

EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

PURITY OF MEANS. *The Commonweal* for January 6th pieces together from various sources the historic address of Cardinal Cerejeira, Patriarch of Lisbon, to his clergy and people on occasion of the ninth anniversary of his elevation to the see:

There are some, perhaps, even among Christians, who seem to believe less in the divine power of the Gospel than in the effectiveness of certain human means, legitimate in themselves and even necessary in the natural order, but absolutely powerless in the spiritual work of human redemption.

We have even seen a certain school of political thought which, without believing in Christ, undertook the defence of the Christian Church as mistress of the moral life and guardian of the spiritual values of our civilization!

And there have been Catholics who did not see that a Church without Christ lacks its principle of sanctification and would constitute a true apostasy from the Catholic faith.

The Church is not only a fine ecclesiastical organization; she is above all a mystical vessel which contains the gift of God, she brings us Christ. Only to the extent that Christ lives in us does she give us light and transform us.

To desire a Church emptied of her treasure, the divine life, a Church imposed merely by exterior pressure, maintained only thanks to official protection, speaking forth only through an equilibrium of human wisdom or of its government, to desire such a Church is to de-Christianize the Church, is to deny Christian redemption, to continue the modern tendency toward secularism. None of this will increase the kingdom of God, but rather will establish a new ecclesiastical tyranny.

In the dreams of those who expect a reign of Christ on this earth, brought into being through the use of the sword, it seems to us that we discover the reincarnation of the judaic idea of a national messiah who shall impose his domination on all peoples through the triumph of force.

Have we not seen, even in Portugal, Christians who became alarmed at the spectacle of the supernatural confidence with which the Vicar of Christ holds aloft the banner of the Christian faith in its immaculate purity, refusing to take a place in the triumphal chariot of any of the proud conquerors of the moment?

Many have shown surprise at the invincible energy of this august old man who, with the Gospel in his hand, fearless in his faith, condemns communism, totalitarianism, statism, racism, pagan nationalism, all these new idols of our times before which the regimented masses bow, the masses which lose any feeling for their own dignity and liberty as soon as they lose Christ.

Those who are scandalized at the devastating condemnation by the Pope of the persecutors who boast of having saved Europe from communism know not, as the Gospel puts it, of what spirit they are. They appear to place more faith in the powers of the world to save the world than they do in the power of Christ.

For such political Catholics, Christ is not the light which lightens all men coming into this world and by which they may judge everything which is. On the contrary, Christ is judged (since the Pope speaks in his name) in accordance with whether or not He serves human prejudices.

This cannot be called seeking first of all the kingdom of God (which the Gospel likewise commands). It is rather to desire, as did the Jews, that the Kingdom of God accommodate itself to the temporal kingdom of the special interests of nationalists and to individual notions.

As far as communism is concerned, the Church of Christ has condemned it not in order to save the strong-boxes of the rich, but because it is contrary to nature and to God. No one has fought it more than the Pope, as a mortal danger for Christian civilization. But no less menacing, although up to the present it has used less violent yet more intelligent means, is a régime based on materialism, even though it is full of religious mysticism, which destroys in men's consciences their Christian heritage. By different means, arising from the ideas of class or of race, it erects with equal harshness and at the sacrifice of the human person liberated through Christ, an altar consecrated to a new God.

Once Christ is banished, we find coming back to rule the world the hard empire of force: Caesar is once more deified and, as in the antique proverb, his every wish has the force of law. Man becomes once more the slave of the State which undertakes to define the rules of justice and of morals, of the State apart from which there exist no rights.

The kingdom of Christ is, as the Liturgy puts it, a kingdom of truth and of life, of saintliness and of grace, of justice, of love and of peace.

Nothing can be determined for the interior life by an exterior means, by virtue of the power of a decree, as the result of a revolution, or thanks to the success of a régime.

History teaches us that there have been political systems which give the appearance of being Christian without having any true Christianity. Where there is neither faith nor Christian life, there are only empty sepulchres of Christ, even though they be crowned with the symbols of the Redeemer.

