

Biblical language, the underlying doctrine of this Christian News-Letter booklet is pre-Christian and sub-Christian. Such indeed is the ineluctable nemesis of the Protestant neo-orthodoxy which proclaims the imperviousness of nature to Grace. This 'theology of Reformation' is compelled to slay itself in the denial of the very possibility and principle of reformation. This 'dialectical theology' by-passes the intrinsic human contradiction on the horizontal, historical plane, thereby ignoring the inherent tragedy of the human situation and the cosmic conflict within history itself, and rests in a crude and irreducible vertical dualism. This 'theology of the Word of God' ends in making the incarnate Word of God a meta-historical *avatar*, and the words of God a mere vehicle for Shankara, Plotinus or Schopenhauer. Even the Moslem merchant would, we fancy, in his bewilderment retort, 'If not in the name of Allah—why figs?' And what ground, we must ask Mr. Davies, for his 'progressive' views on social reformation if not in the name of God and his Christ?

Happily enough, Mr. Davies is not always quite consistent with his premisses, though perhaps he is more successful than some of his more academic colleagues in revealing the abyss to which they lead. But he puts the right questions, and it may be hoped that the very inadequacy and (sometimes) incoherence of his reply may challenge a deeper and clearer presentation of the answers.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

CHRISTIANITY IN THE MARKET-PLACE. By Michael de la Bedoyere. (Dakers; 6s.)

Startling in title and challenging in content, this book deals with the most important issue of the hour: the inception of a social order *in which Christianity means something* or, conversely, failure to realise such an order. I can find in the whole book none of the silky circumlocution and brave platitudes which seem to pack so many books on the subject. Nor is the author given to the facile analysis. He is not out to make our flesh creep with cheap apocalyptics, but he gives us a book which will neither increase our tranquillity nor induce wishful thinking. Indeed, we are warned (p. 92) that 'readers, especially Catholic readers, will be aghast' at the suggestion that we are faced with the 'triumph, unless indeed we revert to a new dark age, of everything which they and I consider most abhorrent.' But the book is far from depressing, and the most phlegmatic of readers can scarcely escape being stirred by it. The author reminds us that Catholics can never hope to avoid the central issue—that of conversion, and that the world must regain its faith if Christian salvation is to *shed its indirect blessings upon it*. Nevertheless, to the question, 'How can the abyss between the world and the Church be crossed?' the author gives a reply that is, inspiring as well as soberly practical. This book may not be liked by the *punaises*

*de sacristie*: it will certainly not be liked by those enemies of the Church who prefer to tackle a Christianity that is myopic and half-asleep.

J. F. T. PRINCE.

THE NEW AGE. By Edward Hulton. (Allen & Unwin; 7s. 6d.)

It is already here; and on the whole it is accurately described by Mr. Hulton. That is to say, he indicates where present tendencies are leading and—not surprisingly—suggests how they may be controlled for the general good of mankind. It is plain, straightforward and honest secularism, but there is an unusual respect for the past, even for the Middle Ages, and the author will not permit the totalitarian progressives to have it all their own way. He objects to uniformity, demands youth movements formed as a result of free association, insists that women shall be educated in a way that befits both their dignity and their nature. His denunciation of pre-war immorality (social and sexual) is fierce but just.

Inevitably, he is at his weakest when envisaging the religion and morals of the future. He is affected by the contemporary admiration for uncontrolled mysticism, and he considers that marriage only needs to last until the sixteenth birthday of the child. This chapter on the future of morals deserves to be read carefully by those who are now so glibly talking about the sufficiency of the Natural Law. This patently sincere thinker, making full use of his reason, appreciating the spiritual aspect of sexual love, does not regard either the unity or indissolubility of marriage as essential, nor does he see anything vile in the practice of contraception. But he is unquestionably right as to the facts. This is the outlook of the New Age, and we are still far from knowing how, with the wealth of Catholic truth, we are going to meet it.

EDWARD QUINN.

DEATH OF A GENTLEMAN. By Christopher Hollis. (Burns Oates; 8s. 6d.)

Old-world England is passing away. It is doing so gracefully, heroically, even consciously, in persons like Robert Fossett. 'Gentlemen are there to be shot at, when the shooting's on. That is what they are for, and, whatever the other duties in which the gentlemen of England have failed throughout their history, at least they have never failed in this.' As so many of them are being shot, and their history is reaching its appointed end, the philosophy expressed in this series of letters may be helpful to those who are responsible for shaping the coming age and who are not so blind in their worship of the common man as to overlook the virtues of the uncommon gentleman. Sooner or later, those virtues are bound to reassert themselves, and Robert Fossett's philosophy will be vindicated by the permanent facts of human nature.