

EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

multiply, and enhance the resources at his disposal. This is true even of spiritual values. Even of the supreme value of the grace of God, which is given to us in and by the mystical Body of Christ.

And so also it must be in the matter of work, combining as it does the material and the spiritual. Collective work can indeed involve a terrible restraint and self-repression; but this danger which lurks in it is but the concomitant of that wonderful power whereby man increases and multiplies his resources. The J.O.C. sets out to seek and discover the means of overcoming this danger, and to dominate that power for the good of man. For it knows that every collective régime, at all its stages and in all the elements that comprise it, is made to subserve the autonomous vocation of *persons*.

It may indeed be opportune and profitable to create new communities spiritually and economically independent of modern society. But on no account may we neglect the task of transforming that society itself in its inmost structure. Only *sin* is impervious to grace, is incapable of integration within the Kingdom of God.

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COMMON PRAYER. Those of us to whom the liturgical movement is a matter of taste—a luxury of the Christian life—will not easily understand the intense seriousness with which it is regarded and the immense importance which is attributed to it by our fellow-Catholics in Germany. “To labour for an ‘Order of Common Prayer’ . . . is one of the most urgent duties that the service of God imposes upon us in our time . . . The destiny of the Church in our fatherland will in large measure depend on the response she gives to the problem of the liturgy . . .” Such characteristic phrases (from an article, *Liturgie in der Gemeinde*, in the current SCHILDGENOSSEN) may still seem practically unintelligible in this country, and the more astonishing coming from a

country in which the Church finds itself oppressed and persecuted and might be thought to have little time for frills and luxuries. An article recounting the history of the movement in German countries, and the spirit that inspires it, in **THE COMMONWEAL** (May 20) will help us. It is by the well-known German priest Fr. H. A. Reinhold:

As a natural consequence of this return to Bible and liturgy, very soon the popular substitutes and the hitherto extra-liturgical practices and devotions became more imbued with liturgical and biblical spirit, and much of the sentimental and pseudo-baroque trash of the late nineteenth century dropped out. Once familiar with the central mystery of the Church, the faithful soon demanded more of the true bread of Christ. Baptism, which hitherto had appeared to be a legal performance in a corner of the church, with much mumbling, salt, and other strange practices, regained in its performance its old majestic beauty, and many dioceses gave as many texts as possible in the vernacular. This happened, *mutatis mutandis*, with extreme unction, matrimony and holy orders. People no longer liked fifteen-minute Masses, and rushing through other ceremonies. And the clergy were glad to see their flock participate in the the most vital and essential things of Catholic life. The heart of the faithful in their religious life began to beat in rhythm with the Church, or, as Guardini has put it, the Church awoke in the souls of the faithful.

Before my first funeral in Switzerland, which I, now a priest, had to perform in a little village near Meiringen, I was asked by my pastor to say every word in the vernacular, and I never before saw a crowd so deeply impressed by the Church's prayer. It shows that this movement of making the Church's prayer the people's own prayer has not only penetrated Austria and Germany, but also the German-speaking parts of Switzerland.

The hierarchy hesitated only a short time to acknowledge this popular movement inaugurated by monks. Of course some exaggeration made some bishops cautious and there was some opposition from the older generation among people and clergy, who had heard wild stories about self-appointed reformers and innovators. Some people tried to construe an incompatibility between extra-liturgical, so-called popular devotions and liturgical prayer, fearing from their own legalistic attitude toward liturgy that a cold and soulless piety might destroy what they thought to be the real food for Catholic souls. But this never happened. From time to time, certain ascetic schools have objected to the "free and easy" ascetism built on this less

methodical and less technical attitude toward sanctification and have uttered grumbling warnings. But they under-estimated the sound religious schooling of the leaders, who had an older tradition to defend than these men of the *devotio moderna* and the nineteenth century.

A greater understanding of the natural process of growth, more faith in God's work in the souls of the redeemed, greater emphasis on the sacramental life and less moralizing have imbued this generation with that joyful spirit of martyrdom of which they are now in such bad need. It is less dull to be a Catholic than it was under the atmosphere of an almost jansenistic past. There was also a heated dispute in the middle of the twenties when a learned professor and his friends started a drumfire of theological name-calling—"paganism" and "modernism"—but he only helped to unearth good old theological traditions and brought forth such valuable allies as Abbot Vonier's book on the Holy Eucharist. These lofty scientific speculations were fought with courage, and I think the monks won the battle.

In the meantime, those hard-working men, Abbot Herwegen, Dom Hammenstede and Dom Casel with their confrères, and with the assistance of other orders, priests and laymen, had thrown open the doors of the sanctuary to God's people, a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation to offer up spiritual sacrifices. As long as this spirit prevails among German Catholics, who have come of age so far as to be chosen to suffer a persecution, the Church in Germany will not succumb to any vicious attack.

