

Oh that my prayers! mine, alas!
 Oh that some Angel might a trumpet sound;
 At which the Church falling upon her face
 Should cry so loud, untill the trump were drown'd,
 And by that crie of her deare Lord obtain,
 That your sweet sap might come again.

The verses of this poet will surely 'endure without a syllable lost, while states and empires pass many periods.' Unexcelled in the God-given warmth of his personal affection for his Lord, George Herbert was given also the tongue 'of men and of angels,' the warmth of a human utterance, the brilliant, angelic insight that pierces the splendours of the Divine Love and sees against it its own unworthiness. It was given to him to see in his own rebellions the sin of all the human race, and to believe that the world, that 'ancient murderer,' had made of the sweetest and holiest of men one who had nailed his Saviour to the Cross. But in matchless language he calls for ever upon the Divine Mercy and sees it for ever preventing and following him:

But as I rav'd and grew more fierce and wilde
 At every word,
 Me thought I heard one calling, 'Childe';
 And I reply'd 'My Lord.'

PAUL URBAN FOSTER, O.P.

THE VATICAN AND THE WAR IN EUROPE. By Denis Gwynn.
 (Burns, Oates and Washbourne; 7s. 6d.)

THE POPE AND THE WAR. By Denis Gwynn. (Catholic Truth
 Society; 2d.)

BENEDICT XV, THE POPE OF PEACE. By H. E. G. Rope. (Gif-
 ford; 7s. 6d.)

A correspondent in a recent issue of the *New Statesman*
 wrote: 'Sir,

" I deplore
 The War,"
 Said the Pope
 In a Message of Hope.'

This letter was signed 'Fox,' perhaps as a symbol of the honest
 Britisher's conception of wily perspicacity. But though there
 are few, one imagines, who would be quite so silly as this, there
 is undoubtedly a widespread feeling that 'the Churches' in
 general and the Vatican in particular have not given the lead
 that is to be expected of them. True, the criticisms of the

papacy are sometimes contradictory : on the one hand it is condemned for a supposed partisanship, dictated by mundane policy ; on the other, for a refusal to condemn one side outright and to bless the other. But often enough also the plain man, faced by the horrors and hopelessness of war, will feel simply that the Pope ought to be doing something about it, though if questioned he would be vague as to what precisely the Pope might in fact do. Such books as these, then, are most opportune and important at the present time, demonstrating as they do so fully both the consistency of the papal attitude revealed in the activity of successive Popes, and the unremitting intensity and fearless single-mindedness of that activity.

'I bless peace, not war,' said Pius X when asked by the Emperor of Austria to bless his armies. Fr. Rope quotes a passage from *Foreign Affairs* (February, 1922) about Benedict XV : 'Alone among those in authority in any Christian sect he seemed to think that peace remained, even in war time, the leading doctrine of his Master. For that he received the scorn and abuse of all the warring nations.' The attitude of the papacy is summarised in Dr. Gwynn's *Introduction*. 'That the Holy See, under Pius XII, will work strenuously for a negotiated peace, without regard for a military decision, must be obvious to anyone who reflects upon the fundamental interests of the Catholic Church and, still more, upon the spirit that must always inspire its policy. There is indeed an apparent difference between the attitude of the Holy See and the patriotic or idealistic sentiments expressed by Catholic spokesmen who regard the war from the standpoint of their own countries. It would be easy to quote from . . . those who have announced that the present war is a "crusade" against the neo-paganism of Nazi Germany and the militant atheism of Moscow. But similar claims were made, with no less conviction, during the last war . . . Yet while the victims of German invasion and destruction naturally gave their entire support to the prosecution of the war by the Allies, Pope Benedict was continually denouncing the whole war as a barbarous and senseless method of settling national conflicts. He appealed again and again to the rulers of the belligerents to stop the war at once and make a just peace without regard to military successes or defeats.' The Holy See has of course never questioned the right to repel unjust aggression by armed force ; but the 'burden of Benedict's repeated warnings in the last war was that war caused ruin and boundless tragedy . . . and that its results, even for the victorious countries, would bring no assurance of peace or future security' ; and 'the truth of those warnings

could not have been more fully demonstrated.' It is significant that, as Dr. Gwynn points out, recent Popes, foreseeing the catastrophes that were to come upon a Europe heedless of their warnings and pleadings, made sure, by seeing to the training and ordination of native priests and bishops in the foreign missions, and by intensifying the Church's missionary activity as a whole, that the faith might flourish in the world even though Europe were extinguished. One of the things, indeed, that emerges most clearly from this study is the universality and the far-sightedness of the papal attitude to European events. Just as the Pope must, in Benedict's words, remain 'perfectly impartial' because he must consider 'not the special interests which divide' the combatants, but the 'common bond of faith which makes them brothers'; so too he must think, not for Europe only, but for the world. He must denounce evil—injustice, cruelty, aggression, the use of evil means to achieve even permissible ends—and there is ample evidence here of the many times he has done so; but he remembers also that, even if one side is unrelievedly evil, the other may not be wholly and without qualification good, in motives and methods, and that he cannot compromise Christ.

