

EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

EROS AND AGAPE. The special numbers of *ETUDES CARMELITAINES*, each devoted to the thorough and systematic treatment of some particular subject, are perhaps the most permanently valuable contributions to contemporary periodical literature. They also afford a striking example of what the contemplative, by reason of his very detachment, can do to help the modern world in its difficulties. The latest issue is devoted to *Psychologie et Mystique de l'Amour*. It is a superb symposium, and the deepest gratitude is due to the French Carmelites for the courage and the care with which they have produced it.

Etudier dans une revue religieuse une question vitale telle que l'Amour et dans toute son ampleur, voilà qui hier eut paru déplacé, et, pourtant n'est-ce pas d'en haut qu'on ordonne avec sagesse et les sciences ne sont-elles pas "servantes" de la théologie? Les *Etudes Carmélitaines* ont le souci d'être utiles à tous ceux qui, au dedans que au dehors des cloîtres, ont le courage de se poser les problèmes et de vouloir les résoudre.

The volume (there are some 260 pages) begins with a series of *Témoignages sur l'Amour*—human and divine—to set the reader "dans le climat de l'Amour." Then follows *Mysticism and Human Love: an Essay on the rôle of the sensitive affections in the structure and development of spiritual love* by Gustave Thibon. It may be considered as commentary on Nietzsche's aphorism that "Christianity has given Eros poison to drink: he has not died of it, but he has degenerated into vice." He also examines the Freudian conceptions of sublimation and of the function of sex in mystical experience; and he sums up his brilliant analysis:

The problem for man does not consist in choosing between the senses and the spirit, but between the *domination* of the senses and the domination of the spirit. . . . The dilemma "for or against the senses" is non-existent. The glory of Catholic thought is that it is *against* nothing (except evil, which is nothing); it is *for* everything, but for each in its proper place and within its own proper sphere.

His treatment of the asceticism of the saints and its essential humanism, of the re-focussing of human potentialities demanded by the coming of Christ, of the disastrous effects

when that re-focussing is misapprehended as the atrophy of the sensitive side of man's nature, is all magnificently done. Dr. Rudolf Allers follows with an illuminating psychological study on *Love and Instinct*—the essential selflessness of the one and the selfishness of the other, yet both indispensable elements—packed with practical wisdom; it contains much exceptionally helpful incidental matter on conflicts and neuroses, repression and sacrifice. In the course of it he shows that human love, partly because of the interposition of instinct, can never fulfil all the exigencies of love *tout court* with its aspirations to identity with the beloved. On the ecstasy of union follows that "solitude which is so much deeper than the banal sense of isolation which man suffers when he is companionless." Individual identity remains, and the pain of it is enhanced by contrast. In a theological exposition, *La Recherche de la Personne*, Père Philippe de la Sainte Trinité shows how divine love supplies that yearning for identification which human love leaves unsatisfied; his essay is a remarkably lucid account of the divine Agape in terms of the metaphysics of personality. (One wonders whether the theories of personality of Cajetan and Billot, especially as the latter is qualified by the writer, are so incompatible as is commonly assumed.) The chief points of these general studies on human and divine love and their inter-relation are illustrated by concrete examples: Charles du Bos contributes a fine study on *Love according to Coventry Patmore*, and Père Bruno de Jésus-Marie on *Madame Acarie, Wife and Mystic*. The number concludes with reviews of *Some Recent Books on Love* and a text of St. John Chrysostom on marriage and Christian perfection. It is to be hoped that this volume will be disseminated as widely as it deserves; it will be found of immense value by all who have the courage to face squarely the most pressing and intimate problems of life and who seek the Christian solution—the Christian synthesis of the claims of divine and human love.

