

EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

LAY DOMINICANS. The September number of DOMINICAN ANNALS (3d. post free from St. Albert's Priory, George Square, Edinburgh) contains the texts of the four stimulating addresses given to the Dominican Tertiary Congress at London by the Father Provincial of the English Dominicans, the Prior of Oxford, the Provincial Director of Tertiaries and Fr. Henry St. John, O.P., respectively. The true purpose and character of the Dominican Third Order is widely misunderstood; it is no mere confraternity of Dominican admirers, it is an essential and integral part of the threefold Dominican Order with its own specific and indispensable function in the Dominican programme of "handing on to others the fruits of contemplation." Father Provincial explained that:

A tertiary is one who tries to live in the spirit of a religious Order, who tries to live his life under the banner of St. Dominic. Everyone must practise poverty, chastity and obedience. We must all detach our hearts from possessions. . . . Whatever state of life we may live in, we must all observe chastity and obedience; we must all obey. A tertiary tries to live his life for the love of God. That must always be the motive of everything he does. In trying to live up to that ideal, all tertiaries are following out the law of charity, striving to love God with all their minds, with all their hearts, with all their strength. That is the fulfilling of the whole law.

The Prior of Oxford, speaking on the words of St. Paul, *Whosoever shall follow this rule, peace on them and mercy*, lucidly showed that some rule of life is a necessity for all. Rule is not an irksome duty imposed by God for His own benefit; "God desires us to seek these things that we may be perfect; this is the will of God, your sanctification, your realization, your perfection, your eternal happiness." He then went on to explain the particular characteristics of the rule of the tertiaries, the lay Dominicans, a rule designed that layfolk may take their share in the distinctive Dominican apostolate:

Those of you who belong to this Third Order of St. Dominic have in your power first of all the means of your own sanctification, but that is not all. The members of St. Dominic's Order are apostles, and apostles are needed to-day, apostles who will, first

BLACKFRIARS

of all and above all, by the sanctity of their own lives give back to men that understanding of truth, that sanity which comes from the realization of the meaning of the Incarnation. We who call ourselves Christians have a mission to bring back to mankind the knowledge of Christ. It is a shame that our Third Order has come to be regarded as a pious association of the few for the salvation of the souls of its members. It is a militia, an army, which belongs to the first rank of the fighting forces of the Church. It is a vocation. Above all, it is a living under a rule, a giving up of our own will, being willing to submit ourselves to the will of another. The rules of the Third Order are but few. But it is not the rules that matter, but the Rule and the spirit of the Rule; and those who have the privilege of being followers of Dominic have also the special privilege of sharing in that spirit of Dominic which was the development in his own soul of the spirit of Our Lord Himself. In this Rule you yourselves will find that peace which the soul demands, that peace which is not a thing of this world, but a peace of the soul in heaven; and you will find it not only for yourselves but also for others.

Fr. St. John followed with a detailed, closely-reasoned analysis of the function of Dominicans generally, and tertiaries in particular, in the peculiar conditions of the modern world. He showed the close parallel between those conditions and those prevailing in Languedoc when St. Dominic founded his Order.

The religion of Christ which we profess is a tremendous dynamic force, capable of revolutionizing the world to-day as it revolutionized it in the past; a force infinitely greater in its power to regenerate mankind than that of any human creed or philosophy. And yet our Christianity accomplishes so little, effects so little in our own lives, has so little impact on the lives of those amongst whom we live. Why is it? Why is it that, possessing this tremendous power, this dynamic force, which might and should control and rule the world, we hardly escape from the charge, which our enemies bring against us, that the world has succeeded in gaining control and rule over us? The answer lies surely in ourselves. That so often, though we "know our Faith" as the saying goes, we are lacking in the spirit of contemplation; we have not really proved its depths and realized all its implications, we have not really carried its truths into every department of our lives, or realized its bearing on the lives of those around us. We are devout and punctilious in our religious duties, as good practising Catholics, but whole areas of our lives are still untouched by the spirit of the gospel. And so because our religion tends to be a private affair between ourselves and God, an individual

EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

transaction which takes little account of our neighbours as our brethren in Christ, we are lacking in the spirit of Apostolic Zeal, the essential characteristic of which is a burning desire to share the good news of the gospel with those around us. And because we are lacking in Apostolic Zeal, we see no need for the ascetic life, which will deny itself to the utmost in order that the good news of the gospel may be preached.

