

thence to the God who redeems, to the act of redeeming, and to its result. Finally he shows how the new life through the Cross and Resurrection is given to the Church in the sacraments.

Although, of course, this is too short a book (160 pages) to be a wholly adequate treatment of its all-important theme, yet it may fairly be said that the Vice-Principal of Mirfield has done an interesting and indeed a valuable work in writing it.

DESMOND SCHLEGEL

LIFE IS COMMITMENT. By J. H. Oldham. (S.C.M. Press; 12s. 6d.)

Dr Oldham welcomed the invitation to deliver these six lectures on 'The Meaning of Christianity Today' as a 'challenge to set down in black and white what I really believe'. The result is a very sincere statement, but one in which the opinions of his many friends of different denominations fill the foreground of the canvas, while the New Testament provides hardly more than the starting point of the discussions, and the Fathers and Catholic theologians are scarcely mentioned.

The author's principal purpose is to teach that one can only live fully in the measure that one commits oneself. Refusing to choose means drifting. Man, who is not only an individual but a social being, must definitely choose God and Christ. But when the author turns to the 'Church', by which he means the aggregate of Christians of all persuasions, he hesitates. Although the reasons for joining this aggregate 'possess undeniable cogency', he thinks that the actually existing 'Church' is the source of all his doubts and difficulties, especially for her exclusive and unreceptive attitude to the life and experience of those outside. Hence, he cannot urge all to join the 'Church'.

For the author none of the present forms of christianity is the same thing as the *ecclesia* of the New Testament, which is a 'fellowship of persons . . . that is a brotherhood, . . . and *nothing else*'. Yet this surely betrays a radical misunderstanding, as the Church of the New Testament is a visible body, organically compacted, possessing sacraments and a definite doctrine authoritatively taught. And from the day of Pentecost itself entry into the Church by baptism has been taught as necessary for all.

Perhaps the book's most interesting challenge to Catholics is not doctrinal, but practical—'Can a financier or a machine-tender really pray at his work today? Is he making something for Christ's sake?' If not, the Christian should 'give up his christianity or his activity in relation to money or the machine'. There is nothing new in all this; but the need for an integrated christian life, of which every element is redeemed, cannot be too often emphasised.

HUGH FARMER, O.S.B.