

facts will not fit. The best portions of the book are those which attack anthropomorphic religious attitudes—though even this attitude is not as simple as Mr Kellett suggests—and those which reveal the author's own sympathy for the 'weak and oppressed'. No one can be an authority on the whole field of religious history, but it is difficult to account for such statements as that for St Paul 'the historical Jesus was evidently secondary' or the description of the Hebrew prophets in terms of what is most trivial in their teaching.

Dr Micklem, on the other hand, has produced a most stimulating interpretation of the whole field of religion. The depth of Dr Micklem's knowledge is measured by the caution with which he handles his subject matter, and while the book advances no new or startling theory, it is distinguished for the ease and lucidity with which the various religious viewpoints are expressed. Dr Micklem deals with his subject under various characterisations based on fundamental religious attitudes:—the Impersonal Sacred, the Religion of Nature and so on. At first sight some of the bed-fellows we find brought together seem rather incongruous, for instance Buddha and Epicurus. The divisions and groupings, it is soon discovered, fit into the framework of the whole book; they are concerned with typical aspects rather than with religious movements in their totality, so that one religio-cultural current, historically characterised by a particular label, may well be found in several of Dr Micklem's groupings. The book must be read as a whole if its full value is to be appreciated, but the chapter on Mysticism may be singled out as particularly illuminating.

M. David's work covers the special subject of Roman religion in a competent manner. Intelligently and methodically M. David defines and arranges the various elements in Roman religion and the final result is an excellent little reference book. M. David brings out well the fact that Roman religion was not just a series of platitudes grafted on to a rather formal nature worship, but he does not really face the problems raised by the failure of Roman religion after the Punic wars. The eclecticism of later years can only be explained by a failure of the old views to satisfy. The Roman intelligentsia tended towards scepticism or a new interpretation in terms of Eastern ideas, and state action was unable to stem the tide. Why? M. David presents the facts but omits the interpretation.

IAN HISLOP, O.P.

THE WAY INTO GOD. By R. G. Coulson. (John Murray; 7s. 6d.)

'Lord teach us to pray' was the plea of the apostles, and although then and there our divine Lord gave them the sublime model of the 'Our Father', the habit of prayer, the means of raising mind and heart to God have so long been neglected as almost to have become forgotten by mankind. When the reformers attempted to

blot out the Mass from English life, they substituted an artificial rite of their own contriving, and a clever piece of substitution it was. But apart from its noble language, the substituted rite has, so it seems, but little appeal to our countrymen today. The role of the Church of England as a spiritual power is on the decline, and Mr R. G. Coulson remarks 'The Church became increasingly aware of her dwindling influence, without generally realising that her spiritual degeneration was the cause of this' (p. 38). And he continues (p. 39), 'By the second half of the nineteenth century the rational field of religion had become so secularised and the Church's authority in the supra-rational field had become so weak, that some of the best educated minds, those in whom the questing need for spiritual experience was most alive, began to doubt whether the Church, indeed whether organised religion altogether was the true medium for the life of the spirit.'

Faced with this gap between the Church of England and the layman, what can be done to bridge the gap? In the author's view the layman must deepen his own spiritual life and chiefly through prayer. The Church of England for its part had recommended in the Report of the 1944 Archbishops' Commission on Evangelism that steps be executed in every parish 'for the deepening in the spiritual life, and for instruction in the faith and in prayer.' Coulson therefore writes this volume as an explanation and incentive to the layman to renew in himself a life of prayer, to grow and develop in consciousness of God's presence. It is inevitable that written by a non-Catholic the book will utter opinions not acceptable to a Catholic. But that, surely, does not allow one to belittle, still less deny the sincerity of the author. No one but would desire the presence of God to become a truth, a conscious reality incorporated into the life of all men. The anguish in man's soul, the longing for God that still lingers in mankind would then in measure be met, and unsatisfied with a partial interpretation of revelation man would then more readily turn to the source of truth, to the Church in whose keeping is entrusted the fullness of the gospel message.

TERENCE NETHERWAY, O.P.

CREATEUR DES CHOSSES VISIBLES. Par Pierre Charles, S.J. (Editions du Renouveau, Bruxelles; 20 fr.)

Although this work first made its appearance in the *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* of March 1940, its production in its present form as a separate booklet (No. 6 in the *Rencontres*) ensures its becoming available to a wider public. Indeed it merits to be more widely read, for whilst there is nothing new in this publication, in the presentation of its contents Père Charles, S.J., brings a freshness of approach that is stimulating. The author insists that theology does not invent things, but sees them in relation to the Creator.

TERENCE NETHERWAY, O.P.