To anyone who thinks that before, during, and after a European conflagration the Pope does no more than emit occasional cries of distress, these books should be an eye-opener indeed. The first is a thrilling, if tragic, chronicle, not only of warnings, teachings, prayers, but of endless activity in mitigating suffering, offering solutions—regardless of the danger of scornful refusal—to the belligerents, exploring every possibility by diplomatic and other channels of bringing hostilities to a just and secure conclusion. The practical conclusion which emerges is obvious. The tale of the present Pope's efforts cannot yet be told; but there may come a time when, like his predecessor, he will openly beg for a negotiated peace and suggest general terms. Benedict's initiative was a failure; President Wilson, in words that, as Dr. Gwynn notes, 'were to be almost exactly repeated some twenty years afterwards . . . asserted that "we cannot take the word of the present rulers of Germany as a guarantee of anything that is to endure."'

It is true that Dr. Gwynn, in drawing attention to the resemblance between this war and the last, has failed to emphasise the main difference between them: the fact that this is, among other things, an ideological war, a war in which the triumph, or otherwise, of a way of life is involved. Is it possible to 'come to terms' with this particular way of life? The question has to be faced. There are some who think that the

only way to deal with such a pseudo-philosophy or pseudo-religion is to destroy it by force, to fight to a finish; there are others who think that such things cannot be destroyed by force, unless force means the extermination of all who hold, or may in the future hold, to them. This is not the place to attempt to argue that question: the point that Dr. Gwynn makes, and would have made more cogently if he had faced this aspect of the problem more explicitly, is that the ideological or religious factors in the situation are the last that the Pope may be expected to neglect; and that if the papal peace proposals of 1917 are to be paralleled, it will be stupid as well as disloyal for us to suppose or to proclaim that the Pope is unwisely attempting to reconcile irreconcilables, or is blind to the deeper issues of the struggle.

Dr. Gwynn's pamphlet puts in compressed form much of the matter of his larger book. Would it not be possible for the Catholic Truth Society to issue pamphlets such as these, which might well command a wide sale because they are of such general interest, in pocket format like a thinner *Penguin*? As it is, their outward appearance is against them.

Fr. Rope's book is a straight biography of Benedict; and, as he says, it was high time that a biography should appear, for seldom has a great man been so unjustly neglected. To one reader, at least, the style (clichés, underlinings, prosiness) is sometimes irritating, the print and lay-out unattractive, and the dust-cover ugly.

Finally, two small criticisms of *The Vatican and War in Europe* suggest themselves. First, it is a pity that, while stressing the fact that papal judgements and actions are based upon a long view of political events and on their relation to the cause of Christian truth, Dr. Gwynn himself should present a very simplified version of some of those events. The Vatican's line of action is determined, not by a *simplisme* which ignores or suppresses facts, but by the sober and patient wisdom which puts first things first. Secondly, there are a number of questions, often asked to-day, which might well have been included here and answered. The Pope blesses 'peace, not war'; but he is not contradicting himself when he gives his blessing in public audience to soldiers who come to ask it—how could he do otherwise? He does not make pronouncements on the justice or injustice of wars; he does not take sides; because he could only declare unequivocally for one side if it were wholly and in every respect Christian or moral and its opponent wholly and in every respect anti-Christian and immoral, and such wars do not usually take place. He does not

make immediate pronouncements on the immorality of acts of aggression, not because of fear or lack of interest or 'policy,' but because it is difficult and sometimes almost impossible to arrive at the true facts. Similar considerations explain why the Pope does not forbid the Catholics of this or that country to fight. Many things perhaps are obscure at the moment and in the heat of battle; the history of Benedict's attitude and activity in the last war should convince us beyond all doubting that it is wise and prudent to trust loyally and unswervingly to the judgement of the man best equipped in every way to judge, the common Father of Christians.

GERALD VANN, O.P.

THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF RELIGION. A Comparative Study. By E. O. James. (University of London Press; Hodder and Stoughton; 7s. 6d.)

The 'purest' and most academic of scientists find themselves constrained sooner or later to prove themselves of 'use' to humanity. Dr. James is here concerned to advertise his cultural-anthropological and comparative-religious wares as the medicine we are needing in our present mortal disease. His main conclusions should by this time be familiar enough to be trite. They may be summed up by saying that, though religion is a function of society, society is a function of religion, and that without a transcendental religion society must either decompose or divinise itself. What is less familiar is the arguing of this thesis from historical and anthropological premisses rather than from *a priori* principles.

Of course, it has all been done before; by the Catholic Dawson as well as the agnostic Malinowski. Indeed, the first half of Dr. James's book proves to be little more than a *soufflé* of Malinowski's memorable Riddell Lectures. Candidly, we do not think Dr. James has improved upon them. He lacks the former's disciplined lucidity and concreteness; and the superabundance of illustration which he introduces from China to Peru, from Pygmies to Falangists, tends to obscure the argument which his mentor's 'close-ups' so admirably clarified.

To Malinowski Dr. James has added an under-current of Christian apologetic, wherein very clear waters mingle with very muddy, and which in the later chapters comes to the surface and occupies the whole picture. Here again, Dr. James has introduced too much material. It is only fair to say that this book claims to be no more than a 'preliminary statement' to a more thorough treatment which we await with eagerness; but it seems over-ambitious to relate the history of the Church