

EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

THOMIST MANIFESTO. The Event of the Month in the domain of periodical publication is undoubtedly the appearance of the special double number of *LA REVUE THOMISTE* devoted to *Théologie et Action*. Throughout its history Thomism has opposed itself resolutely to every form of Voluntarism, to every theory or practice which would assert the primacy of Will over Intellect, of Action over Contemplation, of Practice over Theory. "L'Action n'est point une règle. Elle ne peut l'être qu'à une condition: être, elle-même, réglée. Nous savons trop les résultats d'une économie spirituelle ou matérielle qui ne sert que les intérêts sans obéir aux lois dictées par l'intelligence et la science." In the face of the Faustian *In the beginning was Action and Power* Thomism reasserts the Johannine *In the beginning was the Word*. For many years past the *REVUE THOMISTE* has opposed itself to modern forms of voluntarism and activism: the heretical forms in modernism, the non-Catholic philosophical forms of M. Bergson and Brunschwig, the philosophy of *L'Action* of M. Blondel. But no longer is *activisme* a matter for mere academic discussion; it is a problem which must be threshed out and settled before there can be any true Catholic Action; to many who have never heard of Brunschwig or Blondel it is the real but unsuspected "Root of our Differences." Moreover, the *REVUE THOMISTE*, the principal organ of what has been called "high" or "right-wing" Thomism, believes that it has detected new forms of *activisme* in contemporary thought and practice among Catholics, sometimes appearing under the name of Thomism itself, often under mistaken pretext of promoting Catholic Action. This special number aims at reaffirming traditional and conservative Thomism in face of this new *activisme*. A list of titles of the articles which compose it must suffice for now to give some idea of its scope and importance: *The Intellectual Function of Theology in the Apostolate*; *Theology, the Supreme Science of Human Life*; *Theology and the Individual Conscience*; *Theology and Codified Action*; *Theology and the Life of Faith*; *Religion and Life: An Activist Theory of Holiness* (Dr. A. Rademacher's *Religion und Leben*); *The Thomist Theology of Faith and the Development of Dogma*; *The*

Historical Method and the Teacher of Theology; Le Père Laberthonnière. It is hoped in a forthcoming number of BLACKFRIARS to give more detailed attention to this volume (it contains nearly 300 pages); a work which concerns not only the professional theologian but, indirectly at least, the Catholic public at large. It is obtainable from L'Ecole de Théologie, Saint Maximin, Var, France, for 18 francs post-free.

SUGAR FOR SALT. Paul Claudel has written: "Si le sel perd sa saveur, dit l'évangile, avec quoi salera-t-on? Les catholiques modernes répondent d'une seule voix: Avec du sucre." And "Poseidon," in that excellent review of the British students at Fribourg University, THE TRIDENT, comments powerfully:

Maritain has written of "the devilish ugliness, an offence to God and far more harmful than is generally believed to the spread of religion, of the great bulk of contemporary objects manufactured for the decoration of Churches." It isn't so much that repository art is as *démodé* as Gounod's "Faust," if it was just a question of being *démodé* it would be of little importance, but the point is that the commercial statue of St. Theresa of Lisieux propagates a lie and that of the Sacred Heart is often nothing less than blasphemous. The deplorable state of ecclesiastical art in England must have a shocking effect on the Catholic body. Statues, instead of depicting the strength of Our Lord and the Saints, express sloppiness, weakness and sugary sweetness. *It is not primarily a question of aesthetics but of theological truth.*

The italics are ours. Fr. Ivor Daniel in the no less excellent SOWER (July) is equally powerful, and also searches out causes and remedies. The quantity, as well as the quality, of the things that "clutter up" our churches receives his attention:

We have mistakenly maintained the "loud" tradition of the Counter-Reformation. Because Protestantism would have no statues we would have any amount of them. Because it would have no altars we must have altars on which the primary purpose of Sacrifice would be obscured by the secondary adjuncts of a sub-dedication, or of a concentrated attention to the furniture of Exposition. . . . We may realize with misgiving that if our neo-Anglican friends succeed in making communion-tables look like altars we too often succeed in making our altars look like adjuncts to the towering apparatus of the Throne. Worse than this, we

sometimes allow the very height of the Throne to display a statue of the Sacred Heart or the Madonna surmounting and dwarfing the Cross of Sacrifice with or without the Tabernacle. While it is certain that our holy religion may find expression in many forms and according to the ethos of many centuries, it is a mistake to confine it to a certain phase of over-emphasis. . . . At a time when the minds of so many are turned towards the essentials of our Faith, have we the right, in justice and charity, to present that Faith with such externals as their apparently indispensable adjuncts—perpetually depicting the Virgin of Nazareth as a Queen crowned at Munich, or her Divine Son as an Infant in a rococo dress imagined by devout religious in old-time Prague?