BERNANOS. The astonishing and deeply significant success of *The Diary of a Country Priest* has made the name of Georges Bernanos scarcely less famous—and contentious—in our own country than in his own. His *Cimetières sous la Lune* is yet known to few of us in England except through a strange reference in a Catholic weekly—a reference which is the subject of caustic comment from Emmanuel Mounier in *ESPRIT*. Bernanos is known as a die-hard conservative, a traditionalist, a royalist; but before all things he is, together with Mauriac, the master tragedian of the conflict of grace and fallen nature. To such a one the spectacle of sin masquerading as an instrument of holiness must be a supreme torture; in *Cimetières sous la Lune* he gives vent to his agony. It is, it would seem, an angry and embittered book; but its importance lies in the fact that it is a widely representative one—"L'histoire classera le livre de Bernanos,

bien au delà de son contenu occasionel, parmi les apocalypses d'une chrétienté agonissante," says Mounier. To it, in LA VIE INTELLECTUELLE (June 10), Père Pie Duployé, O.P., devotes an article which is at once profoundly sympathetic and profoundly critical, and of great importance inasmuch as it affords a timely scrutiny not only of this book but also of the widespread sentiment to which it gives forceful expression. After a shrewd analysis of Bernanos' distinctive genius and the character of his "prophetic" mission, the writer shows that this genius and mission have led him to uphold a quite inadmissible divorce of the eternal and the temporal, of religion and politics.

Les Grandes Cimetières sous la Lune donnent perpétuellement l'impression que leur auteur manque, au plan nouveau où il se place aujourd'hui et qui n'est plus celui des destinées individuelles, mais d'une institution, d'une société divine et humaine, de ce sens de l'amortissement fatal de l'idéal chrétien, de ce pouvoir de *comprendre* le mal dans une dialectique de la grâce en travail sur une nature corrompue. C'est le même homme qui manifestait une condescendance si chrétienne vis-à-vis du péché qui habite Torcy et qui maintenant "bloque" un certain péché, l'isole, le *souffle*. Il le vomit. Il refuse l'obstacle. Il se constitue délibérément devant ce péché en état de prophète: "*Malheur à vous, scribes et pharisiens!*" Il est impossible de ne pas être profondément ému, troublé, par le ton violent, passionnément douloureux qui anime le livre. On a parlé de littérature. C'est une absurdité. Le cri d'un homme blessé ne trompe pas.

Il serait vain de paraître ignorer à quelle expérience terriblement précise et concrète de la vie expérimentale de l'Eglise *Les Grandes Cimetières sous la Lune* doivent leur origine. M. Bernanos a été témoin à Palma de Majorque d'une terreur blanche qui a bénéficié de l'appui des autorités ecclésiastiques locales. La guerre est une chose horrible, et le moindre de ses méfaits n'est pas de provoquer des explosions de ressentiment littéraire d'une violence à la Bernanos, car le ressentiment de M. Bernanos n'a coûté aucune vie humaine, et il a pour lui de n'être que la protestation, après tout platonique, contre un ressentiment, lui, qui n'est rien de littéraire. M. Bernanos aurait voulu que l'Eglise habitât la sphère où ne parvient nul écho de ce ressentiment. Il lui semble, au contraire, que l'Eglise d'Espagne ayant solennellement fait sienne la reconquête nationaliste, elle en partagera la gloire devant l'histoire, mais aussi les responsabilités. La gloire de la reconquête, M. Bernanos ne veut pas en entendre parler. Ses responsabilités, elles, lui semblent particulièrement lourdes . .

But Bernanos' book has a yet wider reference. Père Duployé concludes with words which we will attempt to translate and paraphrase:

We must leave to the future to pass its judgment on this, this most tragic episode in the religious history of our time. The witness of M. Bernanos must take its place in the archives which will one day allow that history to be appraised. Without anticipating that judgment, we would attempt to perceive the spiritual significance and the Christian significance, if such there be, of *Grands Cimetières*.

"*Je ne trouve pas cela drôle, l'essai de comprendre.*" Perhaps no other phrase in this difficult book so profoundly expresses the suffering which the author shares with very many of his generation; it is a real and terrible suffering which we cannot ignore, and for which the existing conjunction of circumstances, over which men's wills have no control, seems alone responsible.