Totalitarian régimes tend to smother freedom of Catholic Action, a tendency which is essential to the principle of total absorption of the individual's activities. Since the State denies the existence of anything outside its own self, Catholic life and the Church's freedom are regarded as a curb on its absolute dominion. In Italy, the repeated attacks on Catholic Action evidence the fact that nothing but a deeper feeling of political realities, in the country which is the seat of Catholicism, have averted persecution. Respect for the Church and public interest got the better of the inexorable logic of the system.

But in Germany, Catholic Action has been, despite treaties and the rights of Christ, systematically suppressed. A divinised State claims absolute divine rights. This is a totally new conception of society and of life. God, if He exists at all, reveals Himself in a sublimated conscience of the nation and the race, whose supreme organ is the State. Should totalitarianism prevail, it would mean the destruction of the work, in souls, of Christ. It refuses to acknowledge the separation between the temporal mission, which belongs to the State, and the divine mission, which Christ conferred upon the Church; yet on this separation, as on its keystone, the whole of Christian civilization rests.

This then is the dilemma: either totalitarianism must deny itself by leaving to God what belongs to God, that is religious and moral life, freedom of conscience and respect for the human person; or, true to itself, it will insist on absorbing the whole life of man, by outlining and imposing a complete conception of life. . . .

As *The Commonweal* remarks, 'Emanating from the Primate of a country which lives under an "authoritarian" régime, and which is neighbour to Spain, the Cardinal's words have particular weight.'

THE PASSING OF 'THE CRITERION.' Mr. T. S. Eliot's 'Last Words' in the January *Criterion* have about them a tragic

quality which puts them in a class apart from the conventional announcement of discontinuance of publication. And fittingly so, for the end of *The Criterion* means the end of an era and the death of a hope at least as much as the disappearance of one review more or less. To many of us of a generation which was attaining—or striving to attain—maturity in the wild days of disillusion and disintegration which followed the War, *The Criterion* was far more than one of many literary reviews. It was a symbol and a rallying point of a recall to Intelligence and Order, to the Defence of the West; a harbinger of a new order of tradition-steeped modernity which would make some new thirteenth century out of the chaos of the twentieth. True, *The Criterion* itself never professed such lofty ambitions; its stern cultivation of disinterestedness rendered it always impervious to facile labellings and classifications. If it introduced us to the leaders of the European intellectualists of the day—Maritain, Fernandez, Maurras, Massis, Scheler, Curtius, Fr. D'Arcy—it also found hospitality in its pages for Middleton Murry (who would attack its classicism in his own *Adelphi*), and D. H. Lawrence (on the express grounds, if we remember rightly, that D.H.L. was 'irrepressible'). Wyndham Lewis has somewhere mocked the supineness with which Mr. Eliot allowed so motley a crew of romanticists, leftists and infidels to sail beneath the Tory-Royalist-Thomist-Anglo-Catholic ensign of the 'good ship *Cri*.' But Eliot was always too big an editor to be a sectarian dictator—perhaps too good a Tory-Royalist-Thomist-Anglo-Catholic too. However much he would seek to integrate seemingly intractable foreign elements, provided they were really creative, the *Cri* was never thrown far from her course. But latterly, he tells us, 'a feeling of staleness has come over me, and a suspicion that I ought to retire before I was aware that this feeling had communicated itself to the readers . . . In the present state of public affairs—which has induced in myself a depression of spirits so different from any other experience of fifty years as to be a new emotion—I no longer feel the enthusiasm necessary to make a literary review what it should be.' *The Criterion* under any other editorship would be unthinkable. Mr. Eliot seems to have become

overwhelmed by the power and vigour of irrationalities, more crude and bestial than those of the early twenties, by the growth of illiteracy and the widespread symptoms of cultural decline. Perhaps more significant than any words of his own is his admission as the last article of the last *Criterion* of a shattering apocalypse whose author can write, amid much more of the same sort:

This is the Apocalyptic Era when all things will be made manifest unto us. I am not dippy. I have not become what is erroneously called 'reigious.' I am against all the religions of the world as I am against all the nations of the world and all the teachings of the world. I speak illogically, intuitively and with absolute certainty The destruction of the world we have foolishly tried to preserve is at hand. The death which had been rotting away in us secretly and disgracefully must be made manifest 'Our action,' says Gutkind, 'must have its root in the mysterious centre of our dumb, unconscious being Our ascent must take its start in the depths of the body'

