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Quo Vadis?

The Religious Prospect : V. A. Demant
Muller 7s. 6d.

Church and State : Karl Barth *Student Christian
Movement* 2s. 6d.

National Socialism and the Roman Catholic Church :
Nathaniel Micklem *Oxford University Press* 8s. 6d.

The doubts, confusions and contrasting ideologies which are implicit in the present world situation have their reflection also in the religious sphere; for religion is always sensitive to the prevailing philosophy of the time. It is true that the real concern of religion is the revelation and conservation of absolute values, over against the contingent: for the Church represents an order "coming down from heaven," and is concerned with the embodiment of that order in the actual world. But the form this embodiment shall take, the forces of contemporary thought with which it can best ally itself, are matters of serious importance;—especially for those who feel—as do the authors of the three books under review—that Christianity, deeply

understood and fully applied, is now more than ever before the one hope of the distracted world. In *The Religious Prospect* Mr. Demant, one of the most penetrating and courageous of our contemporary religious thinkers, examines from this point of view the dominant political and religious philosophies of the moment, and contrasts them with the fundamental declarations of a fully Christian metaphysic. His small book is packed with thought, and will repay careful study. The present religious outlook, he finds, is vitiated by a fatal Either—Or. On one hand is Barthian transcendentalism, utterly repudiating this world and its works. On the other is the exaggerated immanentism which finds in the world-process and the personalities cast up by it the sole evidence and action of the divine; an outlook ultimately responsible for "the uprush of Teutonic paganism in Nazi Germany," and the tendency of Jung and his followers to heal the sickness of the modern soul "by a pantheistic baptism into the collective unconscious."

Confronting both these extremes, whilst accepting something from each of them, stands the Christian philosopher, acknowledging both the absolute and the successive as real in their degree, and declaring a divine action both "upon history and within history": a reading of life which restores to man his status as a person, and gives him power for "mastery of his historic destiny." Christianity, poised as it is on a particular incarnation of the Eternal within the time process, gives to each event in history a genuine significance by relating it to the Transcendent; and it is this cosmic witness of Catholic philosophy—lost in the flood of humanism and subjectivism—which must be restored if religion is indeed to regain its position as the interpreter of life.

Dr. Barth's essay on Church and State has already been widely circulated in German. Here he brings his distinctive ideas to bear upon one of the major problems of the time; for the tension between Church and State, which is constantly recurrent in Christian history, may well become a determining factor in the development of the present European situation. He discusses on one hand the essence of the State and its significance for the Church; and on the other, the special service which the Church should render to the State, by constantly applying absolute standards to social embodiments and acts. At bottom, the true Christian ideal is political—a Heavenly City, a Kingdom of God, rather than an ecclesiastical institution. In this sense the Church is the only real State, and the citizenship of Christians in this absolute order involves an allegiance which transcends and may sometimes contradict earthly and national loyalties. The general bearing of this doctrine on present conditions in totalitarian societies is obvious; and will be further appreciated by those who study Dr. Micklem's admirable and fully documented survey of the relations between Nazi Germany and the Roman Church during the past six years. Beginning by an exposition of National Socialist ideals this book goes on to discuss the increasing tension between the exponents of "Race-Blood-Soil" and the defenders of traditional Christianity. Dr. Micklem observes in his preface that many have risked their lives in order to give the first-hand information incorporated in this work, which has been issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

EVELYN UNDERHILL.