

EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

FILII IN FILIO. Seldom in our extensive perusal of periodicals do we light upon anything of such permanent value, of such importance or of such sublimity, as the series of three articles which Père Mersch, S.J., concludes in the July number of *LA NOUVELLE REVUE THEOLOGIQUE*. Père Mersch is well known for his profound studies, speculative, historical and practical, on the doctrine of the mystical Body. In these new studies, with the title *Filii in Filio*, he links up that doctrine with the still more primary and fundamental doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity. Redeemed by incorporation and identification with the Son of God made man, Himself constituted a distinct Divine Person solely by His relationship of "filiation" to the Father, we are raised up into the very life of the Trinity, made really sons of the Father and linked to Him by the divine, hypostasised Love of the Father and the Son who is the Holy Ghost. A first article published in May analysed the witness of Scripture and Tradition to this doctrine; a second, in June, expounded the doctrine itself in the light of traditional theology regarding the Trinity and the Incarnation; the third and final article sketches its immense implications for all Catholic dogma, morals, spirituality and life. Impossible here to do more than recommend this magnificent synthesis to our readers, and express the hope that it may be made available in translation and in booklet form.

THE MASS FOR THE MASSES. Public worship as the Common Prayer of the Common People, the spontaneous homage of the community—the *Volksgemeinschaft*—such is the dynamic idea behind the liturgical movement as it is understood especially in Central Europe. Anything, therefore, but a revival of archaic forms at which modern men will be present as spectators of mediæval rites; but a revival only in the sense that it will make social worship be to modern men what it has been to men of past ages. Not a transplantation of Byzantinisms and mediævalisms into an age which has forgotten their meaning, but something which will be expressive of popular and contemporary worship

under contemporary conditions. There is an echo of the idea in Eric Gill's *The Mass for the Masses* in **THE CROSS AND THE PLOUGH**:

The development of our civilisation has brought us to a position very similar to that of ancient Rome. We are surrounded by pagan grandeur and superstition—wars and rumours of wars. We can no longer think of ourselves as the accepted representatives of God. We are again a small minority, with a mission like that of the first Christians.

And these facts make it necessary to reconsider the nature of the liturgy, that is to say, public prayer and worship.

The liturgy must be revived, revived, i.e., made alive again. . . . The divorce between the clergy and the people, between the people and the altar, has become as wide as the distinction between the artist and the factory hand. . . .

It is no business of mine to describe how Christian ritual has developed, to describe how churches grew longer and longer and how altars became more and more elaborate and withdrawn from the people. The thing happened. The question for us is not how or why, but what we are going to do about it. It seems clear that just as Christianity itself must become again a religion of the people, the common people, the masses, so Christian worship must follow suit. . . .

It is possible that circumstances may make another emphasis more desirable and more imperative. And just as at the beginning of our era God Himself saw fit to come and dwell among men as one of themselves, as a member of the working class, as a "worker" in fact, and by His action supplanted, so to say, the whole caboodle of pharisaical ceremonies and mystagogism, so in our time we must again bring God among men.

There was a pagan world; *here* is a pagan world. Our problems are the same; and without making any sort of accusation against the clergy of to-day, it is clear that religion has lost its hold on the people, it has become to the workers a kind of magic, a thing apart, a thing having little or nothing to do with them. Christ the workman is forgotten; He is lost, or at least hidden, and that not simply sacramentally but by the overgrowth of ritual and furniture; and in our churches these facts are symbolised by this architectural disposition of our sanctuaries. . . .

One thing only matters, Christ gave Himself; that is the fact of Christianity, the key note—sacrifice, not worldly riches, sacrifice, not worldly prestige, success or complacency. He came not to make the poor rich and the rich richer, but to make the rich poor for His sake and the poor holy.

All these things are things are figured by the altar—the altar

not *at* which something is done, something seen at the end of a vista; but the altar on which something is offered and offered in the midst of our acclamation—"Blessed is he that cometh. . ."