Mr. Eliot could not have written 'Finis' to *The Criterion* more poignantly. But his own final words are not of despair:

During these years, the persons in this country who are not Liberals by temperament, and who are not attracted by the ambitious drudgery of practical politics, have remained dispersed and isolated. Some have been engaged in promoting the claims of one or another scheme of monetary reform; I am as convinced as anybody of the necessity of such change; but unfortunately the tendency of concentration of attention upon technical economics has been to divide rather than to unite. I have wondered whether it would not have been more profitable, instead of trying to maintain literary standards increasingly repudiated in the modern world, to have endeavoured to rally intellectual effort to affirm those principles of life and policy from the lack of which we are suffering disastrous consequences. But such a task, again, would be outside the scope of *The Criterion*

It will perhaps need more severe affliction than anything we have yet experienced, before life can be renewed. As the state of art and letters is a symptom of decline, so it might be a symptom of a true revival. But in any case, the immediate future is not bright.

For this immediate future, perhaps for a long way ahead, the continuity of culture may have to be maintained by a very small number of people indeed—and these not necessarily the best equipped with worldly advantages. It will not be the large organs of opinion, or the old periodicals; it must be the small and obscure papers and reviews, those which are hardly read by anyone except their own contributors, that will keep critical thought alive, and encourage authors of original talent . . . I feel that it is all the more essential that authors who are concerned with that small part of 'literature' which is really creative—and seldom immediately popular—should apply themselves sedulously to their work, without abatement or sacrifice of their artistic standards on any pretext whatsoever.

Mr. Eliot concludes with words of gratitude to supporters and contributors who have made *The Criterion* what it was; he makes a special tribute to 'those who have, from time to time, assumed the arduous responsibility of reviewing foreign and other periodicals: the labour of reading and digesting a mass of periodicals is, on any scale of payment, a labour of love.' It remains only to acknowledge the debt which English letters owe to Mr. Eliot's direction of *The Criterion*—a debt which it is yet hard to estimate—and to pray that the way he has indicated may be followed up in some manner adapted to the needs of the time.

THE REBIRTH OF 'THEOLOGY.' January has brought with it one consolation for the loss of *The Criterion*. The Anglican monthly *Theology* has shed its dull and donnish grey and arrayed itself in a gay yellow cover. The change of raiment symbolises a change of editorship and a modification of policy in a less specialist direction. The new editor is Dr. Alec Vidler, and if the change might be thought to indicate a more Modernising trend, this is at least not apparent in the excellent number with which he makes his début. He is supported by an impressive band of editors and advisers, which includes, besides many Anglican divines of different schools, the names of Montgomery Belgion, T. S. Eliot, C. S. Lewis, Donald Mackinnon, J. Middleton Murry, Michael Roberts, Evelyn Underhill and Charles Williams. BLACKFRIARS cannot expect always to agree with the conclusions of the new *Theology's* collabora-

tors, nor yet with all their fundamental postulates; but we cannot but rejoice that our Anglican brethren have been able to gather so admirable a team for the production of an alive periodical devoted to the study and popularisation of Divinity and its applications to the problems of the day. The contributions to the January number, while all of an elementary and non-technical character, set a very high standard. Canon Cockin's 'The Need of Theology' is a sound introduction to the whole subject. Michael Roberts follows with an essay on 'The Moral Influence of Poetry,' which reaches the general conclusions that,

The purposes which poetry can serve in relation to theology and morality are these: it can render more vivid and more urgent the realities on which rational theology rests, it can put moral truths in a persuasive and effective form, and it can help to resist that narrowing and coarsening of sentiment which is itself immoral. At times, it can serve to turn our desires from a direction in which their effects are harmful to one in which they are harmless or good. Whether we intend it to do so or not, literature is always exerting an influence, positive or negative, on us in these diverse ways. To discuss the moral influence of literature is part of the business of the literary critic, but the moralist himself cannot afford to ignore the quality of the literature which he reads or commends or tolerates.

