

Book Reviews

ends with an appeal—which will find many an echo—to artists, writers and theologians, especially those of the Order, to further true devotion to the Heart of Jesus, by producing works worthy of their subject. Copies may be obtained, at two shillings each, from the Dominican nuns, Old Headington, Oxford, who can also supply the same writer's excellent book on the nuns of the Order, *Chez les Dominicaines du Grand Ordre*.

M.M.

ESSAYS OF A CATHOLIC LAYMAN IN ENGLAND. By Hilaire Belloc. (Sheed & Ward; 7/6 net.)

Dare we say it? England reserves her honours for false prophets, and English Catholics are—intensely English. It may be that the splendour of Hilaire Belloc's dialectic in their cause may awake something more than their faint forbearance or their futile gratitude, but will they assimilate his thought? Have they made their own his epoch-making book on the Servile State? It is a clinching correspondence with the *Rerum Novarum*, but did Catholics eagerly buy up the first edition? Sheed and Ward are making them read, and their publications already constitute one of the finest Home Universities. Selah! Here is one of the latest, full of vast surveys and vital analyses of radical matters such as Usury, Legend, the Schools, Church and State. The last named essay is a treatise in brief on what a Catholic ought to know in order to leaven the choking mass of misapprehension and misrepresentation which, unless it be leavened indeed, will prove to be the sea out of which the last Beast of the Apocypse will rise to persecute. Cardinal Hergenrother's great book on Church and State was done into English fifty years ago, but who wants it? Who publishes it? This reviewer has seen but one copy in all his lifetime.

The *Letter to an Anglo-Catholic* is singularly free from the tedium of controversy, and a model to some who sorely need one, who have brought with them into the Church a strange heavy inconclusiveness which hampers their apology for the faith that is in them. It ends on the question: Where is the Church? Instead of asking Where is Christ? Recall the immortal wisdom of Kai Lung: 'It is a mark of insincerity of purpose to search for the sublime Emperor among the low-class tea-shops.' Or this anecdote of Bishop Hedley, who when viewing London from the top of an omnibus was asked by an amateur apostle: 'Sir, have you found Christ?' Like lightning from the blue, the Bishop answered: 'Has He been lost?'

Blackfriars

One Catholic newspaper has done the honour of debate to the Essay on 'The Faith through the Press.' The author, while admitting that a Catholic daily is not a practical proposition, suggests the feasibility at least of a weekly review, which while refraining from the chronicle of small beer which makes our Catholic weeklies a waste of time, will treat all topics current in the light of Catholic philosophy and morals. The paper which discusses this, proves at the outset that if the time is ripe, the personnel is unripe—even sour. The article is largely a cry of 'Where do we come in?' The obvious reply is 'Tradesmen's entrance,' but the really constructive answer is that Catholics as a body are as yet too heterogenous, too inured to the freedom of outlawry to pool their mental weight into such specific gravity as would give the needed dignity and poise to the manner of editing, even were the adequate financial security forthcoming. We have a growing number of publicists who do leaven the Neo-Pagan press with the Catholic point of view, but they work on their own responsibility and plough lonely furrows, though less lonely as time goes on.

There must be many who have read the author's letter to Dean Inge in leaflet form. They will be glad to have that bold and stern monument in a more enduring shrine. When it comes to the personal opinions of Dean Inge *versus* those of Mr. Belloc, the provincial genius must bow to the judgment of the terrestrial orb, which is sure.

Now the appeal of the ideal Catholic weekly would—it absolutely must—be to this tribunal and to no other, and Belloc is one of the few who have 'taken silk' at this bar. He knows how, and he keeps the unwritten laws of the practice. Yet I personally would not make him editor-in-chief of the Ideal Weekly. Excellent as sub-editor or chief of staff would he be, but his fine fencing is the least bit over-anxious. A subtle instance of his limitation (shall we dare to call it?) may be found in a very masterly short essay: *The Approach to the Sceptic*. Here he seems to omit altogether the sympathetic approach, in his zeal for the noble dynamic of pure intelligence. He deals faithfully enough with the impotence to believe, but he never asks the sceptic, 'What do you hope?'

J.O'C.