

## BLACKFRIARS

few in English; almost the only one is Abbot Butler's *Western Mysticism*. This is strange considering what a master of the subject he was, and that "the task of teaching his flock how to pray occupied St. Augustine during the whole of his Episcopate, or from A.D. 395—430." Some have said that "he was not strictly a mystic." They could hardly deny that he was, properly speaking, a contemplative after reading this book (or the *Confessions*). What, then, is this distinction between mysticism and contemplation?

He is indeed so great a teacher on contemplation that "in his well-nigh innumerable references to 'contemplation' it is generally most difficult to decide whether he is speaking of contemplation here or in its fulness—in heaven; he passes from one to the other almost as though there were no difference between them." This we learn from Fr. Pope's admirable introduction. But however high may be St. Augustine's teaching, it is also extremely practical and a help to all who desire to learn to pray well, especially couched in the vivid and readable English of this translation, which must have been no easy task considering the difficulty of translating St. Augustine's Latin. The Editor has joyfully given us pure St. Augustine, has allowed him to speak for himself, and has added little of his own besides the Preface. The book is a compilation of extracts from a great number of the works of St. Augustine, particularly the sermons, arranged arbitrarily under various headings, *How and why we should pray*, *The Lord's Prayer*, *The Things we should pray for*, *Contemplation*, etc., ending with the famous letter to Proba. It has, of course, the defect consequent upon such an arrangement, that it is rather "snippety" and disjointed, but the extracts presumably are not meant for continuous reading but for the constant return of the meditative mind, and each one is so pithy that it provides abundant food for thought. It is compact and handy so that it may be easily carried in pocket or bag. It should become the constant companion of many.

It is to be hoped that this volume is only a preliminary to a much larger book in which the editor will use his great knowledge of St. Augustine's writings to give us a complete treatise on his teaching on prayer and the contemplative life, linking together the extracts and throwing light on them from the other writings and putting each in its true light and perspective.

FRANCIS MONCRIEFF, O.P.

## SOCIAL QUESTIONS

THE CATHOLIC TRADITION OF THE LAW OF NATIONS. By John Eppstein. (Burns Oates; 15/-.)

Mr. Eppstein writes: "The national bias of many Catholic

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theologians and publicists both before, during and after the Great War, in dealing with this problem [international ethics]—which most of all demands clear thought and the absence of special pleading—has been so transparent, their response to the pacific leadership of the Holy See so meagre and indeed contemptible, that the student must be on his guard against taking the words of any particular Catholic divine or author as representing the mind of the Church as a whole. Many Catholic theologians of late have indeed sinned rather by omission than commission: rather than risk the influence of their own national prejudices, or the displeasure of their students and readers, they have, it seems, either left aside any attempt to deal with the ethics of war and peace or contented themselves with reproducing in the shortest possible form the traditional thomistic doctrine on the subject."

This deplorable fact makes the present volume exceptionally timely. In it will be found the *ipsissima verba* of the Scriptures, Fathers, Popes, Councils, Bishops, Theologians which bear witness to authentic Catholic teaching on war and peace and international relationships generally. "The historical method has been, so far as possible, employed throughout this work," and we are enabled to trace the evolution of this Catholic teaching from the mustard-seeds in the Gospel narratives, through their manifold applications by the Church and by Christian writers to the changing conditions of successive centuries, to the determined if little-headed peace-crusade of Leo XIII, Benedict XV and Pius XI. But the work is no mere catena of quotations; they have been collated, synthesized, interpreted with skill, and we are enabled to see this important body of Catholic truth as a vital organic whole.

The conspiracy of silence regarding the authentic Catholic tradition on international right ("For 'Law' in the title of the book is to be understood to mean *jus* rather than *lex*") should be effectively broken by this scholarly book. Catholic teaching regarding military service, conscientious objection, the obligations of the clergy to preach and foster international peace, the limitations which Christian ethics impose on the rights of colonization, can no longer be ignored. Neither can the insistent appeals of the Popes (whose practice, however, has not always accorded with their preaching), from St. Clement I to Pius XI, on war and peace, conscription, armaments—their repeated condemnation of war ("always Satanic in origin," as one of them pronounced, even in the Dark Ages), their insistent advocacy of every lawful means to ensure peace, the "tranquillity of order," which it is the first duty of the temporal power to secure. Nor, it will be seen, can Catholics lightly scorn the idea of a league of nations and of supranational tribunals for the settlement of disputes,

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which, it is shown, is an idea implicit in the Catholic tradition from the earliest times, and made implicit by countless Catholic authorities long before it was exploited by international Masonry or put into partial effect by Woodrow Wilson. How effective, throughout the ages, has been the pacific mission of the Vicars of Christ themselves is also made manifest in the course of this book.

Deep gratitude is due to Mr. Eppstein for this painstaking work, and to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace which has facilitated its publication. It may be hoped that it will be found possible to publish an abridged edition. It is high time that its contents were made accessible to all and that the Catholic tradition of the law of nations was preached from every pulpit and fearlessly maintained and expounded in the Catholic press. It is a splendid heritage, and this book should shame us of our shame of it.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

WHY NOT END POVERTY? By Rev. F. H. Drinkwater. (Burns Oates; 3/6.)

"I have said it before and I say it again." Mr. Belloc's words might well form the motto of Fr. Drinkwater's new book, and indeed of any utterance made by monetary reformers in these days. The collection of essays under review is a sequel to *Money and Social Justice*. Both the form and the general tone of the two books is the same; nevertheless those who have read the one should not feel themselves excused from looking at the other.

The form will suit those who like to take their medicine in small doses, and perhaps the shortness of the individual essays helps to give them the very readable quality that they have. At the same time it makes them appear rather fragmentary, and one could wish for a little more solidity about the whole. As for the tone, it is prompted by a clear view of our present social conditions and a clear understanding of the economic conditions which have produced them. It will be objected, of course, that Fr. Drinkwater is not an economic expert and has no right to meddle with such affairs. Such an objection can be refuted only by the truism that the economic system is not a watertight compartment in which only its own technicians are allowed to interfere. Our present system is a bad means to a worse end, and those who have the social and moral well-being of their people at heart cannot afford to stand by and connive at it.

The events of the past year have made it almost inconceivable that President Roosevelt will not be re-elected. It is therefore strictly true to say that the financiers are beaten. Both in England and America the control of prices, which was their chief