Leslie Hunter's 'The Worship of God and the Life of the People' covers familiar ground; but he faces with less familiar courage the problem of the divorce of modern habits of life from liturgical forms:

Economic pressures and the tyranny of the machine as they are to-day do not predispose men to the faith of Jesus in a living and loving God. In a one-roomed house under the shadow of a colliery that has been closed, in places where insecurity or absence of livelihood makes men too anxious concerning daily bread or where a wide choice of available pleasures dulls their sense of eternity, it is difficult to see the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ so clearly as to be compelled to worship. When men become aware in the community of the prevalence of exploitation, inequality of opportunity, class distinctions, unbridled individualism, social life does not naturally find expression in the public worship of Jesus Christ, espe-

cially when the Church seems to be identified with influences which have produced and are maintaining these evil things.

If a man is driven by economic necessity to serve mammon for nine-tenths of the time—and often at the expense of his neighbour—he will make a poor hand at Christian worship. The Church does not pay enough heed to our Lord's warning against the corroding influence of money. The economic system in which we are all caught produces a scale of values very unlike His, and often makes men worshippers of mammon, be they rich or poor, whether they dabble in the Stock Exchange during the week or paddle in football pools at the week-end. A man and a society cannot worship God and mammon.

The change in modern industry from intelligent tradesmanship to machine-tending, and from *manufacture* to mass production, weakens the creative faculties of men, which are so near the divine, and as yet it has not been balanced by the good use of leisure.

The relentless uniform beat of a machine is not the natural rhythm of man's life. Tie a man to a machine—and it is a noisy one in a coal mine—submit him to excessive speeding-up of work and life, make him travel long distances in overcrowded trains and buses to and from work, drive young people through competitive pressures to evening and continuation classes *after* the day's work, then by the time Sunday comes they are too exhausted to worship. If the Lord's Day Observance Society would go all out for a five-day working week, it would do more to recover the use of Sunday for worship and spiritual recreation than it does at present by confusing Judaism with Christianity.

Every parish priest who is intelligently aware of the forces at work in society must be critical of a social and economic order which is making Christian worship and life more difficult than God intends them to be.

The difficulty is further increased because other social pressures and modern transport are breaking up the unity of the village as of the town. In the old days the English village worked, played, drank, and prayed together; nowadays the contour of many ecclesiastical parishes is the only relic of those times. The Church is attempting too difficult a task in trying to make worshipping congregations out of people who never do anything else together. Public worship ought to be the expression and indeed climax of a particular community's life, but the ecclesiastical parish is rarely a community. I agree, therefore, with the Master of the Temple, who writes in his

recently published *Recollections* that for this and other reasons the time has come when the Church must reconsider its unit of work and worship.

It may be remarked in passing that by the vocational grouping of Catholic Action and its auxiliaries, the Catholic Church in many Western countries, without destroying the parochial unit and while trying to preserve and revive it so far as possible, has already taken full account of these social changes. But the writer's reflections on the weakness of a purely monastery-bred liturgical 'revival' (significant word!) gives food for thought. Few have the leisure or the education (we may add, the right) to 'be able to think without discomfort in terms of the fourth, thirteenth or sixteenth century, and to use in worship without sense of constraint the language and symbolism which fitted those ways of thinking.'

What is possible behind the walls of monasteries is not possible for those who live in crowded thoroughfares. The timely writings of those who have been influenced by the Liturgical Movement on the Continent are weakened by their inability to appreciate this . . . The plain man's difficulty in worshipping is increased by the narrow pietism of some who are set apart to help him. Partly in consequence of influences to which I have referred, they give him the impression that the God whom they worship is the God of religion only. The more earnest such men are, the more they try to make good the loss in extensiveness by increased intensity.

Nevertheless, a pietism that looks for the Lord only in His temple and thinks that He is only interested in what goes on there is not the Christian worship of the Triune God. The God of Christ's revealing cares for the whole life of man. He meets a man not only in the vertical relationship of the soul with God, but also in and through the horizontal relationships of life . . .

