

scholars and general readers alike. We are glad to note that this is still entitled the first of a series on 'Problems of Worship', though no other volume has yet appeared. O.P.

ANGLICANS ET CATHOLIQUES: LE PROBLEME DE L'UNION ANGLO-ROMAINE (1833-1933). Par Jacques de Bivort de la Saudée. (Librarie Plon, Paris; n.p.)

This is a documented history of the relations between Anglo-Catholicism and the Holy See during the century which followed the beginning of the Oxford Movement, written at the request of Anglo-Catholic friends for the information of continental Catholics.

The bulk of the book consists of a full account of the five Malines Conversations. The author has been able to draw upon a considerable amount of unpublished matter though nothing of cardinal importance has emerged from it. His account is mainly factual and he does not greatly obtrude his own judgments beyond showing his belief in the possibility of corporate Reunion in *some* form, and pointing out that Catholics can work for such reunion without prejudice of any sort to individual submission to the Holy See.

H. StJ.



EXTRACTS

A VOCATION and how to discern it, both in its general and in its specifically religious and priestly sense, are subjects of great interest and practical utility today. *Vita Christiana* (Florence) devoted a double number of nearly two hundred pages to this subject, beginning with a chapter from Père Sertillanges's book *La Vie Intellectuelle* in which he points out the long stages that lie between the first desire to become a priest and the actual acceptance of that gift, stages of preparation of mind and heart, the discerning of spirits—for the simple desire or inclination is not sufficient grounds to decide the vocation. Fr da Vigolo contributes some valuable notes for the spiritual director on the important place that chastity takes in the question, and remarks wisely on the 'serene and virile autonomy proper to the virtuous celibate' (i.e. the celibate by choice and grace). A Camaldolese writes on the discernment of the contemplative vocation. Among the signs of such a vocation he lays down as the first—a perfect obedience particularly in those matters which contradict the individual's personal spiritual aspirations; the second is an aptitude to contemplative prayer, but this alone is not sufficient, the other signs must also be present. The vocation

to Catholic Action and to married life are not overlooked in this comprehensive survey.

COMMONWEAL, the always alive American Catholic weekly for which there should be an English counterpart, celebrates its 25th anniversary with a special number contributed to by several of its own stalwarts such as Michael Williams, H. A. Reinhold and George N. Shuster as well as outstanding authors like Maritain, Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton. Fittingly, Maritain writes the leader on faith—faith leading to the depths of God, faith creating a divine unity among men, faith leading to wisdom and contemplation.

I firmly believe that the spirit of contemplation is called upon to assume new forms, to make itself more pliable and bolder, to clothe itself in the love of one's neighbour in proportion as it spreads out into ordinary life. This means that action can be a disguise for mysticism, but it does not mean that there can be a mysticism of action. There is no more a mysticism of action than there is one of inertia. Stop now, says the Lord, wait a minute, keep quiet a little: be still and learn that I am God. Thomas Merton caps this by answering in the affirmative, and in some three thousand words, the question, 'Is Mysticism Normal?' Some points well deserve to be quoted.

No theologian worthy of attention holds that infused contemplation is the essence of Christian perfection, which consists in the union of the soul with God by perfect charity. . . . Anyone with experience . . . realises that there are very virtuous men and women who reach a high degree of perfection without ever receiving the grace of mystical or infused contemplation, at least in a clearly recognisable form, on earth. Such souls may actually reach a higher degree of sanctity than other less perfect souls, who nevertheless do receive the gift of passive contemplative prayer. . . . The grace of infused prayer . . . is only another, and very effective, means to perfection.

We wonder what Fr Garrigou-Lagrange will make of this and whether it really does cap M. Maritain's article.

CHURCH & PEOPLE, the Benedictine review which is designed to be popular, deserves to be popular, but through the Englishman's lack of intelligence has not so far become popular (it is only 3s.6d. a year for six issues, from Farnborough Abbey), has set out to bring before the general public the theology which has been so stirring the minds and hearts of French Catholics and which is beginning to blow breezes even over the Channel. It will be a difficult task to introduce de Lubac to the plumber, or Bouyer to the typist. But as a matter of fact *Church and People* provides nourishment which is intended for the intellectual Catholic, and he will be missing something if he does not spend this modest sum

on a subscription. There still remains the original problem of conveying the 'plain tommy' of sound sacramental theology to the general. We hope that the *Church and People* will not abandon this latter task.

The task is being taken up by way of the spoken word by the liturgical Missions adapted by Fr Illtud Evans, O.P. from the French method of Père Pichard. In the October *Liturgy* (the organ of the Society of St Gregory) Father Evans gives an account of these missions.

To introduce the faithful to the life of the Sacraments through the Sacraments themselves, using the words and gestures hal- lowed by Catholic practice through the centuries, is to introduce them to realities that concern them, is to explain the Faith as a life.

Each day of a week's mission can be devoted to a different sacra- ment, and in the middle of the mission service, after the instruc- tion, the congregation is presented with the sacred sign in action.

The Sacrament. This is enacted on a platform—a trestle-table will do—by the parish priest and the servers, while the Missioner in the pulpit translates and comments on the words and actions of the rite. The Sacrament is of course not really administered, and so the celebrant says nothing (except possibly those parts, e.g. in Baptism, usually said in the vernacular). . . . The con- gregation itself makes all the responses. . . . [Thus on Wednes- day] Penance. Preferably the parish priest 'goes to confession' to a curate. He kneels and says the Confiteor with the con- gregation (boys can represent our Lady, St Michael, St John the Baptist, SS. Peter and Paul—who are accusers: my sins weaken the Mystical Body; and when I have said *mea culpa* the saints become my intercessors, and so the boys then move behind the penitent to symbolise their help). This is clearly no attempt at 'confession'. The congregation kneels while the peni- tent reads slowly an examination of conscience based on the theological virtues—goodness I lack.

Such instruction by word and action should go a long way towards a revival of Catholic life in this country; and it is to be hoped there will be plenty of literature to support it.

THE CATHOLIC WORKER (New York) has unfortunately misunder- stood the outstanding article of Father Victor White, O.P., on the Catholic attitude to war which he contributed to the September issue of LIFE OF THE SPIRIT. In a long review Robert Ludlow describes it as a deliberate attack on Pacificism. Happily this article, 'The Morality of War' is being reprinted in pamphlet form so that a wide public may be able to study it and discover its positive contribution to this vital topic. (Price 3d.)