Like many Continentals, Gill sees a remedy in bringing the altar down again among the people: and not only a remedy, but *the* remedy. Perhaps things are not quite so simple. The sense of mystery should be an essential ingredient of public worship; but there is a real danger that its paraphernalia may degenerate into a meaningless hocus-pocus. Familiarity is also an essential ingredient; but unbalanced by the sense of mystery it leads to contempt. Fr. Conrad Pepler, O.P., in THE DOWANHILL COLLEGE MAGAZINE strikes the balance:

The worship enjoined by the Christian religion will be at once the most usual and the most unusual act of our lives. It is necessarily the most usual since worship of God is the primary and most necessary of all our activities. In his everyday life man has to be subject to divine authority, and he must needs subject himself consciously to that authority at frequent intervals in order to maintain this attitude towards the Creator. Worship is therefore a constant necessity, implied in every act, but expressed consciously at frequent and suitable moments, at best once a day. In this sense worship is a commonplace and the liturgy of the daily Mass and Office in the Church gives apt expression to the instinct for ceremonial in these cases. It is as simple as the rubrics of handshake and farewell and as easily learnt as they. The music of the liturgy is the easiest and the "plainest" as the very name of Plain Chant suggests, so that the most rustic peasant may take his part in the celebration of the liturgy after only a short preparation. All the actions, the bowings, and turnings, the genuflections and movements of the hands, are of an elementary nature. Even the language, though unknown to so many to-day, is nevertheless the most universal language. The liturgy is thus within easy reach of every man and well suited to daily performance, so that formal expression may be given by each individual to his commonest, or at least to what should be his commonest state of soul.

The commonest state of soul does not here imply the meanest, but on the contrary it is also the most sublime, and the liturgy fulfils the desire for ceremony in that which is greatest and most important in life. Worship should not only be the daily act of every man, but also his most noble and important act, since God is the supreme goal of all his actions. In this matter Christ

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has given to His Church a unique opportunity of offering the greatest possible worship and praise to the Godhead by means of the commonest things of life. In the simple liturgy of the Church using the most universal means of life, bread and wine, lies concealed from the eye of the unbeliever the unique act of sacrifice in which the highest of all creatures, united indissolubly to the Godhead, is at once the Offerer and the Offering. No man could make a more noble or more reverential act, and this act is placed within the capabilities of the meanest human intelligence. It is there in the daily Mass to be shared by one and all, giving expression in formalised manner to an emotion far beyond the most poignant and personal tragedy or the happiest personal joy. One single ceremony fulfils this double function of expressing the commonest and the most sublime movements of the soul.

MARITAIN. A news-item of considerable significance has, so far as we are aware, passed unnoticed in the English press.¹ We are indebted for it to **TEMPS PRESENT** (1.7.38):

We learn that in a speech delivered recently at Bilbao, Señor Serrano Suner, General Franco's Minister of the Interior, launched an attack of rare violence against "Maritain and his friends, Mauriac and all the contributors to the press that is our enemy." He further declared that Jacques Maritain, as well as our excellent confrère *La Croix*, was the most dangerous enemy of General Franco.

Extracts from the speech as reported by **LA GACETA REGIONAL** of Salamanca follow:

I would mention more especially Maritain, the president of the Committee for Civil and Religious Peace in Spain, that convert Jew who perpetrates the infamy of shouting on the housetops the lie of Franco's massacres, and commits the colossal stupidity of maintaining the legitimacy of the Barcelona government. And *La Croix*, a periodical which has to-day turned pacifist and is as such our enemy.

Maritain is a legalist. Maritain is against us; he is for legitimacy: for the legitimacy of the government of Barcelona. In the name of the 400,000 of our brothers, martyred by the enemies of God, I despise him, and I refuse to embark on the subject of the legitimacy of the government of Barcelona.