Fr. Daniel quotes some tragi-comic instances from his own experience and from a work by a German Doctor of Theology with the title *In the Name of the Liturgy against Religious Infantilism*, and concludes:

Meanwhile the ultimate struggle between Christianity and Paganism is being waged in no uncertain terms. We need therefore to concentrate on essentials, to emphasize principles, and to present the externals of our Faith with a dignity related to Dogma and therefore capable of inspiring genuine Piety. . . . Protestantism, as such, is now dying or dead. In Russia, in Mexico, in Germany, and, less openly, in every other land, the issue is between Christianity and Materialism. We must see to it that our churches, even the smallest and humblest, convey our essential convictions in dignified expression, and that the inspired sanity of the Liturgy shall preserve us from the Sentimentalism and Formalism which may otherwise mislead those who have the Faith—and, much more, those who are looking for it.

RECOVERY WITHOUT REFORM. The comments of the editor of THE CATHOLIC WORLD on the collapse of N.R.A. are so applicable to features of the type of propaganda which the National Government and its minions are trying to put over as to deserve a long quotation:

The N.R.A. is gone. With it, for the moment, has gone the hope of social and economic reform. But if we don't get reform, we shall get revolution, soon or late. Recovery without reform will not do. Seven devils will return in the place of one. Nothing is settled, says the axiom, until it is settled right. A natural resumption of business and of international trade, a healthy condition of the stock market (if that chronic invalid can ever be anything but sick), the taking up of the slack in unemployment (some slack! with 10 or 12 million potential workers unemployed),

the abolition of the dole as prosperity returns—all these things will not save us. The most traitorous utterance that a man may make at the present juncture is, "Everything will be all right again: Business as usual." Such a one cries Peace, Peace when there is no peace. He is an enemy disguised as a patriot. So were the artificial optimists who in 1928 sang the beguiling refrain, "Prosperity is just round the corner." Let us not pull the wool over our own eyes; the world will never be the same again. The War and the Seven Years' Depression mark an epoch in human history, just as surely as the Emancipation of the American Colonies, or the guillotining of the Bourbons.

To repeat: Recovery without reform will be a greater calamity than Depression. It will be as though a sinner were to get absolution without contrition. He thinks he is just where he was before his sin, but the truth is that he has added sacrilege to his account. If the world resumes where it left off in 1928, with no reformation, its last state will be worse than its first. . . .

Since N.R.A. is ruled out, something will be found to take its place. In one way or another we *must* have social reconstruction. Ordinary folk like this writer have been called Alarmists and Communists for saying such things. But unordinary persons, the Pope for instance, have said as much and more. The absolute need of social reform is declared and emphasized in the *Rerum Novarum* of Pope Leo and the *Quadragesimo Anno* of Pope Pius quite as forcefully as in *Das Kapital* of Karl Marx or in the Communist Manifesto. Reform must come. If the business world will not have the papal brand, it will in the end have to take something less palatable. Neither the business world nor the social world can revolve backward. . . . Chesterton says somewhere, "The answer to the statement 'you cannot turn back the hand of the clock' is that you can." Yes, you can; but if you do you may ruin the clock. No, the revolution must go on—clock-revolution, earth-revolution, social revolution. If the world is wise it will accept the Pope's plan for a smooth, peaceful, orderly revolution in line with the laws of nature. If not, the world will get such a jolt as will make the worst earthquake seem like a ripple on a pond.

THE CATHOLIC WORKER. We extend a warm welcome to the English CATHOLIC WORKER, the first number of which appeared in June. It is modelled closely on the American sheet of the same name whose praises we have already sung. It would be premature to prophesy what impression this courageous venture will make on the British working-classes, Catholic or non-Catholic; but it should be effective

in arousing Catholics generally to a sense of social responsibility—which implies, not a lip-service to Principles but a determination to apply them. The CATHOLIC WORKER should help us to bring *Quadragesimo Anno* and Catholic social teaching generally down to brass tacks of British manufacture. There is a real danger that, without some such paper as this to spur us, the encyclicals may become mere sops to our conscience rather than incentives and guides to determined and self-sacrificing action.

