

## OBITER

THE EIGHTH CENTENARY of the consecration of the Crusaders' Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre has been celebrated by the publication of a magnificently illustrated volume, whose subtitle *Splendori—Miserie—Speranze* sufficiently describes its purpose. The Custody of the Holy Land in this way draws attention to 'the pitiful state of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, once a splendid monument erected in veneration of the tomb of Jesus Christ'. Archbishop Testa, Apostolic Delegate to Palestine, contributes a preface; Fr L. H. Vincent, O.P., *facile princeps* in all matters of Palestinian archaeology, describes the splendours of the past; Fr D. Baldi, O.F.M., writes of the present-day dilapidation of the sanctuary, with a realistic description of the innumerable difficulties of its administration; while hopes for the future are reflected in the plans of the architects Luigi Marangoni and Antonio Barluzzi. The latter has certainly succeeded in the Basilica on Mount Tabor, and most people would say at Gethsemane too. But it is perhaps safest to suspend judgment about the artistic quality of this highly ingenious project. Whether such a plan is feasible remains to be seen. Certainly it can never be realised without the active co-operation of English-speaking Catholics. For this reason alone an English edition of this admirably produced and cogently argued appeal is greatly to be desired.

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THE PRESENT QUESTION CONFERENCE, founded in 1945, 'is based on the belief that men and women are more important than machines' and seeks to reaffirm the importance of human values amidst the impersonal and materialistic conditions of life today. Its review, *Question*, prints papers delivered at its annual Conferences, and the last two numbers deal with 'People at Work' and contain a valuable discussion on 'Human Relations and Production', 'Work as Education' and similar subjects. Any movement that attempts to combat the depersonalisation of modern society deserves encouragement, and the *Present Question* freedom from political bias seems to allow of an objective debate.

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UNIVERSITY aims at encouraging communication between graduates and undergraduates of different universities, and has attempted this in the first number by discussions of God's existence, the meaning of history, 'on being a Catholic', foreign policy, and the four senses of T. S. Eliot according to Dante. Surprising as it may seem, some measure of success has been achieved within the small scope of forty pages, and *University's* editors are to be congratulated. One imagines, however, that in future they will either avoid such complicated matters as

proving God's existence or else make sure that the first symposiast does not thoroughly confuse the issue, as Mr Flew does here. An able statement of the issues involved comes at the end from Mr Hare, who points out that Hume, in reaction from the despair induced by his positivism, turned to backgammon. There are indications in this symposium that not all the members have been taking their backgammon.

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THE INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC CONVERSATIONS held each year at San Sebastian have by this established themselves as a valuable forum for the discussion of the Catholic contribution to contemporary problems. The latest issue of *Documentos* includes papers delivered in 1950 on the formation of public opinion, and among them are notable contributions by Canon Thils on 'Catholic Theology and the Means of Temporal Action', and by M. Cruz Hernandez on 'History and Public Opinion'.

PHILOSOPHIA NATURALIS (published by the Westkulturverlag Anton Hain Meisenheim) is a new review which should be of the greatest value for the Catholic apologete. The first number has authoritative articles on the history of Science and on theories of Evolution.

COMMONWEAL (February 2nd) is interesting for Jacques Maritain's 'Problem of Means' ('How can the People control the State?') and Donald Attwater's 'Decline of Distributism' ('I do not believe it has failed; it has not yet had a chance to succeed').

LA REVUE NOUVELLE (February 15th) includes a study of Bertrand Russell. The Nobel prizewinner is 'neither king nor country mayor: perhaps a provincial governor'. In other words his latter-day authority must be seen in the light of his philosophy as a whole.

LA MAISON-DIEU (No. 24) is devoted to the proceedings of last September's liturgical congress at Versailles: *La Messe, engagement de charité*.

L'ART SACRE for January-February is devoted to the 'public' of sacred art. M. Dorival writes of the divorce between art and the public taste in our own time, and excellent illustrations point the moral. (Perhaps the obsessional dislike of *Art Sacré* for the new Lisieux Basilica should be given a holiday?) A new feature is film criticism, and Père Lelong's review of *Dieu a besoin des hommes* is a serious study of this revolutionary view of the priesthood. French cinema producers (or is it the directors?) continue to be fascinated by the problem of sanctity on the screen, and a recent number of *Témoignage Chrétien* included several stills from, and much information about, the cinema version of Bernanos' *Curé de Campagne*.

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