

BLACKFRIARS

becomes a Christian before he allows himself to stand in judgment with Christ, to let himself be humbled and shamed by the goodness that is set before him. Certainly our common facile charges of mediocre moralism, of anti-mysticism, etc., break down before the evidence that is provided here. And, on the other hand, insofar as it was a false Pharisaism that Christ denounced, it is not for us to insist on being able to verify the abuses, or to find traces thereof.

More scholastically considered, the book has great importance for the study of the bible. It is pleasant to consider that it is necessary to resort to the schools of the Rabbis in order to attain a full understanding of the Scriptures. The service of introduction and interpretation is supplied by the Jewish editors of this book; they have been generously attentive to all the needs of scholarship, and still more generous has been their concern for the cause of charity.

There is scarcely less of charm than of edification in this book, and they do not make separate features. This lovely prayer that God is imagined to pray may be said to comprise the best of *Green Pastures* at a stroke: "May it be my will that my compassion may overcome mine anger, and that it may prevail over my attributes (of justice and judgment), and that I may deal with my children according to the attribute of compassion, and that I may not act towards them according to the strict line of justice."

RICHARD KEHOE, O.P.

SOCIOLOGY

A PERSONALIST MANIFESTO. By Emmanuel Mounier. Trans. from the French by Monks of St. John's Abbey. (Longmans; 7s. 6d.)

We have wasted an enormous amount of valuable time being negativists, being content to do no more than condemn non-Christian attempts to remedy the evils which surround us. This has caused us to be regarded as in alliance with those evils. It has also lost us those who, for want perhaps of a better alternative, turned to the non-Christian solutions. The lead was given us, *Roma locuta est*; but then, in a sense not originally intended, *causa finita est*. There could be nothing more fiercely affirmative than the social encyclicals; but they need to be implemented by an equally affirmative policy on our part.

That affirmation, happily, is not now everywhere lacking. In the realm of action, there is the great collective affirmation of the Christian Workers. In the realm of thought, there are the many efforts being made to think out anew the implications for sociology of the Christian doctrine of man: to think out an

REVIEWS

economic policy which, utilizing the material of to-day, expresses and safeguards the eternal values. One of them, Maritain's *True Humanism*, has already been reviewed in *BLACKFRIARS*; the present book largely complements and reinforces, from a different angle, what was there put forward.

M. Mounier, the founder of *Esprit* and the leader of the personalist movement in France, has grouped together in that movement Catholics, non-Catholic Christians, non-Christians, all united in their affirmation of the value of the human person, and of the primacy of the spiritual, both threatened by Left Wing and Right. The present *Manifesto* is the result of their discussions: "a provisional front of research, and not a rigid framework or a formulary definitely fixed in its minor details." It is a major tragedy that the book, in English at any rate, is difficult to read. One can well believe the editor's remark that "the work of translation was not an easy one"; yet it must be confessed that the result is in places almost unintelligible, and that the whole book would be immeasurably improved by a drastic simplification of language. But it is well worth every effort which the reading of it involves.

Balance is one of its key qualities. The author first discusses liberal-individualism, fascism, marxism; and then proceeds to outline the structure of a personalist system: in private life, economic life, politics, international society; he concludes with a discussion of the methods of personalist action. And throughout he will not be beguiled by any of the extremist views to which too often Christian speculation has been led. As in the first part he will not deny validity wherever—in however substantially false a system—it may be found; so in the *Structures of a Personalist System* he has not allowed reaction from evil to lead him into over-emphasis. Thus, for example, he rejects all the anti-capitalist solutions which are "reactionary in the proper sense of the term"; he rejects equally, in his section on woman, the "inhumanity of the present system, which constrains women of the poorer class to full days of labour and takes them from their homes," the "extreme views of certain marxist conceptions," and an extremist "reactionary 'back to the home' movement for women, which is but pure and systematically applied materialism." So elsewhere. Those who have studied *True Humanism* should nevertheless not neglect this *Manifesto*. There, are the principles and the broad lines of application; here, detailed analysis and discussion of means. Nor is this last the least important. Too much well-intentioned work has been rendered useless and even harmful by an obtuseness about method which is also a lack of humility. "At heart the awakening conscious-

ness of even the most oppressed workers, the sense of the dignity of the human person in its function as worker (which is the essence of their lives) represents an incontestable spiritual progress and is the central spiritual datum of the economic problem. It rejects irremediably every kind of paternalism, that is, every attempt on the part of the ruling classes to improve the worker's conditions from without and from on high, even when the attempt is disinterested . . . The worker will improve himself." The discussion, again, of What we are to do, here and now, is of first importance. This is not meant to be a final programme: it cannot but be a most valuable basis for further discussion, and a lead for action.

GERALD VANN, O.P.

THE PHILANTHROPIC MOTIVE IN CHRISTIANITY. By Frank M. Hník. Translated from the Czech by M. and R. Weatherall. (Blackwell, Oxford; 16s.)

The author of this "Analysis of the Relations between Theology and Social Service" is Reader in Christian Sociology and Ethics in the John Hus Theological Faculty in Prague, and, we are told, in a Foreword by the Principal of Manchester College, "one of the younger leaders of the new and remarkable Czechoslovakian Church," a Church of liberal Christians that in England would be called unitarian. "We understand by Christianity," Dr. Hník declares at the outset, "a collection of organised tendencies to follow Jesus Christ in common, within ecclesiastical aggregations from Apostolic times until the present day." Further in discussing the "good tidings of Jesus Christ," Dr. Hník is satisfied that "Jesus did not even contemplate the creation of a permanent organisation for the furtherance of the religious community of his adherents." From this standpoint we are led through the centuries to the examination and criticism of contemporary Christian ethics, noting that "the post-Apostolic Church did not take sufficiently energetic steps to see if it could gain control of the social and economic situation in harmony with Christ's moral ideal of the realm of God"; that "Thomistic theology has remained as the classical interpretation of Christian doctrines in the Roman Catholic Church; the Lutheran and Calvinistic theologies have remained as the key to Protestantism; Humanitarian theology outlines the situation with regard to doctrine within the Liberal Churches, released in the Christian world from historical dogmatism." For this vast survey Dr. Hník has read widely and his judgments, frequently unfavourable, inevitably unfavourable from the liberal humanitarian position, are always temperately expressed. "The unhealthy element of Catholic intolerance was manifest in the