Contemplation, apostolic zeal and the ascetic spirit, he considered, are our three great needs, and it is just these that the Dominican Third Order provides:

That, then, is your Apostolate as Dominican Tertiaries; the Apostolate of Catholic Action; Dominican Catholic Action; for there is a special Dominican vocation, a special work which can only be done by Dominicans, a work for which is needed an outlook on life and a way of approaching its problems which is distinctively Dominican, an outlook and approach which draw their inspiration from St. Dominic's spirit, and are fostered by Dominican training and Dominican life. That special Dominican work will play an important part, so we believe, in the tremendous struggle for Christian principles which lies ahead. And you as members of St. Dominic's Order and as sharers in his spirit have your place, an important place, in the doing of that work. It is through the impact of the Christian laity on the modern world that the Christian solution of the world's problems will become effective, and the Dominican ideal has a tremendous part to play in that solution.

MADRID AND BURGOS. While our Red and Pink and Infra-Red journals continue their propaganda for what they humourlessly represent as the Madrid junta's struggle for "democracy" (with touching photos of wide-eyed militiamen on guard over ecclesiastical treasures), and while, on the other hand, Fleet Street awaits with curiosity the fruits (in net-sale statistics) of the Rothermere Press's blood-curdling campaign for Civilization and Christianity, the Catholic Press abroad seems less convinced that the Spanish struggle between Right and Left is a clear issue between Right and Wrong. The general reaction of Catholics is well summed up in the French Dominican weekly, SEPT (September 11):

Confronted by the horrors in Spain, Catholics throughout the world have reacted unanimously to deplore the killing of priests and nuns and the destruction of churches. Such sacrileges as these must touch us all to the quick.

BLACKFRIARS

But they are more reserved regarding the *political* issues between the contending parties, and show themselves anxious not to identify too artlessly the cause of Catholicism with that of the insurgents. That many Catholics hope for the triumph of the insurgents is undeniable and very understandable, especially now that the new Madrid Government is directed by Largo Caballero, the "Spanish Lenin."¹ Even those Catholics who were able, a month ago, to consider the Madrid government to be the lawful one, feel differently to-day towards what has become a Marxist dictatorship when they consider the social and spiritual implications of such a Moscow-inspired regime. This fact explains how the Bishop of Vitoria, in a pastoral letter of September 1st, declares unhesitatingly that "Catholics must know that the victory of the national army is indispensable if they truly hope that the infamies which Russian Communism has already perpetrated in some part of Spain be brought to an end."

French Catholics are well aware of that. But as has been said in *Blackfriars* . . .

Follow quotations from the September *Extracts and Comments* and Cardinal Verdier's moving appeal for peace and good-will.

Not all Catholic periodicals, however, are confident that the victory of the insurgents will serve the best interests of religion. Says SOCIAL FORUM of Ottawa: "Christ on His Cross has a dignity and a moral power which no Marxian hatred can dispel. But Christ the servant of a Totalitarian State, granted liberty of cult which will take the minds of the poor off their misery, yet forbidden to open His mouth against violence, injustice and the denial of His social teaching, is a sight that must tear the heart of every true Christian." And the Editor of the American COMMONWEAL (August 28) writes:

Yet if we suppose that the Communists are beaten, the position of the Church is not for that reason made any easier. Spanish Fascism will be the antithesis to the radical social demands made by the revolutionists. Superficially it will also oppose anti-clericalism, because Fascism is traditionalistic and there is only Catholic tradition in Spain. But it will not liberate creative Catholic social energies, which have struggled to emerge during hundreds of years. Even if it wanted to it could not. A right

¹ But we may recall that a BLACKFRIARS contributor has written: "Largo Caballero, for all his Marxist paraphernalia of clenched fists and Red flags, his wild talk of civil war, and his soubriquet of 'the Spanish Lenin,' is of no deeper dye than the English Labour Party." (April, 1936, page 292.)

EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

social order cannot be promulgated from on top. The change must start among farmers, in factories. The yeast of an all-leavening justice must work from the bottom of the dough. This is what the great Catholic moderates of Spain—the Jesuits, and the best of those round about Gil Robles—knew very well. But will the time ever be ripe for them? It is a brave and optimistic man who would say yes. Sometimes one is almost impelled to believe that the sacred freedom of the Church, so infinitely surpassing in value and nobleness all other freedoms, could in the long run be better served if a new army of apostles walked, through peril and tribulation, among the people—hounded by their triumphant enemies, expecting nothing but the glory of a wayside Cross. Perhaps that is only a romantic dream, the realization of which Heaven in its mercy would not permit and man in his weakness could not accomplish. But we cannot see any reason for stridently applauding the present rebels. The lessons of history are too plain for that.

“THUNDERINGS.” Commenting on the editorial legerdemain practised on an interview given by Mr. Eric Gill to *THE DAILY WORKER*, G.K.’S WEEKLY comments: “It is to be regretted that *The Daily Worker* employs the same inferior journalistic methods as the capitalist press.” *Penguin* concurs—with feeling. Under the stream-headline, “Roman Catholic indicts Press Lies,” the September 7th issue of the Communist daily prints a selection of quotations from our last *Extracts and Comments*. (*Penguin* is puzzled, and rather incredulous, to learn that he has “scarified” the Rothermere Press.) The accompanying comments are not unfair, but the substitution, in a quotation, of three stops for a sentence has made us say that the Catholicity of General Franco and the anti-God ideology of the Red leaders in Spain is “irrelevant,” not to the ethics of atrocity-propaganda, but to the rights and wrongs of the opposing factions. *THE UNIVERSE* (September 11) says, “Strenuous protest must be made against the misuse by *The Daily Worker* of the September issue of *Blackfriars*” —and thereupon repeats the selfsame misrepresentation of *Penguin*’s “deplorable communication,”² and goes on further to contrast it with the “editorial

² “We have no wish to repudiate anything we have written on the subject” is all that *The Universe* (September 18) had to say when we pointed out the misrepresentation. Indeed, the offence is repeated on the same page which reproduces *News Review*’s misquotation of the first seven lines of p. 705 of *BLACKFRIARS* omitting the crucial phrases “on that account” and “not only does not follow, but.” No indication is given that the passage has been mutilated and its meaning, in consequence, seriously falsified.—PENGUIN.

BLACKFRIARS

policy of *Blackfriars*," as manifested in last month's Editorial. What inconsistency there is between condemnation of Red terrorism on the one hand, and condemnation of atrocity-propaganda, interventionism and the identification of the cause of Christianity with that of Right politics on the other, is left unexplained. The palm for misrepresentation must go, however, to NEWS REVIEW. In the September 10th number of "Britains First Weekly Newsmagazine" (of the American, "snappy," "know-all" variety) a headline announces an "English Catholic Split," which is related as follows:

While Bishop Amigo, Roman Catholic Bishop of Southwark, was writing a fierce anti-loyalist, pro-rebel screed to the Press Association, thousands of Catholics were reading an outspoken article in *Blackfriars*, monthly organ of English Dominicans, attacking Spanish Fascists and the British pro-rebel Press.

Wrote Bishop Amigo: "Those who are called 'rebels' and 'insurgents' are fighting for God and their country. It will be terrible if the 'Reds' obtain the victory. Their triumph in Spain would lead to troubles in other countries, and perhaps to a world-wide conflagration." Immediately *Blackfriars* thundered back . . .