The Spain which has rendered to the Church of Christ the

¹ Some account has since been published by *The Catholic Herald* (15.7.38), together with an irenic comment by Michael de la Bedoyère.

great service of struggling against the Protestant heresy, undertakes the same service again to-day before the whole world. In face of that, what does the wisdom of Jacques Maritain matter to us? The *sagesse* of Maritain has an accent that recalls that of the Sages of Israel, and has the spurious manner of the Jewish democracies. We know that he is going to receive, or already receives, the homage of Lodges and the Synagogues. We have the right to question the sincerity of his conversion, and before the Catholic world we denounce this terrible menace of treason.

TEMPS PRESENT comments:

We feel obliged to reproduce, for the edification of our readers, these passages from an official speech of a minister of the Burgos government. Señor Serrano Suner, who doubtless regrets that the butchers of the Spanish Inquisition cannot operate against those whom he calls his enemies, ought to improve his sources of information. He would learn that by such excesses he betrays his own cause, and that there are men whom one cannot insult without bringing dishonour on oneself. He would learn that Jacques Maritain is not a Jew; that he has not yet said a word regarding the legitimacy of the Barcelona government (the only question he has raised is whether an insurrection against the *established* power is licit when it brings greater evils than it seeks to destroy); he would learn that not only Communism but Racism and Hitlerism have been condemned by the Church, and that a speech which invokes Catholicism gains nothing by being pronounced with a Hitlerian accent. And he would learn, finally, that to denounce so impartial and moderate a journal as *La Croix* as an accomplice of Moscow, and to denounce Catholics like Maritain and his friends for *treason*, because they advocate a peace of conciliation, suggests a conscience which is very little sure of itself, and in any case reveals a state of mind which it would have been preferable not to have exposed to the public.

Interviewed, Maritain himself was more moderate:

These calumnies judge those who utter them. For my part, they make me feel to what extent I was right to say what I did say about the ideology of the "holy war," and to do what I have done for peace in Spain. They also suggest that public opinion and the simple affirmation of truth are more efficacious than is sometimes supposed. This attack certainly will not deflect us from the line of "positive impartiality"—to use the term of our friends of *The Commonwealth*—which we have adopted. We are vividly aware of the crimes of the civil war, no matter by which

side they are perpetrated, and we know that holy things ought not to be entangled with the combative passions of men, and that it is a Christian duty to labour to make *peace*—even between warring brothers . . .

Mauriac commented more extensively in *LE FIGARO* (30.6.38): A few extracts *à titre documentaire* must suffice. After relating that his first reaction in July 1936 was *en homme de droite*, progressively disillusioned by subsequent events, he continues:

What decided our attitude was the claim of the generals to wage a holy war, to be the soldiers of Christ. Here, please try to understand us. Amiable confrères have written pleasantly that perhaps I regretted that there had not been more than 15,000 priests massacred, and that perhaps I did not find that enough. Please, let us be serious. The sacrileges and the crimes committed by armed and infuriated masses, following on a repressed military insurrection, are of an unbearable horror. We say only that the slaughters committed by Moors decorated with Sacred Heart badges, the systematic "purges," the corpses of women and children left behind by the German and Italian aviators in the service of a Catholic leader who calls himself a soldier of Christ—we say that all these things constitute *another kind of horror*, with which you (*Franquistas*) are entitled to be less impressed than we are. But it is not our fault if the consequences be more fearful for the cause which for all of us should be above all others: the cause of the Kingdom of God on earth.

I would beg the Minister for the Interior to understand that we do not speak or act as partisans. As Christians, we do not presume to judge the reasons which induced certain of our brothers in Spain to take up arms against a government which they deemed unjust. We know that they could not foresee all the terrifying consequences of their act. We understand that the Episcopate and the clergy had difficulty to control a conflict in which they found themselves so tragically involved. But the terrible fact remains that henceforth for millions of Spaniards Christianity and fascism will henceforward be inextricably associated and that hatred for the one will necessarily involve them in hatred for the other . . .

