

The Spirit as a Shaper of History

Five Ideas That Change the World by Barbara Ward. W. W. Norton. 188 pp. \$3.75.

The Movement of World Revolution by Christopher Dawson. Sheed & Ward. 179 pp. \$3.00.

by *Russell Henry Stafford*

This is a year when mounting pressures are forcing the world crisis home upon all thoughtful citizens. But in our technological age, negligent of the humanities and consequently with little background to set the drives of the moment in perspective, many are bewildered, and some are tempted to despair. The reading public which sets the tone of public opinion needs, as perhaps never before, simple, accurate, lucid counsel to guide its thinking through the current maze.

It is therefore especially helpful that at this time two scholars of first rank should present us with brilliant brief summaries of the contemporary situation and its antecedents, from supplementary points of view. Mr. Dawson has long been acknowledged as a historian of extraordinary range and penetration. His recent coming to the Harvard Divinity School as the first Charles Chauncey Stillman Professor of Roman Catholic Studies is a notable enrichment of America's cultural resources. Miss Ward (Lady Jackson) is equally eminent in the field of political economy. She is living just now in Ghana; but from West Africa her voice reaches us with its well-known clarity.

We can be grateful that both these scholars have here withstood the scholarly prejudice against mere surveys, and have offered works obviously in that category, direct in style, plain in

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language, and with no clutter of footnotes or bibliography. These are little books which John Citizen, B. A., can read painlessly, yet without fear lest they deceptively oversimplify the complexities of their vast subjects. The more learned will find in them alluring echoes of countless heavy tomes; the less learned may follow these arguments with assurance that in them no essential considerations are wilfully omitted or dogmatically slighted.

Miss Ward's book comprises the 1957 Aggrey-Fraser-Guggisberg Lectures at the University College of Ghana, which she gave at Prime Minister Nkrumah's request. The five ideas with which she deals successively are Nationalism, Industrialism, Colonialism, Communism and Internationalism. Each is treated in terms of its origin, its development, its influence upon today's situation, and its positive values as well as its disvalues. So seldom is any phrase recognizably slanted toward the original Ghanaian audience, that a reader unaware of the circumstances in which these lectures were given would not discover or suspect them from the page. Yet one wonders how teaching or advice more profitable could have been framed for the future leaders of that vigorous young democracy as it enters upon nationhood.

As we should expect from a Christian and a scholar, Miss Ward is against racialism, against exploitation in any form, scornful of delusive buncombe from any source in support of injustice or fanaticism, and energetically on the side of the basic freedom of all men. This freedom she regards not as a goal to be sought, but as a dynamic so intrinsic in human nature that, though it may be thwarted for a time, it can

never be throttled. Such is Miss Ward's unobtrusive artistry that to follow this dominant theme of human rights through these five contexts is in itself an aesthetic satisfaction, in complement of the sharpness of the presentation, all but diagrammatic, which makes her points stand out and stick. Here are facts and principles long vaguely acknowledged among us; but they have seldom before been so skillfully correlated, and brought into such clear focus.

Only in one section does the author's tone take on an edge of shrillness. The pages on Communism survey its absurd datedness as a philosophy of history arising out of fleeting initial phases of industrialism left behind a century ago, the disingenuous manipulation its theory has undergone to suit the agrarian scene of Russia, and the exploitation of its catchwords as slogans for a harsh new form of imperialism which may for long prevail in underprivileged Asian areas. These pages come as near to sarcastic diatribe as so poised a writer would ever venture. Yet such are the marshalling of the evidence and the objectivity of the logic that even here the conclusions proposed seem irresistible.

In the interest of the sane internationalism which must somehow be achieved at the very time when scores of peoples once controlled from abroad are entering aggressively upon independence as separate nations, Miss Ward sees hope chiefly in the development of a permanent UN force commissioned and adequate for policing incipient disturbances anywhere and everywhere, and in "the transfer of one or two percent of the West's rising income to the developing nations . . . This annual sum of \$5 to \$10 billion in development capital would provide the essential motive power to lift the emergent peoples

through the first phase of capital accumulation and set them on the way to creating their own means of further growth." Let him who thinks this cannot be done suggest a feasible alternative.

Miss Ward's book is an indispensable survey. So is Mr. Dawson's. *The Movement of World Revolution* deals with much of the same matter in another light. Mr. Dawson is concerned primarily with the dominant role in world affairs today of Europe and its outposts, despite the relatively recent date and confined area of the European peoples in terms of world history. He reviews with exciting concision the rise of European culture and its explosion into revolt against static conditions of living and government, chiefly from the Reformation onward. His thesis is that "Europe was the original source of the movement of change in which the whole world is now involved and it is in European history that we find the key to the understanding of the ideologies which divide the modern world."

