

Mussolini. And then there is General Franco and the support he received from English Catholics; though Dark forgets the Catholic minority in England who never saw Franco's war in Spain as a crusade.

All very difficult for a Church of England man, a strong lover of England and its people. The Holy Roman Church is un-English, as Mr. Podsnap would have observed, and it's difficult to see what can be done about it. However, Sidney Dark will have none of Dr. Buchman and his Groups. Buchman's association with the Nazis makes it impossible; the 'whole movement is from every point of view utterly damnable.'

This autobiography of a man of good will and of fundamental modesty and sincerity is, in spite of occasional small errors in matters of fact, of value to the historian of our times. Deep friendships have not come to Sidney Dark. 'My limitation,' he tells us, 'has meant that while I have had a host of kind and pleasant acquaintances I have rarely had real friends, and I do not fail to realise that I have not received because of my general inability to give. My trouble has always been that the people who interest me to-day often bore me to-morrow. I have no sense either of superiority or inferiority.' This candour disarms criticism. But Fleet Street can recall many acts of unrecorded and probably forgotten kindnesses on the part of Sidney Dark. But why should so competent a journalist write of a Dominican 'monk'? He must know better than that.

JOSEPH CLAYTON.

SOCIETY AND RELIGION.

THE CHURCH LOOKS AHEAD. Broadcast Talks by J. H. Oldham, M. B. Reckitt, Philip Mairet, Dorothy Sayers, M. C. d'Arcy, V. A. Demant, T. S. Eliot. With an introduction by E. L. Mascall. (Faber; 3s. 6d.)

This small book of 122 pages has an interest and an importance far greater than either its size or its title suggest. The title is misleading, since not even so distinguished a team of speakers as this can claim to be 'The Church'—and there is very little 'looking ahead' in the talks: their design is rather to expose and discuss some of the real issues in the present war and to propose measures for the recovery of social and international sanity such as may claim to be deduced from Catholic doctrine. This second purpose is clearly the more difficult, and it is not perhaps surprising if it is less obviously achieved. The first four talks are remarkably satisfying—remarkably, that is, to this reviewer who had the honour of arranging the series, and who was more than once discomfited by the seeming impossibility of getting speakers to keep to their brief. Dr. Oldham established with lucidity and conviction the indispensable basis of all true social *order* in the Catholic doctrine of man, which

is the only completely true account of what man is. Mr. Reckitt, speaking on 'The War behind the War,' argues cogently the power of supernatural faith to penetrate the confusion of immediate and even of ulterior issues, and to illuminate the ultimate issues at stake to-day, showing how necessary is this virtue for a right understanding of what is really going on. The Editor of the *New English Weekly* contributes a masterly exposition of what a nation is, and shows how far we have weakened our national vitality by denying the basic dependence of a nation upon nature—notably on the soil whereon it lives; whilst Miss Sayers indicates with her usual freshness of illustration the absurdity of demanding Christian (or even natural) virtues in this world without the under-pinning of revealed truth enshrined in dogma.

The last three talks are perhaps inevitably less satisfying in relation to the general plan of the series: but nothing spoken by Fr. d'Arcy, Dr. Demant or Mr. Eliot could fail to be of value. Fr. d'Arcy discusses with his unflinching ability the unity of nature among all human beings, underlying all differences of nation, class or even creed—though liable to grave misunderstanding or even total neglect without the illumination of the Faith. Dr. Demant contributes an invaluable essay on the psychology of nations and says some very shrewd things about the pre-conditions of national health: and Mr. Eliot concludes the series with a timely reminder that no society can be christianised (still less re-christianised) unless the Christians within it are fully formed both intellectually ('thinking always as *Christians*') and spiritually for their apostolate, conceding that this apostolate may be worked out in many varied and strange ways, and illustrating his point by a fine encomium of Charles de Foucauld—a fitting end to a series of talks inspired by the Papal Peace Points and given by members of different communions who are yet united by a common faith and a single devotion to the one Christ.

P. McLAUGHLIN.

RETURN TO HOLINESS. By W. G. Peck. (Dacre Press; 5s.)

For years now Christians, with magnificent and untiring energy, have spent themselves in protecting and barricading themselves and their fellow Christians against secular influences. Affrighted by the immensity and the complexity of world problems they have withdrawn from contact with the world into cold seclusion, wherein they have concentrated on their own inner spiritual life. Outwardly they have pursued what might well be called the doctrine of religious protectionism. The general probity of their lives and the evident sincerity of their convictions induces many to conclude that Christianity consists essentially and entirely in the practice of renunciation and mortification; that the quintessence of the Christian ethic lies in the avoidance of all occasions of sin. If such a notion were to prevail we should end with a 'Church' of hermits and recluses.