Another American propaganda sheet which might be imitated (*mutatis mutandis*) in this country is the new five-cent WISDOM. "It is dedicated to the great task of constructive propagation of the thesis that: Man Is Because God Is. The blighting soul-destroying plague of the day is not, we think, so much the economic and social maze in which the world flounders, but the deadly trend towards indifferentism and the abandonment of the idea of God." Many leading American Catholic thinkers and publicists have combined to produce the first number. A little "loud," and somewhat naïve for even the most unsophisticated English taste; but its eight pages are crammed with invaluable popular apologetic. Obtainable from the offices of the Trinity League, 32 West 60th Street, New York City. The offices of the CATHOLIC WORKER are at 13 Langworthy Road, Salford, 6, and 2-4 Garrick Street, Covent Garden, London.

CONTEMPORANEA. BEDA REVIEW: *Abyssinia*: Evelyn Waugh up to Black Mischief again. What Mussolini wants to clean up: a vivid and grim picture.

CATHOLIC GAZETTE (July): *The International Church*: the last round of the liveliest and most important correspondence in an English Catholic periodical for many a year.

CATHOLIC WORLD (July): *The Case for the Mexican Government*: Fr. McSorley examines ex-President Gil's apologia for the Mexican persecutions.

CLERGY REVIEW (July): *F. W. Maitland and Anglican "Continuity"* by A. Back, A.A. A useful summary of a devastating work.

COMMONWEAL: *Applying Catholic Action* (June 21) and *Social Order and Education* (June 28). Editorials drawing lessons for U.S.A. from BLACKFRIARS articles by Fr. Ferdinand Valentine and Dr. H. C. E. Zacharias.

BLACKFRIARS

CONTEMPORARIES (Cambridge): *A Doubt about Mr. Dawson* which it should not be difficult to resolve. Mr. Dawson and the combination of religion with mass-civilization considered as a menace to culture: Fr. Thomas Gilby as its stalwart champion.

DOWNSIDE REVIEW (July): *Abbot Chapman on Prayer*. The orthodoxy of the Abbot's letters defended by their editor on the invitation of Archbishop Goodier. *Catholic Action and the Mass* by Dom Gregory Murray. The technical term "Catholic Action" misapplied again; but an admirable essay showing that the main purpose of the Liturgical Movement is *congregational* worship. *Freewill and Causality* by Dom Mark Pontifex: a noble attempt to put into English the Thomist critique of determinism. Some important reviews, notably of Unwin's *Sex and Culture* and "Father Clement's" *Catholic Reunion*.

DUBLIN REVIEW (July): *King George V's Jubilee*: a striking and important essay by the Archbishop of Westminster. *The Venerable Bede*: a posthumous paper by Fr. Bede Jarrett. *The Burning of Sappho* by Fr. Henry Tristram: ecclesiastical obscurantism Not Guilty.

HOCHLAND (July): *England und das Empire* by Dr. Albrecht Graf Monteglas. An exceptionally well-informed study of our British selves, our mentality and our works: shows how we are unconsciously becoming Fascised.

MEMORIE DOMENICANE (March-April): Special number devoted to St. Dominic.

ORATE FRATRES (June 15): *Catholic Action and Liturgical Life* by John J. Griffin: "The perfect Catholic is he in whom the liturgical life overflows in the charity-consecrated apostolate of efficacious Catholic Action; the liturgical life superabounding in Catholic Action forms the ideal 'other Christ.'" An admirable essay, written in complicated "R.C. American"—should be translated into plain English.

PAX (July): *An Eastern Churches Number*—this time mostly concerned with the Eastern churches in Palestine.

SOWER (July): *The Educational Value of the Liturgy* consists in its aptitude to teach—in its own powerful non-didactic fashion—not in its aptitude to be taught: the first instalment of a valuable paper by Dom Columba Cary-Elwes.

STIMMEN DER ZEIT (June): *Nach vierhundert Jahren* by Fr. Max Pribilla, S.J. A fine commentary on Mgr. Besson's *Après quatre cents ans* pleading for "an entirely new attitude on the

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part of Catholics to the world of religious thought among present-day Protestants."

VIE INTELLECTUELLE (June 10): *L'humanisme en défaut* by Fr. Thomas Deman, O.P. St. Thomas's doctrine regarding fallen man's need for Grace applied to humanism; humanist values themselves unattainable without supernatural aid.

PENGUIN.