

His realism does not forget the question of means. How is this revolution to be achieved, without doing more harm than good? He quotes Dr. Davies: 'Co-operation is a system which, without violent revolution and without injuring anybody, can grow within the capitalist system and gradually undermine it and transform it from within, and which experience has shown to be practically immune from capitalist attacks.' That does not mean that the task is easy; but it does mean that it is practicable; it does mean that a new synthesis, which both in end and means can approximate to the ideals of Christian sociology, is a possibility—provided that as individuals (for such a revolution is a *personalist* revolution; and starts therefore *from* the person, cannot be the result simply of external imposition from above) we have the energy and courage to work for it.

Clarity of thought is the necessary precondition of success in action. This book, as readable as it is realist and judicious, should help towards the formation of that consensus of mind in which alone can be found sufficient spiritual power to move the mountains which confront us.

GERALD VANN, O.P.

COMMUNISM AND CHRISTIANS. Translated by J. F. Scanlan.  
(Sands: The Paladin Press; 7s. 6d.)

This is a translation of the collection of essays, *Communisme et Chrétiens*, evoked in response to the famous 'outstretched hand' offer of the French Communist leader, M. Maurice Thorez. 'The offer,' says J. F. Scanlan in his prefatory note, 'was doubtless as sincere as it was misconceived, but the question of its sincerity or insincerity is not discussed here, and the tactical and vote-catching aspect of this policy . . . has been deliberately eschewed.' The discussion in fact is not tied up with French politics of the recent past or with any historical event of which the veracity has been controverted. It maintains a high level of understanding and of truthful and exact exposition, and in this it may be hoped that the 157-page examination of Communist doctrine by Père Ducattillon, O.P., may set a standard to future Catholic writers on the subject. He says truly: 'It is easily said of Communist doctrine that it is crude; the interpretations of some of its opponents are infinitely cruder . . . Such crude interpretations . . . should . . . be avoided with regard to the determinist character of Communism and even with regard to its materialism: and the caution holds good with regard to property.' But he does not merely say it, he proceeds to show how and why; expounding

the doctrine in terms which would, in the judgment of the present reviewer, be acceptable to the instructed Marxist, and judging it without ambiguity, flirtation or bombast. One point in his analysis of the doctrine claims particularly serious attention, 'Opposition to Christianity occurs only indirectly in the development of Communism—through the intermediary of Idealism. Communism developed not so much *vis-à-vis* Christianity as *vis-à-vis* Idealism, which was already opposed to Christianity. This must be thoroughly realised if serious misunderstandings, the first of which would be to confuse the cause of Christianity with that of Idealism, are to be avoided.' Idealism, it is true, needs fuller examination and definition before the criticism may be made fruitful, but the passage suggests comparison with the attitude taken *vis-à-vis* Idealism by Emil Brunner. The essays by other contributors are very much shorter, and to that extent disappointing, since the difference in scope between a 150-page essay and one of thirty pages is not merely a matter of quantity. In this book it is Père Ducattillon who does the work. The others merely have something to say. That 'something' includes 'The Salt of the Earth' by Daniel Rops, 'Shall Life or Man be Changed?' by the Calvinist contributor, Denis de Rougemont, a characteristic essay on 'Human Personality and Marxism' by Nicolas Berdyaev, a short and challenging introduction to the problem by François Mauriac.

BERNARD KELLY.

#### APOLOGETICS

THE QUESTION AND THE ANSWER. By Hilaire Belloc. (Longmans; 3s. 6d.)

The profundity and accuracy combined with simplicity and clarity achieved in this short book verify the belief that a medium for the discussion of philosophy of religion with 'the plain man' is discoverable. It has, in fact, been discovered, and its application exemplified.

But the point will be missed if these pages are read hurriedly and superficially. Indeed, the form of the book is almost disposed for the unfair criticism of hasty reviewers. It is brief, has no references, and a quite unworthy format; in fact, it has none of the pretensions which would be excused in a work of this character.

The most effective way to point out their real quality is to indicate the two, evident, if not equally intended, 'uses' of these pages: the first is that of enlightening the 'rational sciep-