

REVIEWS

REVIEWS FROM ABROAD

DIEU VIVANT, a handsome new review, admirably printed and containing 160 pages each issue (Editions du Seuil, 1 Rue des Poitevins, Paris VI; 150 francs a number), gathers together writers of different religious loyalties who are yet united in their conviction that there is a need for a return to "authentic religious values". Its sub-title is "Perspectives Religieuses et Philosophiques", which gives an idea of its wide scope. The first number contains important articles by Jean Danielou on the Symbolism of the Baptismal Rites, by Hans von Balthasar on Kierkegaard and Nietzsche and by Vladimir Lossby on the Theology of Light in Gregory Palamas. The second number maintains this high standard with contributions by Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel, Henri de Lubac and Henri-Marie Feret. Translations from the Fathers, Book Reviews and "Notes d'Actualite" are features of *Dieu Vivant*. A sympathetic note on the Church Unity Octave celebrations held at Blackfriars, Oxford, in 1942, however, confuses these with the Week-ends organised in the same place under the auspices of the Eastern Churches Quarterly.

CATHOLICITE and *UNIVERS*, published from 11 Rue des Frères-Vaillant, Lille, are concerned with unity: the former having for its motto, "Pax Christi in regno Christi", the latter, "Pour l'union fraternelle entre tous les hommes". *Univers* has excellent articles on racial questions, and has a useful summary of continental periodicals dealing with social justice.

LA REVUE NOUVELLE is a fortnightly review of general interest, published from 92 Avenue Moliere, Brussels (15 francs each issue). It is a fruit of the Liberation and has valuable articles on economic and political matters.

From Belgium also come *IRENIKON*, resuming its work as the organ of the Monks of Unity of Amay, now removed to Chevetogne. *LA NOUVELLE REVUE THEOLOGIQUE* (11 Rue des Recollets, Louvain) keeps up its accustomed standards, and the October 1945 issue is of special interest, containing several articles on the Encyclical of Pope Pius XII on the Mystical Body, as well as a detailed criticism of the new Latin translation of the Psalter recently authorised by the Holy See. *LE BULLETIN DES MISSIONS* (Abbaye de Saint-Andre-lez-Bruges), excellently illustrated, shows that the trials of the war years have in no way diminished Belgian zeal for the foreign missions.

CHURCH UNITY

LA VIE DU CHRIST DANS SON EGLISE. By Canon J. Leclercq. (Editions du Cerf, Paris; 130 Frs.).

It is probably true to say that one of the most important and, until quite recent years, one of the most neglected branches of study in Catholic theology is the treatise on the Church. This

treatise is usually studied as a branch of Apologetics, and perhaps that is the reason why few students feel satisfied after having been through the course. That this method of studying the Church is unsatisfactory needs no proof; what is important is to discover the reason why it is unsatisfactory, and to give some indication of the lines on which an adequate study of the Church may be worked out. With that object in view Canon Leclercq has written this valuable book.

Canon Leclercq begins by showing how the traditional type of text-book on the Church is not really adequate. These books all follow much the same pattern. They show that Christ founded a visible society; this society is the Catholic Church, centred round the person of the Pope who is infallible; this Church bears a certain relation to the State; and so on. This method of studying the Church is, comparatively speaking, quite recent in the life of the Church; for example, there is no such treatise among the works of St. Thomas. It arose in an atmosphere of polemics and became really prominent at the time of the Reformation, when it took its present form of controversial apologetics. Unfortunately, it has become completely fossilised in that form, and has not altered appreciably since the Sixteenth century. It is primarily a defence of Church institutions against Protestantism, which was, at least in its origins, essentially a revolt against institutional Catholicism. This apologetic, based on a study of the institutions of the Church, still has some value, especially in countries where there is strong Protestant opposition, but it is really only one aspect of the Church, and by no means the most important one. The Church today faces issues concerned with the very foundations of religion, with the existence of God, the divinity of Christ, etc. Many factors, unknown to the writers of classical studies of the Church, are at work in shaping the form of modern ecclesiology.

One fact upon which Canon Leclercq lays particular stress is that by far the most important aspect of ecclesiology is that which concerns those people who already belong to the Church. Catholics must be led to an understanding and love of the Church to which they belong, by showing the bond between Christ and his Church, by teaching them what manner of union ought to exist between Catholics and the Church, by showing how they ought to serve the Church and how to find their own place in the Church. This ecclesiology for Catholics really includes the apologetical aspect of the study of the Church, because the reality of the Church's life is the best apologetic. This is not a new idea; in fact, it is the way in which the doctrine of the Church was presented by the Fathers, particularly that group of writers known as the Apostolic Fathers. In the beginning of the Church's history, the only effect of persecution was to cause vast numbers of converts to join the Church, whereas all modern persecutions almost completely destroy the

Church in particular countries and give no corresponding impetus to the rate of conversions. The reason for this cannot be anything in the nature of the Church itself, because we know that there is the same divine life in the Church today as there was in the early Church. To say that the Church has not the same appeal now as it had in the past, because it is no longer new, is to show a lack of real faith in the Church. Modern Catholics attribute to Christ and his Church the weakness which is really in themselves. History shows clearly what is lacking in the Christian life of modern Catholics: there is no need to look for any other explanation. The revival of a real living ecclesiology is probably the most important task facing Catholics today: it is a tremendous work involving the study of theology, canon law, history, liturgy, etc., under the special aspect of the Church.

Canon Leclercq's book is, he modestly claims, only a series of marginal notes to the traditional studies on the Church: it is an attempt to show simply and clearly the best approach to the many questions involved in a modern study of the Church. The whole book is distinguished by remarkably sane and balanced views about questions which usually lead to much extravagant writing. Of particular value are the author's views on such subjects as Unity and Diversity in the Church, "political" Catholicism, the relations between Church and State, the effect of Persecution, etc. His chief concern is to emphasize the fact that the Church is both divine and human, like Christ its founder. Completely to understand the Church would involve understanding the mystery of the Incarnation, which is impossible. The human aspect of the Church, God working in and through men who retain their freedom, is a mystery to us. Only the Church, not as we imagine it, but as Christ made it, is the full realisation of the wonder of God working in and through men.

Canon Leclercq's book cannot be too highly recommended as an invaluable supplement to standard works on the Church, and as an indication of the primary importance of the study of the Church in all Catholic education.

DROSTAN MACLAREN, O.P.

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH. An address delivered to the Gloucester Conference, Oct. 24th, 1944. By The Rt. Rev. A. C. Headlam, C.H., D.D., Bp. of Gloucester. (Blackwell, Oxford; 2s.).

The most important thing to be said about this small pamphlet is that it is an authoritative exposition of what the ordinary instructed Anglican, who is neither High Church, Low Church nor Modernist, means by the clause which he repeats in the Creed, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church"; and it is important for us to try to understand this. It is not an easy task because it is never certain that where we use terms in common we are expressing identical concepts.