CHRISTIAN MORALS. *Ueber das christliche Menschenbild* by Dr. Josef Pieper in the May HOCHLAND should be read as a commentary and development on the theme outlined recently by Père Ceslaus Tunmer in BLACKFRIARS (November 1935). We may paraphrase his opening paragraph:

St. Thomas's Moral Theology, the *Secunda Pars* of the *Summa*,

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begins by saying that, as the first part of the work had treated of God, so this second part will treat of man, who is made in the image of God. This opening sentence of St. Thomas's Moral Theology expresses a truth which we Christians of to-day have almost entirely forgotten: the truth that morals deals first and foremost with *man*, that its task is to explain what man should be like—the ideal of man—and that consequently Christian morals should portray the Christian ideal of man. In mediæval Christendom this truth was taken for granted. But it soon came to be overlooked, and already, two generations after St. Thomas, Eckhart had to remind his contemporaries that people should not concern themselves so much with what they should *do*, but rather with what they should *be*. Later on, owing to a variety of causes, Morals came to lose sight of this view of things altogether: so much so that even those textbooks which claimed to be "*ad mentem Sancti Thomæ*" differed from him on this fundamental point. This is one of the reasons why it scarcely occurs to the average Christian of to-day to look to Moral Theology or Philosophy for information regarding the true *being* or the ideal of man. Rather do we associate with Morals an exposition of what we are to *do* and, still more, what we are *not* to do: a codification of commandments and, still more, of prohibitions. Yet the first point of the Common Doctor's moral teaching is that morals is concerned with the true meaning of man. Naturally it treats also of doing and not-doing, of obligations, commandments, sins. But its primary, proper concern, on which all the rest depends, is the true being of man, the portrayal of the "Good Man."

The writer goes on to show that the traditional, as distinct from the dominant post-Tridentine, conception of Moral Theology is essentially that of a *Tugendlehre*: it is founded on the idea of *virtue*; and virtue, according to the classical definition, is that which renders its possessor—man—good, and, as a consequence, his actions are rendered good. This central idea of virtue—indeed the very word—has practically disappeared. He quotes Paul Valéry's address to the French Academy:

"Virtue, messieurs! The word Virtue is dead; or, at least, is dying. . . . I confess that I myself have never heard it; or rather, what is more deplorable, have heard it used only as an oddity, a joke. That might mean that I mix only in low company. But neither have I come across it even in the most widely read and highly prized books of the day. No newspaper or periodical, I fear, would dare to print the word except in some comic context. We have reached the time when the words 'virtue'

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and 'virtuous' are to be met with only in the Catechism and in farce, in the Academy and in musical-comedy."

"Virtue," Dr. Pieper continues, "does not mean the rightness of individual actions and omissions; it means that *man* is right and good, both supernaturally and naturally." He goes on to give a masterly summary of St. Thomas's moral teaching—no better introduction to it could be found—and shows how the concepts of virtue and of the virtues are the core of it. He points out how this teaching escapes the Kantian "moralismus," to which too many moral theologians have succumbed, which reduces Morals to a mere codification of isolated actions and omissions, and also the false "supernaturalismus" which, since it is unconcerned for the intrinsic goodness of the whole man, tends to departmentalize Morals and isolate it from the concerns of everyday life. He pleads for a restoration of the traditional and Thomistic view:

It is, I think, a not unimportant concern to restore this sublime ideal of classical Theology to the consciousness of our age. . . . Not because of historical sentimentality, but because this view is still valid; and not only valid, but because it is, I believe, a matter of life and death for us to recover and reaffirm it.

OUR CATHOLIC PRESS. The concurrence of the Vatican Press Exhibition and the centenary of the DUBLIN REVIEW gives our native Catholic Press occasion to look at itself. The centenary number of the DUBLIN itself provides an excellent survey of its own history and that of our press generally; the editor of the DUBLIN also contributes a useful historical summary to the CLERGY REVIEW. The hundredth birthday of a review of the DUBLIN'S calibre is indeed an occasion for congratulation. Mr. Stanley James in THE MONTH is more concerned with the present opportunities of the Catholic weekly press. He draws attention to the need of de-parochialization—"herein lies its opportunity and responsibility"—and concludes:

The conclusion seems to be that reliance on the intrinsic qualities we possess rather than on those extrinsic advantages which can be purchased in the journalistic market indicates the best and, in the long run, the most successful policy. Competition with the secular press in any other way is hopeless. But to adopt such a policy demands, besides a revaluation of journalism as a form of Catholic activity, a measure of heroism. It means that

