

some point, which could well have been expanded in the text. Many of the magnificent and illuminating photographs deserve to be less reduced and less crowded; splendid and plentiful as are the illustrations, there are references to too many more which must involve the reader in long research in libraries. In short, we must regret that both author and reader have so little elbow-room; difficult as it must be to draw the line, it might be expected that two guineas could purchase a little more spaciousness. A work of such general interest would also benefit from a glossary and chronological table.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILISATION. First part: Foundations. By Emil Brunner. (Nisbet; 10s. 0d.)

Dr Brunner's Gifford lectures for 1947, like everything he writes, will provoke much thought and interest. Civilisation can exist, he tells us, without Christianity, and Christianity without what we call civilisation. On the other hand our civilisation is based upon Christian culture-transcendent presuppositions.

These presuppositions concern fundamental problems such as those of being, truth, time, meaning, personality, justice, freedom and creativity. Without the Christian solution to these problems our culture would be wrongly orientated with regard to the deepest questions of existence.

In his general defence of the position of Christianity, a cursory perusal of his book gives the impression that he is in essential agreement with traditional Christian philosophy, even with the Thomism he so heartily distrusts. For Dr Brunner as for the Thomist, creatures have no more than a relative reality—a reality wholly dependent upon the mind and will of the Creator. Both agree in rejecting all forms of pantheism. Both vigorously reject the extremes of materialism and idealism. Both have the same view of history as a God-guided process having a beginning and an end, and having no meaning except from the point of view of a transcendent God. Both agree that man's relation to God, his capacity for grace, for being lifted up to union with God, is his greatest glory. For both it is this capacity that raises up the least talented of men to a position of dignity equal to that of the most talented, so that he is truly the image of God. Both reject the extremes of individualism and collectivism, putting in their place the true notion of the membership of Christ and the communion of saints.

At this apparent agreement the Thomist would rejoice, while Dr Brunner would object. Dr Brunner always appears anxious to show how different his own position is from ours. He rarely seems to mention Catholic philosophers without appearing to us to misunderstand them. In this he is unlike Dr Barth. Dr Barth is often further from us, but usually seems to understand us. To Dr Brunner the only alternatives for the thinking man are Greek humanism

and his own type of humanism, which, he would have us think, is pure Christian humanism. Our humanism he seems to regard as a mixture of the two, which will not work. He shows no signs of being conscious of the fact that mediaeval philosophy was poles apart from the Greek humanism of the renaissance, and that it was rejected alike by neo-Hellenists and Protestants in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

I said that a cursory perusal of his book would give the impression that he is an ally. A deeper consideration would make one wonder. He uses terms in a way most confusing to the Thomist. Take for instance the terms *object* and *subject*. His usage is common enough in modern German theologico-philosophical writers; but it is very different from the Thomist and indeed the popular English tradition.

As far as I can judge, Dr Brunner seems to identify *subject* with the thinking, knowing, spiritual, subject. *Object* he seems to identify with material things. Thus *objectivism* becomes for him synonymous with materialism, while *subjectivism* means the same as idealism. God is sometimes said to be beyond subject and object; sometimes, more often, he is said to be absolutely subject. It would be blasphemy for Dr Brunner to say that God is the object of my thought. This would be to identify God with material things rather than with thinking subjects.

For the Thomist subject and object are of course relative terms. Anything towards which an action or feeling is directed in any way can be called an object. Anything which acts or possesses or suffers can be called a subject. It will be seen from this that the same thing will be an object from one point of view and a subject from another. I may be the object of the Doctor's medical attention, and he may be the object of my gratitude. I will be subject to the surgeon's knife. He will be the subject who operates upon me. To say that God can be in no sense an object would mean for the Thomist that God can in no sense be known, and that no action can be directed towards him. We know we cannot comprehend him nor change him. But we can pray to him, believe and love him. The very I-Thou relation of which Dr Brunner so often speaks demands that God can be in the Thomist sense an object of my attention.

The opposition between subjectivism and objectivism was unknown in the middle ages. Subjectivism is a modern term for those who see things too much from their own point of view, and are consequently not objective. Bishop Berkeley would not have admitted that, in being an idealist, he was necessarily a subjectivist.

Another distinction of Dr Brunner's that Thomists find hard to accept is that between God-truth and world-truth, between God-knowledge and world-knowledge. It is clearly not the same

as our distinction between natural and supernatural, nor between faith and reason. At times Dr Brunner seems to speak as though God-truth were not truth in the same sense as world-truth. Any facts found in the Bible are presumably world-truth for Dr Brunner, and so we are at liberty to follow the verdict of science or criticism in accepting or rejecting them. What are the facts about God? Are they facts about reality in the same way that world-facts are? If God-truth has no analogy to world-truth, why does Dr Brunner use the word truth at all for God-truth? The use of a common term where there is no common meaning seems to confuse the issue. God-knowledge, he tells us, is not knowing God, but being known by him; it is not possessing God, but being possessed; it is not having the truth, but being in the truth. Dr Brunner says that this is the meaning of St Paul in 1 Cor. 8, 2-3; though for the life of me I cannot see how he reads this dialectical philosophy into St Paul's simple words. If 'knowing God' in no way means 'knowing God', how does the way God knows me differ from the way he knows a stone or plant? Is it not that I can respond, and the stone cannot? Dr Brunner admits that I respond by loving. Must I not have some knowledge in order to love?

I must confess that I do not understand how far Dr Brunner means to be taken at his word. If he really teaches either that faith gives us no knowledge in the normal sense, or that there are two kinds of truth, one for faith and another for reason, then, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, he is a modernist in the sense in which the Catholic rejects it as heresy. Perhaps he will be pleased to know that we will have none of such views, but I hope it is not as bad as that. His inability to appreciate the Catholic notion of dogma and Church authority would tend to suggest that it is.

If I have completely misunderstood Dr Brunner, I am probably not the only one. I feel it can only do good to make public one's doubts, in the hopes that he or his followers may be provoked to make their position clearer.

H. FRANCIS DAVIS

JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY. By James Parkes. (Gollancz; 10s. 6d.)

Christianity demands an unwearying regard for truth, justice and charity in the relations of its members with all men, either as individuals or groups. That is why category-hatred, with its accompaniment of lies, robbery and murder, must be opposed by Christians. Even when category-hatred is stimulated by economic or racial friction the Christian position is absolutely clear. When such differences exist there is all the more need for religious leaders to stress the obligations of truth, justice and charity. There is also need for all concerned, Christian or non-Christian, to try to reach a dispassionate understanding of the situation and to find a solution of the problems which are involved. No good is served by the publi-