work. There are new items and there is some modernisation of the old; but for the most part the Dictionary is the *Encyclopædia* reduced to about one-twentieth of its size.

After this preliminary description of the book we shall be expected to give some criticism of its quality. But we shall not be expected—in this case at any rate—to have read the whole of that which we criticize. The best we can do is to nibble here and there—like a mouse at a mountain—and to give the reader the benefit of our discoveries.

Well, the first thing we would report, after some examination, is that American interests have received predominant attention. We do not quarrel with that; indeed, we regard it as only natural, for there is an English-speaking Catholic public in America which far outnumbers ours; but it seems to us to have led to some neglect of English interests. Thus we have not found any treatment of Anglican Orders. To give an example of another kind, there are very many entries of which 'Mercyhurst College, Erie, Pa.' may serve as a type; but there is no