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we shall really come to look upon our papers and magazines as standards of revolt against that world which is too much with us. If we appeal to the same tastes to which the ordinary Press appeals, we may by this means secure a more or less apathetic number of readers who purchase their copies for the "worldly" interests they provide. Whereas, if we appeal on the higher grounds of truth and morality, we shall win support of a different kind, based on sacrificial loyalty and enthusiasm for Catholic enterprise as such. But to deserve enthusiasm of this kind a periodical must be Catholic in a wider sense than that it chronicles Catholic news and uses the familiar idiom of the Faith. It must be the creation of a profoundly Catholic mentality. Coupling courage with charity, it must be truly militant. Breadth of vision, independence of judgment capable of withstanding the crowd-mind of a servile generation and inspiring with a like independence those who read it—these are the qualities we may hopefully oppose to a press whose strength is in its financial resources and in them alone.

In the DUBLIN, the Editor, Mr. Denis Gwynn, also discusses the present outlook and future prospects from the standpoint of the monthlies and quarterlies as well as of the weeklies. He draws attention to the fact that there has arisen a number of English Catholic reviews carrying matter for which the DUBLIN would hitherto have been the only vehicle. A glance at the catalogue of the British section of the Press Exhibition might suggest that perhaps there are too many. The disadvantages of dissipation of energy, talent and money on a superfluous number of such periodicals should not be overlooked. There is also the danger of overlapping and wasteful competition. *Distinctiveness* must be the aim of each of these many periodicals if their independent existences are to be justified. The distinctive aim of BLACK-FRIARS is generously recognized by Mr. Gwynn when he speaks of it as providing an "outlet for much excellent and original writing in which the growing influence of St. Thomas Aquinas has very properly been conspicuous."

CONTEMPORANEA. CATHOLIC BOOK NOTES (May): *The Antidote*: Charenton and *The Evening Standard*—a resurrection of relics.

EASTERN CHURCHES QUARTERLY shows still greater promise in its second number.

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- LONDON MERCURY (May): *The Poetry of T. S. Eliot* by Michael Roberts: an unusually helpful critical introduction showing Eliot's consistency and continuity.
- SOCIAL FORUM: another paper of the *Catholic Worker* type; this time from Canada (2 cents, from 96 Wilbrod Street, Ottawa).
- VIE INTELLECTUELLE (April 25): *Qu'est-ce qu'exister* by A. Marc, S.J.: metaphysics—and morals—without tears. *L'Eglise anglaise établie et le monde ouvrier* by V. M. Pollet, O.P.: a well-informed account of Anglican social work. *L'héritage ancestral d'Edouard VIII*: how "la dynastie britannique démontre le triomphe de l'esprit sur la matière. . . ."
- VIE SPIRITUELLE (May): *Les fidèles et la messe* by V. Héris, O.P.: the theology of the priesthood of the laity and of congregational worship. *Pour l'union des chrétiens séparés* by "Apostolus": "L'union des communautés chrétiennes autonomes autour de la *cathedra Petri* peut être aussi rapide dans sa consommation qu'elle aura été longue à préparer. . . . Mais cela exige avant tout un effort des fils privilégiés pour connaître et pour accueillir, pour aimer et pour *revivre* tout ce qu'il y a de divin dans le coeur de leurs frères."

PENGUIN.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE CROSS AND THE PLOUGH

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS

SIR,—I hope that the readers of your May Editorial will read also the issue of *The Cross and the Plough* to which you refer and decide for themselves whether or no the comments of the Midlands Catholic Land Association are "ungracious."

It is depressing to find BLACKFRIARS supporting the suicidal policy of "Back to the Town."

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

M. G. S. SEWELL, T.O.S.D.

(We also hope that Mr. Sewell will read our Editorial, and not merely one sentence in it. He will find that the policy we support is not "Back to the Town" but "Save the Flock"—and in this we are content to follow the lead of the appointed Shepherds.—ED.)