We "immediately thunder back" while thousands of Catholics are still reading us and the Bishop of Southwark is still writing—it is all very confusing. We were, in fact, unaware of His Lordship's quoted pronouncement, with which, nevertheless, we find ourselves in heartiest agreement (with the obvious qualification that Moorish troops, at any rate, even if fighting for God, can hardly be said to be fighting for *their* country). It will indeed be terrible if the Reds win; but *Penguin* is not alone in questioning whether the victory of the insurgents will be in the best interests of religion either. It seems likely that the Church stands to lose either way. The English CATHOLIC WORKER (September) quotes WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL CHRONICLE to the effect that:

The Church in Spain appears to be between Scylla and Charybdis. If she falls into the hands of a Left Government, predominantly Communist, religion will be persecuted. . . . If she falls into the hands of a Fascist Government, outwardly friendly, but having no roots in the will of the people, the Spanish workers, downtrodden for centuries, will not have justice done to them, and the day of reckoning will only be postponed. . . .

THE CATHOLIC WORKER itself, realizing the impossibility of

yet reaching the full truth amidst the flood of interested propaganda, wisely suspends judgment on the Spanish situation beyond exposing the "delusion that the success of the 'Government' forces in Spain means the establishment of democracy and social equity; means anything but the destruction of Western civilization." But it joins in warning against the exploitation of the religious persecution:

Men are dying in Spain because they believe themselves to be in the right. Women and children are dying because they belong to those men. All that is decent and humane has gone up in smoke. And our Church is being bandied about by men who would use it as a convenience. Notice our Yellow Press (the Yellow Press is the newspaper the other man buys). Never before has the Church of Rome been praised by the "Daily ——" and the "Daily ——." But now its whole social teaching and outlook is being twisted by the proprietors of these newspapers in order that the particular racket they favour might find some support. Watch them. They are dangerous, for to-morrow they will abuse Catholicism as yesterday they did. If only the Catholic workers knew their religion and its social implications there would be no "Daily ——." And there would be no Spanish blood in the gutters. Neither would there be Moorish troops camping in our Spanish churches. Do you understand?

We do; and the time may not be distant when there may be general thankfulness that some English Catholics have declined to be stampeded.

THE CHURCH AND THE PROLETARIAT. Fr. Gillis, Editor of **THE CATHOLIC WORLD**, takes occasion of recent happenings in Spain to discuss the tragedy of the loss of the workers in "Catholic countries":

Why have we in certain countries lost the masses of the people? Perhaps the chief reason is that we have not made it clear that to-day, as in primitive times, the Church has a love and predilection for the poor. Not many wise, says St. Paul, not many mighty, not many noble, but the foolish and the weak and the base and the contemptible and the things that are not, hath God chosen. To say it in one word, our primary obligation is to the proletariat. Ugly word? Not at all! The Pope uses it again and again in his epoch-making encyclical on the social question. And it is not half so ugly as the word St. Paul uses, "Peripsema."

Now if we have lost the proletariat, if they turn against us at the first opportunity, something is wrong, perhaps with them, but

BLACKFRIARS

surely with us. Something is wrong, also, tragically wrong, with the Capitalistic system. If we hesitate to say so for fear of losing millionaire support, if we kowtow to the rich, defend their injustices, seek their companionship while avoiding that of the poor, we are renegades from our calling. The poor see that fact if we do not. Their instinct in this matter is in the long run infallible. "I know mine and mine knows Me," said the Poorest of poor men. And He declared that to the poor God reveals what is hidden from "the wise and prudent." One explanation usually alleged for our not favoring the poor is that we dread to "stir up class against class." But to align ourselves frankly with the poor is not to do injustice to the rich. If a rich man is irritated when we fight for the poor man, that is the rich man's mistake. Yet our fear of stirring up a class-war is almost pathological. Jesus Christ had no such phobia. He said, "Blessed are ye poor," and He didn't hesitate to add, "Woe to ye rich." Take it or leave it; like it or lump it, such is the original, primitive authentic Gospel. If we insert weasel words to suck out the marrow of those terrific texts, if we are too mealy-mouthed to say what Christ said just as He said it, without adding a flock of "if's" and "ands" and "however's," the poor, whose intellectual capacity may be mediocre, but whose instinctive recognition of friend and foe is all the sharper on that account, "get wise" to us. And when in a riot or a revolution their inhibitions are released, they set fire to our ecclesiastical palaces, pillage our accumulated treasures, shoot us down and fling us into the blazing ruins. Those palaces, by the way, would never have been built, those stores of gold and silver and precious stones never accumulated, if we had continued to emulate the Poor Man of Galilee or His *alter ego*, the Poverello of Assisi. The proletariat in Umbria would not have murdered St. Francis. They knew what side *he* was on. If to-day the "under-privileged" (heavens! what a wishy-washy word) don't know what side *we* are on, perhaps there is a reason apart from Diabolism and Bolshevistic propaganda. Let us not damn the poor man as a dangerous imbecile actuated by the devil. The poor man knows who's who