The Christian is "in the world," and he shares in its pain. Is not the greatest pain of our time that truth is becoming more and more inaccessible, and that confronted by momentous current events it seems no longer possible to avoid a certain one-sided perspective which deprives many consciences of the satisfaction of their yearning for certitude and loyalty? The war of broadcasting, the war of the press, the war of conferences and embassies, of all the various powerful forms of propaganda and counter-propaganda, have profoundly upset the equilibrium of the European psyche. It is not a very far step from this psychosis to a universal *catastrophism*. The unhappy thing is that, in certain countries, the Church herself does not seem to have been able to escape this general panic. M. Robert d'Harcourt has remarked how profoundly the recent conduct of the Austrian hierarchy had upset the conscience of many Catholics, and how it had weakened that confidence which is indispensable if their obedience to their pastors is to be wise and prudent. . .

The Holy Spirit, we are confident, will enable the faithful to overcome this trial. Need we add that these local defects must on no account allow us to prejudge the attitude of the whole Church? The example of Austria has already enabled us to see how the attitude of a particular local hierarchy may precisely afford an opportunity to the Holy See to reassert more emphatically than ever its independence of the established powers.

For ourselves, let us bear one another's burdens. The cry of one sorely tried conscience has reached our ears. We must try, at least, to *understand*.

CHRISTIAN CATASTROPHISM. To the reference to "catastrophism" (quoted above) P. Duployé adds the warning footnote, "But there is a catastrophism which has been the food no less than the subject-matter of the prophet in every age: we may instance Jeremias and John the Baptist—and even a certain Dominican tradition represented by St. Vincent Ferrer and Savonarola." That there is a true and theocentric catastrophism as well as a false and anthropocentric one is the theme of an essay by the Rev. J. V. Langmead Casserley in the June CHRISTENDOM. For the apocalyptic prophet, "catastrophes affirm not the triumph of the demonic, but the sovereignty of God." We take the liberty of plundering a long quotation from his concluding paragraphs:

Strangely enough, we normally accept this interpretation of past catastrophes. We agree now that the fall of the Roman Empire was a good thing for European civilization, and that the Norman Conquest ultimately benefited England. It is always the next calamity which we depict in the gloomiest colours available. The Fall of the Roman Empire, the Norman Conquest, to them we are reconciled, but the fall of the British Empire or an African Conquest of Africa would be a graver matter. If we contrive, however, mentally to disentangle our values from our fortunes we shall at once perceive that the same type of interpretation holds good in all these cases. We cannot, surely, desire that our present industrialised imperialistic order of society should continue indefinitely, even if that were possible. A Christian certainly cannot desire it. The West, though dear to us because it contains so many relics of the first Christendom, is not the Kingdom upon earth for which we pray in the Lord's Prayer and which we anticipate in the Mass. It is not even a good basis from which to journey to that Kingdom. All its roads branch off in another direction. Between the West and the Kingdom there is no broad highway, only a wilderness upon whose verge we sit waiting for Moses. Industrialised, urban civilization has not only estranged men from God, not only transformed manners and morals, it has taken from them even the æsthetic and intellectual values within who the true humanist feels more at home. The average best selling novel or theatrical success in the land in which once Will Shakespeare was the idol of the groundlings reflects the degradation of our taste. Similarly intellectual values are trampled upon in a community in which knowledge has become one of the utilities—indeed the principal utility—metaphysics are mocked, and even the blessed

adjective "scientific" is fast sinking to the stage in which it is most frequently met with in advertisements for tooth pastes and beauty creams. Our land is become a land of corrupt affections, vain purposes and false gods. We cannot even desire its survival. This is no mere political rejection of one form of Western industrialism, say the capitalist. Communism, fascism and democracy are alike variants of the same industrialism. All three aim at the preservation of the dominant existing form of social life. The communist argues that industrialism is threatened by the capitalist system which is and must be technically inefficient. The worker, he holds, is the true industrialist, and to him must we look for the salvation of industrialism. The fascist holds that the communist is the enemy because of his invocation of class war, an evil which he would avoid by setting before men an ideal end which transcends all class interests, the glorification of the nation-state. The democrat argues in effect that the bourgeoisie are the creators of industrialism, and that they alone understand how to govern its workings. If he is a "social" democrat he endeavours to abolish titles and raise wages in the hope of recruiting to the bourgeoisie from above and below and thus producing a kind of "one class" industrial society. These three differ in their diagnoses and prescriptions, but they share a common aim, a world safe for sinners to sin in, the stabilisation of a rotten industrialism. The Christian cannot with all the charity in the world wish any of them good luck in the name of the Lord. His Faith, his Bible, the history book, the very march of contemporary events, all combine to suggest to him the irresistible conclusion that the Wrath of God who loves us, and therefore demands so much of us, is now upon us, that wrath of God which we most righteously have deserved. Even now men wait fearfully beneath its shadow . . .