I would beg of those readers who have judged us severely to understand the reasons which have induced French Catholics—perhaps more than others—to fear any compromise of the cause of Christ with that of parties. Since the Great War there has come about in Catholic France an event of immense significance. The efforts of "social Catholics," the initiatives of a magnificent

episcopate, the devotion of one of the finest body of clergy the world has ever known, have borne their fruit. There is a Catholic revival of the workers, there is a Catholic syndicalism, there is the J.O.C. . . . It is impossible to describe all the workings of Grace in contemporary France . . .

I would that the Minister of Salamanca would try to understand us. This is not the time in which the efforts of generations of Christians, their humble and heroic devotion, can be brought to nought: this is not the time in which we can permit the Gospel to be compromised. We do not judge you or condemn you because the terrible law of war has led you to such "purges" as Bernanos describes in his immortal book, to these bombardments of open towns, to this monstrous alliance with racism, which is an enemy of the Church as fearful and as virulent as Communism. But we do feel responsible towards our own faithful people whom we are not free to deceive. Jacques Maritain, in setting himself up with all the force of his dialectic and all the fire of his charity against this claim to wage a "holy war" has rendered to the Catholic Church a service whose value may be measured by the fury it has aroused.

We do not believe ourselves to be infallible. But we shall not cease to affirm what we believe to be true, especially at this time when the civil war seems to be drawing to its close. For it is then, when all seems to be at an end, that the undisputed reign of force may begin. And force, which *utilises* the Church, is the greatest misery that can weigh on a Christian people.

CRITIQUE. The campaign against Maritain, Mauriac and their friends has been carried on with such vigour and virulence in some sections of the English Catholic press, that the reproduction of these statements seems due to them in justice; a reproduction which does not indicate our own unqualified association. For ourselves we cannot but regret that so many quite distinct issues have been allowed to become confused in the heat of the controversy. It is, we think, a pity that our French friends have allowed their main position to become obscured by its association with the veracity of *particular* atrocity stories alleged against General Franco's supporters. Nor is it generally understood that while Maritain has fought uncompromisingly against the theory of a *holy* war, he has only *queried* the *legitimacy* of the insurrection. Moreover, to maintain that the situation in July 1936 fully justified—and even neces-

sitated—insurrection (and the evidence that it was morally unavoidable seems to us pretty overwhelming) is not necessarily to exculpate all but Leftists from all responsibility for creating that situation, still less is it to justify the fashion in which the war has been waged, the means and allies employed, or to maintain that it ought not to be concluded except by a crushing victory which repudiates the very suggestion of conciliation or mediation. These are distinct questions, and should not be confused. Those who know their Spain ought not to take “holy war” rhetoric very seriously—we ourselves well remember, at a military requiem in a Spanish garrison town, an impassioned sermon proclaiming a holy war against the Moorish infidels during the Riff campaign. The trouble began when the rhetoric was interpreted literally. It is one thing to maintain that Spanish Catholics, as *Spanish* Catholics, have become bound by a tragic necessity to wage a *just* war for the preservation of their religion and their nation; it is quite another thing to maintain that their war is a *holy* war which involves the Church at large and the Catholics of all nations. On the first point, the appointed pastors of the Spanish Church have declared themselves unequivocally; the second lies outside the competence of any local hierarchy, nor have the Spanish bishops made such a declaration. It is the maintenance of this position by unauthorised propagandists—a position fraught with immeasurable danger not only for the Church in France, but to the Church at large—against which Maritain and his friends have directed themselves more particularly. Critics have found it only too easy to evade Maritain’s main contentions by concentrating attention, with varying degrees of fairness and unfairness, on secondary issues. Those main contentions are: (1) “that the present is a decisive moment in the history of Christendom, and that its life depends upon an absolute refusal to compromise with the morality of totalitarianism” (we quote Middleton Murry’s paraphrase of Maritain in the current CRITERION); (2) that the Spanish *insurrection*, even though justified given the lamentable circumstances which had been allowed to arise, and even though necessarily involving the *Spanish* Church, is not a holy war which involves, let alone is waged by, the whole