Fr. Gillis concludes with an application which touches us more closely:

Recently in New York a movement was started—strictly proletarian—The Catholic Worker, to bring the Church into the slums and to retrieve for Christ souls that might otherwise be lost to Communism. One would imagine that churchmen would say spontaneously, "Now that is the sort of thing!" But some of them can see in the movement and its leaders no merit at all but only faults: "they are indiscreet; they are communists in disguise, traitors. They are anti-clerical." Yes, but if they are, so

EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

was Savonarola. And St. Bernard. And St. Catherine of Sienna. And St. Alphonsus. And every saint. If one will be critical one can condemn all the saints. St. Francis of Assisi got his dose of criticism. Conservative folk found fault with his peculiar antics, as Michol the daughter of Saul turned up her nose at David when he danced before the Ark. When Francis cavorted in the streets and through the fields pouring out his soul like the lark in "profuse strains of unpremeditated art," some captious listeners, I dare say, remarked, "All very poetic but likewise injudicious," just as to-day comfortable spectators of a brave difficult experiment in practical sociology say, "Heroic indeed, but is it safe and sound?" Safe? The only unsafe course of conduct for the Church is to remain aloof from the victims of our merciless civilization. The only unsafe thing is to seek protection under the aegis of the rich and powerful. Remember the French Revolution. Remember the Commune of 1870. Nearer at hand, recall Russia in 1917. And for the very latest up-to-the-moment example of what happens when the proletariat suspects us of alliance with kings, autocrats, plutocrats, witness Spain.

CONTEMPORANEA. CATHOLIC WORLD (September): *A Comparative View of Agrarianism* by J. F. Fichter, S.J.: a synthetic view of the back-to-the-land urge throughout the industrialized world. *Whither Europe?* by A. N. Raybould: a good general analysis of the situation of the Church in contemporary Europe; a new era of persecution which "may be the seeds of new life."

CLERGY REVIEW (September): *The Relationship between Mass and Benediction*: the Abbot of Buckfast in an illuminating and original theological study shows the continuity of "extra-liturgical" use of the Blessed Sacrament with the liturgy of the Mass. A thought-provoking distinction between *Usury and Profit-making* is drawn by Dom J. B. McLaughlin in an article which cannot be neglected by such as are concerned with the ethics of capitalism.

COLOSSEUM (September) contains, besides the items advertized in our last number, *Marital Maladjustment and Social Disorder* by Gerald Vann, O.P., *The Chances of Humanism* by Bernard Wall, and a ruthless exposure by T. A. Traversi of the bogusness of *Charles Morgan* and of the society for which he caters.

COMMONWEAL (August 21): *Philosophy into Fiction* by F. X. Connolly: the novel as the contemporary vehicle for ideas: "The Catholic must be prepared to pay more attention to popular forms and less to the textbooks . . . he must be willing to cope with situations rather than with terms, with attitudes rather than with a terminology."

BLACKFRIARS

HOLY NAME MONTHLY: The first number of a promising and lively new Dominican-edited periodical of the "catholic Catholic" variety from Australasia.

IRISH ROSARY (September): *The Dominican Idea* by Finbar Ryan, O.P.

LITURGY AND SOCIOLOGY ("Summer"): *Catholic Education—a Plea for Rebellion* by Dorothy W. Coddington: challenging but constructive.

MONTH (September): *The Wrong Fear of God* by A. G. Herring; *The Church in Finland* (illustrated) by Marita Emeleus; *St. Teresa and the Dominicans* by Abp. Goodier: how the saint was guided in her prayer by Thomist theologians.

THE TABLET is printing weekly instalments of G.K.C.'s autobiography.

PENGUIN.