

tion—the Christian's double allegiance (p. 57). This idea of spiritual sovereignty is first traced through the Old Testament theocracy, and examined together with the idea of membership of the People of God by incorporation into Israel. The transference of the title to Christianity—promised by the angel to Zachary as a "perfect people" (Luke i 17)—is carefully studied, especially from the fine passages in Romans (the further references on p. 24 are of course to chapter xi, not ix), where also it is promised that Israel will ultimately return. But now, according to Osee, "I will call that which was not not my people, my people; and her that was not beloved, beloved . . ." And it is the very first quality of the People of God to know this their status, to recognise their privilege (p. 54). *Non fecit taliter omni nationi*. Further, the People of God will be a nation of fervent patriots (p. 32)—the marvellous phenomenon which we call the heart of the People of God (p. 39)—for it is quite certain that wherever Catholic Faith dwells, there is in man a loyalty to God, an acceptance of the rights of God, a dread of the righteous judgments of God, which have all the character of profoundest sincerity. Then we have as our King Him who announced Himself first as a Shepherd and whose vigilance is the providence of God. He has solicitude for all the various occupations of His People, for the ordering of the life of His Nation (Ecclesiasticus is quoted: "Their prayer shall be in the work of their craft . . ."), and has care of all things, down to "God's love for the least fragment of created reality" (a lovely phrase, p. 109). The *Pater Noster* is the prayer of this People—it is the prayer of a people for every moment and for every need, it turns into a prayer the very economic problem: "Give us this day . . ." (p. 132). Finally all the threads of the idea of the People's life and loyalty are gathered up to the Altar. A people has an "altarmentality" (p. 159), and the Mass is the rallying of the People of God, a divine act, a proclamation of God's sovereignty, to which the multitudes of the faithful are expected to shout their approval (p. 165). It is a protest of the People's loyalty: *Unde et memores, Domine, nos servi tui, sed et plebs tua sancta*: "Wherefore O Lord, we do not forget, we Thy slaves, we Thy holy People."

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

MORALE ET CORPS MYSTIQUE. By Emile Mersch, S.J.
(Desclée de Brouwer; 25 frs.)

The reader may experience a momentary disappointment on the discovery that the promise of such a title and author is realized only in a volume of collected essays. But the disappointment will soon vanish on perusal of the work which manages

REVIEWS

to achieve a real unity and is fully worthy both of author and title. The unity may in part be due to the singleness of P. Mersch's outlook on spiritual matters, but in addition the work follows a regular and gradually developing plan. Indeed the scheme adopted suggests a new formulation of theology based on the psychological approach rather than the logical, if such a distinction be not misunderstood. In place of beginning with the highest truth, *De Deo Uno et Trino*, we seize the religious truth most obvious to ourselves, the fact of religion. The first essay here is divided into three parts showing, firstly, the metaphysic of religion as the ingrained necessity of our whole being, then Christianity is shown to be the whole of religion, and finally Catholicism the whole of Christianity. After this the central doctrine of Catholicism, the Incarnation, is approached from the same standpoint, in viewing Christ as the first principle of all grace; and here P. Mersch deftly outlines the way in which the Church's dogma of the Person of Christ may be made the basis of the knowledge of Christian morality. The gratuity of grace is shown from the gratuity of the Incarnation; Christ's humanity is the instrument of the Word, our humanity is the instrument of God through grace for our salvation; the Christian looks to Christ in all the aspects of morality and follows Him. In this manner the whole of morality is built up on the doctrine of grace in the light of the Incarnation and the Mystical Body. The author then proceeds to show how the holiness of the Christian is essentially a "partial" holiness, in the sense that it is the holiness of a member, that of the holy Thing which is the Mystical Christ. The volume is quite invaluable simply in consideration of the following chapter, *Prières de Chrétiennes, Prières de Membres*, where the notions of liturgical and private prayer are shown to be entirely complementary. The author insists that the two can never be opposed or separated, that both are essentially *Catholic*, both are in different ways the prayer of the whole, both are centred in the Mass. Here follows the paper on the priesthood of all in Christ, unfortunately lacking the clarity of the rest of the work; and finally, having described the practical value of the doctrine of the Mystical Body in the modern world, where man suffers from individualism and yet is dependent on all his fellow creatures in a way hitherto unknown, P. Mersch applies the general principles to poverty, chastity and obedience.

We suggest that in a future volume he should take still more within the scope of this fundamental doctrine of the Mystical Body. Does not the system so far described demand completion in the dogmatic sphere, going on from the Mystical Body and the Incarnation

BLACKFRIARS

to consider the source of this earthly mission, the source of this Christian grace, where the author would treat of the Holy Trinity and of the unity of the Godhead finishing off the whole in an admirable synthesis? This seems to be a possible conclusion to the more psychological approach to theology, and we look forward to the time when P. Mersch makes a complete synthesis of theology under this aspect. The attempt has already been made by the Abbé Anger and Ernest Mura, who show the universality of the doctrine of the Mystical Body in the whole of Christian doctrine, but no one has as yet set forth theology fully in those terms. We look therefore to P. Mersch.

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

SUMMA THEOLOGIAE MORALIS. By Benedict Henry Merkelbach, O.P. Vol. I de Principiis et Virtutibus theologicis; pp. 786; Vol. II, de virtutibus Moralibus, pp. 1029; Vol. III, de Sacramentis; pp. 1024. (Desclée, de Brouwer.)

The second and enlarged edition of Fr. Merkelbach's widely-known work, which has already won the unanimous praise of numerous theologians, among them a previous reviewer in BLACKFRIARS (July, 1932). This edition is more than a reprint as it contains a number of fresh items so bringing it up-to-date with decisions of the Holy See, and other changes with a view to giving precision and removing possible obscurity.

The first volume investigates the general principles which govern the rest of moral theology. The theological virtues, as being at the root of all practical morality, likewise receive special treatment in this place.

The second volume is devoted to the cardinal virtues, and to the other virtues associated with them. We remark with pleasure that no less than 131 pages have been assigned to the virtue of prudence, under which is properly included the treatise on conscience.

The third volume is a complete and lucid treatment on the Sacraments, partially from the speculative but mainly from the practical standpoint. Whilst avoiding the prevalent failing of intermingling without discrimination Canon Law with Moral Theology, actual needs are provided for by citing recent ecclesiastical decisions in their proper places. Especially in regard to marriage, owing to the complexity of the matter and the growing problems which call for solution, the treatise of the earlier edition has received considerable development.

An independent value is given to each volume by the addition of a separate alphabetical index, so making the work of reference both pleasing and easy.

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.