

BOOK REVIEWS

CHRIST OUR BROTHER. By Karl Adam ; translated by Dom Justin McCann, O.S.B. (Sheed & Ward ; 7/6.)

Dr. Karl Adam is already well known to English readers in his book, *The Spirit of Catholicism*, in which he presents the main outlines of the Christian Faith, the character, practices, doctrines and devotions of Catholic Christianity. In this latest work—once more presented in an admirable translation by Dom Justin McCann—the author confines his attention to that central and decisive fact in Christianity, the Incarnation. He gives us in effect a devout treatise on the Sacred Humanity. Following closely the New Testament record, he unfolds the character and life of Christ, His prayer, His preaching and His redeeming work and shows how through Him, Son of God and Son of man, and in the Holy Ghost, we are united to the Father. The Man Christ is the first-born among the brethren, the new Adam who, holy and unspotted by sin, reconciles a lost humanity to God.

The third chapter, entitled *Through Christ our Lord*, is one which should be read both extensively and intensively. It aims at correcting an error which good Catholics sometimes fall into of isolating the different articles of the creed as if they were broken fragments which have only an external relation to one another. Our religion is not mechanical but organic. Apparently complex to the spectator from without, the Faith is to those who *live* it a simple unity : it is in fact not a series of formulae or theories, but a Life. Our human nature is in Christ and through the Holy Ghost united with God. The Church is the mystical body of Christ and in the communion with the flesh and blood of Christ which we celebrate in the liturgy we become members of that body of which Christ is the Head and members of one another. 'For we, being many, are one bread, one body, all that partake of one bread.' The Liturgy is presented as the means of rectifying lop-sided devotions and bringing all Christians to live and pray 'through Christ our Lord.'

The most sublime philosophy, says St. Bernard, is to know Jesus Christ : Dr. Adam would urge us to know Him not only in his transcendence and his divinity, but also in his humanity and in his fellowship with us, for as Man He is as truly our Brother as God is our Father.

B.