

REVIEWS

- TEMPS PRESENT (Jan. 7): *La Médiation ou la Guerre?* by Claude Bourdet: the responsibility of France and Britain for the continuance of the Spanish war. *Individu et Personne*: J. Maritain popularises a favourite theme.
- VIE INTELLECTUELLE (Dec. 10) includes *Le catholicisme et l'ordre international* by T. S. Eliot; *Le Culte de la monarchie et l'abdication de Edouard VIII* by X. de Lignac; *T. S. Eliot* by Georges Cattau; an instructive study of the "anti-Comintern" alliance by Maurice Jacques.

PENGUIN.

REVIEWS

THEOLOGY AND RELIGION

GRACE AND NATURE. By A. G. Hebert. (Church Literature Association; is.)

No dictum of Aquinas has been more abused—in both senses of the word—than that which asserts that grace perfects nature. It enshrines a fundamental and vitally important truth, but too often is it quoted, torn from its context in the whole Catholic and Thomistic doctrine of justification, in a sense that implies that grace is little more than a contributory adjunct to natural perfection, itself conditioned by nature. Self-styled Thomists are not always to blame if Barthians have seen in Aquinas an arch-betrayer of the Gospel of God.

Father Hebert, of the Anglican Society of the Sacred Mission, rightly anxious to vindicate the rights and values of nature and the claims of natural law, has fallen headlong into the pit prepared by this pseudo-Thomism. For him "the work of grace is seen to be the restoration of the image of God in man" which means no more than "the return of man to a truly 'natural' condition" (p. 37, cf. pp. 34, 71 etc.). That man was created in grace and called to supernatural glory; that redemption is essentially the restoration of a condition of union with God and not that of "pure nature"; that grace, as such, does *not* completely reintegrate nature, though, by reconciling us with God, it imparts the principle of that reintegration (cf. *Summa Theologica*, Ia IIae. cix. 8 etc.—a point which, if more emphasised, might solve many "Evangelical" difficulties regarding Catholic teaching); that the primary effect of grace for the Thomist no less than for the Barthian is the forgiveness of sin (ibid. cxiii); that grace, while ontologically transforming (ibid. cx.), is eschatological in its very *raison d'être* (ibid. cxiv.)—all this is almost entirely ignored in these pages. In view of the force and urgency of Barthian criticism it is just these points that need special emphasis at the present time. A right appreciation of them seems

to us particularly necessary for such solid foundations for a Christian sociology as the author seeks to lay. Moreover, as a number of contributors, both Catholic and Protestant, showed recently in an "Œcumenical" number of *The Student World*, they lie at the root of the differences between the Christian confessions with whose unity Fr. Hebert is so concerned. The Protestant objection that the Catholic Thomist doctrine of grace is a *theologia gloriæ*, an anticipation of eternity, is irrelevant as a criticism of St. Thomas. It is not, we think, irrelevant as a criticism of Fr. Hebert.

With his practical conclusions we are in general—often in enthusiastic—agreement. We endorse emphatically his strictures on an exclusivist, sectarian, individualist, anti-social and wholly other-worldly interpretation of Christianity. But, as the author himself reminds us in the course of some excellent criticism of current pacifism, it is possible to be pragmatically right for the wrong reasons, "and mistakes in matters of principle have always serious effects in confusing the issue." The fact that Fr. Hebert here prints boldly and baldly a view which is not unknown outside his own communion must be our apology for taking this opportunity of drawing attention to its defects. Such *suppressio veri et suggestio falsi* may easily become positive heresy, and its invocation of St. Thomas may deceive even the elect.

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KNOW YOUR FAITH: A Refresher Course in the Catechism for Older and Younger Catholics. By Rev. E. C. Messenger, Ph.D. (Burns, Oates; 2s. 6d.)

Any commentary on the Catechism to be intelligible to the untrained mind must state Catholic theology simply, concisely and accurately; and it is singularly erroneous to imagine that this is achieved merely by omitting abstruse points. If the point, as is often the case, be a pivotal one, this does not simplify but falsifies the argument. This is true when God's existence is proved by the fact that changing beings can only be accounted for by one Changeless Being, completely disregarding the question *why* they can only be so accounted for. The argument is rendered incomplete and to that extent false.

Inadequacies of this type are too frequent in *Know Your Faith*. Thus: by original sin man was reduced to a state of nature—no distinction between *status naturæ puræ* and *status naturæ lapsæ*. The Hypostatic Union is a fact, but no explanation how. Catholics should learn something about Holy Orders—but their commentary on the Catechism offers them no help.

These are a few examples of the startling inadequacy which renders the arguments of *Know Your Faith* vulnerable to the