

CORRESPONDENCE
THE LAYMAN AND SOCIETY

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS

SIR,—In the December (1934) issue of BLACKFRIARS, Dr. H. C. E. Zacharias expressed his views on *The Layman and Society* with a clearness and precision for which I should like first of all to thank him. I should not have anything else to say concerning his views on this question if Dr. Zacharias had given them as being only his own. But unfortunately, amongst the Catholic organisations quoted as giving those ideas bodily form, he was bold enough to mention (p. 812) the *Ad Lucem* Movement of Lille. As a vice-president of *Ad Lucem*, and in full agreement with its chaplain, Father R. Prévost, I want to make it quite clear that our society for the preparation of Catholic lay missionaries considers itself to be one of the many branches of Catholic Action in France. It never was anything else, nor ever will be. So far as I personally am concerned, I should not remain connected with it one day longer if its members were to consider themselves as being neither “religious” nor “Catholic Actionists”; in point of fact they are both. What the so-called *Laïcate* of Dr. Zacharias is going to be I am not prepared to say; the only thing I am sure of is that *Ad Lucem* has nothing to do with it. Its members are not monks nor priests; they have a full right to found a Catholic family, and they have even a duty to attend to their personal advancement. The only thing we ask them to do is to use what personal influence they may later acquire in their own profession for the benefit of the Church in missionary countries. The reference to *Ad Lucem*, made by Dr. Zacharias in your issue of December last, is therefore a completely mistaken one and I feel it my duty to make this perfectly clear to your readers.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

ETIENNE GILSON.

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Vice-President of *Ad Lucem*.

THE BUILDING OF A CHURCH

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS

SIR,—As your most valuable review is also interested in matters liturgical (as was its founder, Fr. Bede Jarrett, whose memory will ever last), would you be kind enough to open your columns to the following observations about Fr. Williamson's book, which you reviewed in your December number?

Without discussing several general questions which your re-

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viewer has already dealt with, such as reputing all past styles dead, I would like to deal with some serious mistakes which have direct reference to the practical execution of ceremonial and of the laws of the Church, so that people concerned should not be led astray.

(1) The author takes for granted that a foundation stone is a small portable stone put inside another; he excludes the possibility of a fine large foundation stone, the "lapis angularis" of the Roman Pontifical.

(2) He tells us "en passant" that the organ should be put over the entrance door, thus separating completely the celebrant, his ministers and the choir, from the schola; and the church he describes is to seat 2,000 people. *Sine commentariis*.

(3) On page 90 he says "he knows many liturgical purists dislike the gradine, but he wants one or two." Although he constantly quotes St. Charles, he apparently forgets that St. Charles only wanted one low removable gradine and that on side altars only. (See *Actorum Eccle. Mediolanensis*, ed. A. Ratti, H.H. the Pope Pius XI, pars. iv, cal. 1343.)

It might be argued that liturgical purists think six candlesticks sufficient, as the Pope himself has only seven when he says Mass, and for that no gradine at all is necessary, but one low gradine is often accepted by them. What they do not want is unnecessary things and gradines that have no "raison d'être except in so much as they are a temptation to sacristans to litter them with a variety of things, as empty shelves look bad.

(4) On page 92, Fr. Williamson is quite wrong about the five crosses that are to be put on the mensa, when he says the sepulchre should be in the centre, also that the cross on the sepulchre is the centre-cross of the mensa. It suffices to go over the Rite of consecration of altars to see what a mistake this is (p. 103).

(5) As to what the author says about Benediction, I think no one, least of all liturgical purists, likes to see a priest climbing steps carrying the Blessed Sacrament. The author is quite right to say that it is pedantic not to want to give a liturgical place to Benediction. It seems to me that what "purists" want is to put Benediction in its proper place, to make it a sort of "sacrificium vespertinum," as Fr. Faber so well named it, and not a sort of solemn complement of the Mass. Regarding Benediction, the author also thinks it cannot be given without a throne. But the S.C.R. has declared that a canopy (or throne) is required for solemn expositions, for the Forty Hours or the like, not for a solemn Benediction. After all, the holiest and best place to put the ostensorium is the consecrated mensa itself, where the sacrifice is offered. In Westminster Cathedral, perhaps the most

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liturgical church in the world, but for one or two details, the ostensorium is placed on the mensa, when Benediction is given at the main altar.

(6) Fr. Williamson says that "the erection of ambones on either side has been universally abandoned." Yet it would be easy to check up a list of modern churches in Europe and America where ambones have been used with great success.

The author seems to rely only on St. Charles, who was a liturgical purist, if ever there was any, and on his own experience. It is always dangerous, however, to write a one-point-of-view book. The marvellous publications of the Liturgical Arts Society, as well as different modern works on church building and church accessories, seem quite non-existent to Fr. Williamson. In "Liturgical Arts" for instance he would have found a whole number with scholarly articles about concrete churches, an interesting subject to which he devotes only three paragraphs.

To build a church according to the sane principles of liturgical law and practice contributes greatly to your so expressive Dominican motto: "Laudare, benedicere, praedicare."

Very sincerely yours in Domino,

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REFLECTIONS ON REUNION

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS

SIR,—In view of Fr. White's misgivings over my Reflections on Reunion, I beg leave to offer the following comments on his observations.

(1) It is difficult to see how "reunion" can be read into the Canon of the Mass, since "the term *reunion* does not exist in reputable Latin." Moreover this interpretation of the Latin text is in conflict with history, with the liturgical spirit and with ecclesiastical discipline. The Church is not accustomed to pray liturgically for persons out of visible communion with her; even a non-Catholic sovereign of manifestly Christian life is no exception to this rule. But the Church does pray, outside the liturgy, for the Conversion of England and the average Catholic needs not to be convinced by laboured argument of his duty in this regard.

(2) Insistence that Baptism alone unites the baptized to the Church tends to confirm many non-Catholics in their error that by Baptism they are united not only to the invisible Church but also to the visible church of which they are a part. The Report of the Lambeth Conference expresses this error almost in the form