There is a great task for the specialists in theology and liturgy working in co-operation, and in touch with the general practitioner. In this connexion the general practitioner should be not only the parish priest, but also, and indeed particularly, the thoughtful layman. There is often in the latter's approach to these things a homely realism, a good earthiness and in consequence a sense of proportion and a touch of imagination which

escape the academic student and the clerical mind . . . One wishes therefore that both in the group-thinking and in the writing which require to be done in the years ahead lay men and women will take a large share.

Another noteworthy contribution is the Rev. E. L. Mascall's notes on 'The Christian and the Next War.' Regular features include, besides excellent book reviews, a Comment on Periodicals, and Surveys on philosophy and theology. The first philosophical Survey is a lucid introduction to the problems set by logical positivism from the pen of Dr. F. L. Cross.

PERSONAL. Penguin continues to receive kind inquiries regarding the upshot of the attack on him in the August-September *Integration*. It is now some months since he wrote to the editor of that review as brief, as conciliatory, as constructive a letter as he was able; but his efforts to elicit a definite assurance that it would, or would not, be published for the benefit of *Integration* readers have so far proved unavailing.

CONTEMPORANEA. ART NOTES (Jan.): The possibilities of cartoon-films and how to make them.

CATHOLIC FILM NOTES (Jan.): Fr. J. B. Reeves, O.P., *Crying for the Moon*, 'explains why there is so much that is hellish in the cinema. Too little imagination. Too little appreciation of the dark and of the wondrous world of light that can come to life only in the dark.'

CLERGY REVIEW (Jan.): Fr. Hugh Pope, O.P., on *The Teaching of St. Augustine on Our Lady*.

COMMONWEAL (Dec. 30): Fr. Gerald Vann, O.P., concludes an important series on the ethics of modern warfare with consideration of *The Means of Peace*.

CROSS AN. THE PLOUGH (Christmas): Reflections suggested to Eric Gill by *St. Teresa of Lisieux*.

DOWNHILL COLLEGE MAGAZINE (Jan.): Memories of *Michael Field* by Fr. Edwin Essex, O.P.

DOWNSIDE REVIEW (Jan.): A suggestive essay on the theology of Predestination by Dom Mark Pontifex. *Who shall raise up Jacob?* by Dom Ralph Russell: a discriminating appreciation of Mr. Robbins' *Sun of Justice*.

HOUSE OF HOSPITALITY: 'A Programme of Christian Action' in accordance with Matt xxv, 35-36 (3½d. from 61 Darlington Street, East, Wigan).

IRENIKON (Sept.-Oct.): *What is a Latin?* Dom O. Rousseau continues an extremely important study on the origins, developments and characteristics of Latinism in the Church from the 'ecumenical' standpoint.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS is an excellent ten-cent magazine from Chestnut Hill College, Pa. December number includes Paul Hanly Furfey on *The Criteria of the Ideal Lay Life*, Georges Bernanos on *Poverty and the Gospel*, and Georges Goyau on *Sorel and Catholicism*.

SOWER (Jan.): *Uncomfortable Doctrines*: 'Presbyter' attacks the dangerous disregard of the Catholic Press for national mentality and sentiment.

PENGUIN.

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

CHRISTENDOMS NEW OR OLD?

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS

SIR,—St. Thomas says 'Grace presupposes Nature,' and he applies this principle constantly and fearlessly, as when, *e.g.*, he refers to 'a sufficiency of those bodily goods whose use is necessary for an act of virtue.' There is here the unmistakable note of something prior, something preliminary, something basic. Nature can exist without Grace, but it seems that in this order Grace cannot exist without Nature. I insist that it is a reasonable paraphrase of this principle to say that Grace is built on Nature. No reader would exclude from this image the notion of penetration, for any sound edifice has much more than a plane contact with its foundation. And no reader would deduce from my use of the image (or indeed from any part of my book) the mechanical notion which Fr. White has evolved from his inner consciousness. If such danger there were, it would be safeguarded by other passages, as at the preface and at greater length at the end of chapter two.

On the other hand, it seems that the image of inter-relation and inter-penetration preferred by Fr. White is definitely dan-