"VICARIOUS SACRIFICE." Nobody could be better qualified to comment on the recent controversies regarding the J.O.C. attitude towards industrialism than Père M.-D. Chenu, whose *Open Letter* on the subject appears on another page. Père Chenu's credentials as a theologian are guaranteed by the fact that he occupies the office of Regent of Studies in the French Dominican province, and he has for many years been in closest contact with Jocist leaders, chaplains and militants both in France and Belgium, paying close attention to the theological implications of the movement as he has seen it in the concrete. He is thus particularly fitted to express a typically Jocist reaction to the somewhat ill-

informed discussions which have been carried on in this country. His letter would seem to suggest that we ourselves have accepted too readily some current assumptions regarding the "immolationist" character of the Jocist *mystique*; though we have no doubt that Père Chenu would agree that the Jocist vocation is in a high degree self-sacrificial. Whatever may still be thought of Jocist ideals and methods, our readers will be grateful for this opportunity to correct false impressions of the movement which they may have gained from less authoritative and representative sources.—We note that CHRISTENDOM comments as follows on the recent discussions:

The introduction of the topic of grace into any sociological discussion seems to act as a kind of water-shed. On the one side rush down the meaningless torrents of activism; on the other lie the stagnant pools of quietism. The April *Blackfriars* has taken up cudgels in defence of the Jocists against the Integration group. The theological presuppositions of these latter seem undoubtedly heretical. They appear to take the quite proper conception of grace as perfecting or presupposing nature to mean that nature must reform itself before grace can be added. Socially speaking, this means that Society must be more in accord with human nature before grace can make the perfection of the Christian life possible. But as *Blackfriars* insists: it is from grace itself that this first transformation must be expected.

There is, however, some danger that phrase such as "We have not to make a human society in order that it may be Christian: if we make it Christian, its humanity must follow as an inevitable result" will be misinterpreted. Grace is not magic, nor does it act *in vacuo*, but in conditions of time and place in which the recipients may be. The full Christian life enabled by grace will be a certain sort of life. The Christian to-day is compelled to live in a world of false assumptions—and so far the fullness of the Christian life in a proper natural order will be denied him. Ours can be a full Christian life only if grace raises us to the heights of prophecy and revolt.

We are grateful for this gloss, which expresses our mind admirably. It need hardly be said that our phrase envisaged grace in all its fullness—*co-operans* as well as *operans*. At the same time we should like to make it clear that we have never said that the presuppositions of the INTEGRATION group are "undoubtedly heretical." We must only query whether

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those presuppositions have been accurately thought out, and whether the interpretation that has been put upon them does not give an unduly biased—and jaundiced—turn to the group's general outlook.

CONTEMPORANEA. CATHOLIC TIMES OF SOUTH AFRICA runs a useful series on *Catholic Action* by Bonaventure Perquin, O.P.

CLERGY REVIEW (June): The case for the establishment of Young Christian Workers presented *ad clerum* by Fr. Bernard Goode.

ECHANGES ET RECHERCHES (May): Fr. P. Doyère on *L'Etre collective dans la Cité chrétienne*.

IRENIKON (March-April): P. Congar on *The Ecumenical Significance of the Work of Moehler*.

MONTH (June): *Good and Evil*: Fr. Martindale up-to-the-minute and down-to-brass-tacks on the "amazing duel."

TEMPS PRESENT (June 10): Strong *Fascismes* number.

VIE INTELLECTUELLE (May 25): *Quand les chrétiens s'égorgent* by F. Perroux: an authentically Christian case against indiscriminate conscientious objection.

VIE SPIRITUELLE (June): Several illuminating articles on the presence and indwelling of God in our souls, and of ourselves in Him.

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CATHOLIC ACTION

QU'EST-CE QUE LE CATHOLICISME? par le R. P. Sertillanges. (Editions Spes; 4 frs.)

ENTRETIENS SUR L'ESSENCE DU CHRISTIANISME. par P. Bernard, O.P. (Desclée, de Brouwer; 18 frs.)

L'ESSOR. Jean de Courberive. (Editions Spes; 10 frs.)

ENTREVISIONS DU CIEL. par Henri-Pierre Faffin. (Editions de la Cité Chrétienne, Bruxelles; 22.50 B.fr.s.)

Catholic Action is far removed from chattering activism: nor can directors of Catholic Action be satisfied with the hysterical lip-service induced by propaganda. If Catholic Action is to be fruitful it must be based in the supernatural life of "persons now." Hence the insistence by all authentic exponents of the Lay Apostolate on *formation*. Without Sacred Doctrine there can be no true apostolate. Catholic Action is primarily a call to integral Christian life and the end is union with God through Jesus Christ. "En quoi consiste le Bonne Nouvelle évangélique . . . En ceci que l'homme est appelé à nouer avec Dieu des