Mr. Dawson recounts the origins of Western secularism, beginning with the so-called Enlightenment which sponsored the French Revolution, and bifurcating into Western Democracy and East Soviet Communism. His account of the thrilling Age of Discovery and the subsequent impact of the forces it released upon the ancient and inert Oriental Empires is a masterpiece of balanced exposition. He notes the uneasy and inadvertent alliance

of Christian missions with Western imperialism, in full cognizance of its dubious aspects. His interest is chiefly in Christian outreach and its prospects for the future. The comparison he institutes between the spread of the Christian faith in the Roman Empire and the conditions it confronts on the wider scene of the world today, beyond the Mediterranean which was yesterday's world, brings out the alarming contrasts as well as an encouraging parallel. He blinks none of the obstacles to the world extension of Christian faith, which he earnestly desires both because he is a Christian and because he judges dispassionately that no other condition can afford a foundation for general understanding and a firm peace.

Yet he is not without hope. In sober assessment of the openings, he discounts the intelligentsia as currently too infiltrated by the diverse urges of secularism, and he weights only moderately the peasants whom it seems easiest for Christian missions to reach. But he points much more confidently to the great cities, cosmopolitan rather than nationalist in type and texture, as likely to prove again, as in the first Christian centuries, to be the most amenable and responsive centers for proclaiming the gospel of brotherhood and peace in Christ.

Mr. Dawson's emphasis on the primacy of religion is not wholly or perhaps chiefly based, one feels, upon his own creedal allegiance. It is not as a Christian, but as an objective historian studiously fair to all factors in the

human adventure thus far, that he declares: "The deeper spiritual needs of mankind must always remain . . . Religion is essential to humanity and cannot be permanently banished from the modern world." He finds a vacuum today where faith should be, for mankind's health of mind and motive. He sees no hope of filling that vacuum save in the universalism of the Christian worldview. He believes that the hostility to missions now proclaimed in many quarters of Asia and Africa because of the old unholy alliance between Colonialism and the Christian World Mission, of brief duration and long since broken off, is by no means beyond gradual correction. But he realizes that it will take time. His last word, after a study both realistic and comprehensive of current trends and their sources, is one of hope and patience: "The soil must be broken—the plough and the harrow must do their work before the seed can produce a good harvest. But this is the age of the plough and the harrow, not of the harvest."

For all who concede prime importance in this age of troubles to religious ethics in support of the effort to achieve a sound international order, it is encouraging that these two scholars, Christians without bigotry and recognized masters in their respective fields, have given us surveys of the world scene in which hard facts are honestly confronted and analyzed, yet from which the hope emerges, without debt to wishful thinking, that man may still have a morrow, and that tomorrow on earth may be brighter than today.

We Strangers and Afraid

by Elfan Rees. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 72 pp. 50 cents.

Since the end of World War II, some forty million refugees, in permanent exile from their homelands, have come to represent a tragic problem to the free world. This study, prepared in anticipation of World Refugee Year, documents their plight and the relief work being done by intergovernmental and voluntary agencies.

Mixing Religion and Politics

by William Muehl. Associated Press. 128 pp. 50 cents.

In lively and persuasive style, this handbook discusses the political implications of religious faith and explains why Americans have traditionally tended to resist or misunderstand these implications.

The Economics of Freedom

by Massimo Salvadori. Doubleday. 242 pp. \$4.50.

The achievements of American capitalism, Professor Salvadori argues, are largely based on the generous motives and egalitarian values of a liberal democracy. Despite the claims of its critics, it has proved itself "superior to most other, perhaps to all other, existing economic systems."

The Sociological Imagination

by C. Wright Mills. Oxford. 234 pp. \$6.00.

In a time when "the sociological imagination is becoming the major common denominator of our cultural life," one of its foremost exponents undertakes to examine the contemporary condition of the social sciences in America and their various divergencies from classic sociological analysis.

A Short History of Christianity

by Martin E. Marty. Meridian Books. 384 pp. \$1.45.

A notable addition to the distinguished "Living Age" series, this volume combines brevity and lucidity in a compact rendering of the historic Church and its many faces.

Report on a Study of Non-Military Defense

The RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, Calif. 48 pp. Free.

The possibilities for an effective system of non-military civil defense are investigated by a group of experts in this informative report, which includes basic data on population shelters, fallout, economic survival, and policy measures.

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