

CORRESPONDENCE

"VICARIOUS SACRIFICE"

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS,

Sir,—The "Theological Eye" which you claim in your April *Extracts and Comments* has failed you in your criticism of my article "Vicarious Sacrifice."

You will agree that the subject I dealt with was that a suggestion exists to "Christianise" Industrialism without any attempt to modify the essential affront to human dignity involved in mass-production work, and that certain groups of young Catholic workers are being encouraged to accept the present industrial basis as a species of self-immolation. Such was my thesis right or wrong. It was developed in terms, and with reservations as to the necessity for due caution in the reaction, which you are careful not to quote.

You retort, after a highly offensive introductory phrase, with a passage from *Divini Redemptoris*. In this passage the Pope is speaking of the mission of all "Catholic working men, young and old," to play their part in the reconciliation to the Church of their strayed comrades. The reference to "sacrifices" in mines and factories bears only on this, and may reasonably be taken to mean the scoffing, contempt or persecution which this process may provoke. Certainly it has no possible reference to the quality of Industrialised work as such, for this is not in question in any part of the passage.

That is, the Pope is talking of something quite different from the matter of my own article.

I refrain from expressing any opinion on the quality of this kind of controversy, in the conviction that on reflection you will withdraw willingly from so untenable a position. For the same reason, I will not make a very easy point arising from your final quotation.

Yours faithfully,

H. ROBBINS.

PENGUIN REPLIES

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS,

Sir,—The issues raised by the article "Vicarious Sacrifice" and by Mr. Robbins' letter are of such moment, and are a source of such perplexity and personal anxiety to many at the present time, that I would beg to take very full advantage of the opportunity you kindly offer for further comment.