Catholic Church; (3) that Christian ends can be accomplished only by Christian means: "La chrétienté se refera par des moyens chrétiens, ou elle se défera complètement"; (4) that it is incumbent on *all* Christians to labour for *real* peace in Spain; i.e. for a pacification which will not involve a force-imposed tyranny of one section of the people over another, more especially if that force and tyranny are likely to be exercised in the name of Christianity and the Catholic Church. These contentions may be disputable; but at least they should be disputed and not obscured or confused. And, whatever be the truth about Badajoz and Guernica, the question of *means*, on which Maritain has rightly laid so much emphasis, is paramount. As Abbé Jacques Leclercq, himself a convinced supporter of General Franco, has written at the conclusion of a balanced study of the ethics of aerial bombardment in LA CITE CHRETIENNE:

From the Catholic standpoint, one of the saddest things about the war in Spain has been the fact that, on the side where Catholics have been able to exercise their influence, that influence has not shown itself by a humanisation of the war. We may not acquiesce in this attitude. We have the duty to require of our own people, of our fellow Catholics, that their influence should make itself felt. Moreover, since the vast majority of Catholics are in the Nationalist camp, and since the Nationalist government advertises its sympathy with the Church, it is our duty to demand of the Nationalists respect for the elementary rules of humanity to the extent that they profess the solidarity of their movement with the Church.

Even in wartime, we must continue to love *all* men; to see in all men our brothers, to will evil to none, not to take delight in the miseries of a single person. War, it is true, consists precisely in inflicting evils on the enemy; but this must be the *necessary* evil, nothing more. War does not absolve us from the obligations of charity.

CONTEMPORANEA. CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT (July): Strong articles on *Armaments and Social Justice* and *Workers without Security*.

CHRISTIAN FRONT (July): *War Makers*: an editorial with a punch—at Communists, Safe-for-democrats and a Monsignore.

CLERGY REVIEW (July): *The Principles and Methods of the J.O.C.* outlined by Dom Columba Elwes.

COMMONWEAL (July 1): Rural Life Number.

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HOCHLAND (July): A fine study—and defence—of Karl Adam by Dr. Franz Hofmann.

HOWARDIAN: The idea of *An Aquinas Society* explained by Fr. Henry St. John, O.P.

JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF ARTS (June 17): *Work and Culture*: Eric Gill tells the R.A.

MONTH (July): Good sketches of *St. Andrew of Bobola* of Poland by Fr. John Murray, S.J., and of *St. Vladimir* of Russia by Countess Bennigsen.

SCHOENERE ZUKUNFT (June 26): Précis of an important study by P. Zeiger, S.J., of recent profound developments and changes in moral theology, fulfilling but not destroying the legalist-casuist "Confessional-morals" of latter centuries in favour of a deeper and more comprehensive moral theology closely linked to dogma and social realities.

VIE INTELLECTUELLE (June 25): *Rembrandt and Reunion*, or "Catholic ecumenicism" through art-criticism: Mr. Visser't Hooft and Père Régamey, O.P., open up new avenues of approach.

PENGUIN.

REVIEWS

FAITH AND PRACTICE

THE FAITH IN PRACTICE. By Philip Hughes. (Longmans; 5s.)

There is no lack of spiritual literature in English dealing with Catholic faith or Catholic morals; yet there is still an urgent need for books based upon the explicit and purposeful recognition of the fact that Catholic faith is not just a theory or even a mere statement of objective supernatural truth, but a vital, organic unity, a practical plan for human living; for the only truly Catholic faith is Catholic faith in practice. So many sincerely good and "practising" Catholics appear to have a narrow vision of Catholic life, that is to say of the wholly supernaturalised human life that they are invited to lead; they tend to concern themselves entirely disproportionately with particular and sometimes petty details while they lose sight of, perhaps have never even glimpsed, the astounding profundity and largeness of the Divine Economy in respect of human kind, its essential unity and purpose. They are not necessarily to blame for this deficiency; perhaps we who should teach them by word and pen have failed to keep the main issue before their eyes. At any rate we have good reason to welcome a practical effort, like that of Fr. Hughes, to supply what is undoubtedly wanting.