

Nietzsche or Christ?

NIETZSCHE has often been accused of, or complimented with, the responsibility of leading present-day Germany into a state of mind that made world peace and coöperation impossible. To his teaching has been attributed the German alternative of world mastery or downfall. He regarded himself, and has been regarded by others, as the greatest philosophical foe of Christianity. And yet there is much in his criticism of Christian thought and practise that is not opposed to Christian fundamentals, but might rather be taken as a tonic for the true Christian spirit.

The relation of Nietzsche to contemporary thought and particularly to Christianity, as well as to the prevailing ideals in Germany, are well brought out in Dr. Figgis' *Bross Lectures on The Will to Freedom or the Gospel of Nietzsche and the Gospel of Christ*. The author gives a brief and illuminating survey of the life of Nietzsche and the effects of his physical infirmities upon his writings.. His attack upon Christianity as a decadent religion, or a religion of decadence, "slave morality" and cowardice is well delineated, but shown by the author to have been based largely upon an essential misunderstanding. Dr. Figgis recognizes Nietzsche's originality and charm and regards him as one of the most vital forces in the progress of phil-

osophy and ethics. As he puts it, "Nietzsche is a good tonic, but a bad food."

As an offset to Nietzsche's emphasis of the will to power, Dr. Figgis would place the Christian doctrine of the "will to freedom" with all of its implications. He evidently believes that the more the writings of Nietzsche are read the more clearly will his neo-pagan attitude of revolt against Christianity spur on Christian teachers to rid our religion of its mere hypocrisy and lip service. When the followers of Jesus become practical devotees of the brotherhood of man, instead of mere acclaimers of its phraseology, while they still live on the Nietzschean basis of treating large classes of men as mere things, then the criticism of Nietzsche will no longer have its present powerful appeal. Until that time comes religion will still need the tonic of Nietzsche's strenuous message, Dr. Figgis' volume is a discriminating and brilliant discussion that will well repay every thoughtful person to read.

The Will to Freedom or the Gospel of Nietzsche and the Gospel of Christ, by John Neville Figgis. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$1.25.