

## BLACKFRIARS

perfect had it attempted such a synthesis, for it would have guided its readers to a complete Christ-life, and one more adapted to present needs.

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

CHRISTIANITY AND RACE. By Dr. Johannes Pinsk. Translated by C. M. R. Bonacina. (Essays in Order, New Series No. 2.) (Sheed & Ward; 2/6.)

How be at once 100 per cent. Roman Catholic Christian and 100 per cent. Nordic Aryan German? This, the overwhelming problem of the race-proud Catholic in the Third Reich, is the subject of Dr. Pinsk's startling essay. Not, it might be thought, a problem of such concern in English-speaking countries as to justify translation. Yet, though we have no Aryan fanatics to reproach us incessantly with the Jewishness of Jesus and the Latinity of Catholicism, the problem of reconciling fidelity to one's own race, blood and culture with fidelity to a Church which, however Catholic, is thoroughly Latin in its outlook, constitution, language and liturgy is one which is felt in one way or another by all non-Latin Catholics.

Dr. Pinsk's main thesis is that "As the body of Christ was that of a Jewish man, so is the bodily manifestation of the Spirit of Christ in the Church that of the Roman-Hellenistic culture." This thesis, though strangely worded, contains much pertinent truth. It is historic fact that the Son of God assumed a particular (and not a universal) human nature of a Jewish Mother, and that His Church has been intimately bound up in the course of her history with Graeco-Roman culture, to which she has given much and from which she has received much. But Dr. Pinsk's approach is as inadmissible as it is fantastic. His Christology comes at times dangerously near to Docetism, Monophysism and Apollinarianism alternately, and he has failed entirely to mark the world of difference between the hypostatic union of human nature to the Son of God and the *unio mystica et accidentalis* which binds the members of the mystical Body. Reviewers in Germany have already drawn attention to these grave defects, and it is to be regretted that they have been allowed to appear unaltered in the translation.

When the author leaves theology to describe the rôle of the Nordic in the Church and the reciprocal function of Catholicism as corrective to the inherent defects of *Germanismus*, he is more instructive. *Deutsch heisst protestantisch*: the charge is not without truth, but the inborn *Eigenmächtigkeit* and "protestantism" of the Germanic character have their own specific and vital contribution to make to the life of the universal Church. The English reader will be inclined to smile—or yawn—at the Herr Doktor's humourless effort to extract the quintessence of the

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German soul, but if he reads between the lines he will find much that will be helpful to all who are oppressed by some form or other of the problems imposed on the non-Latin in the Church which is at once Catholic and Roman.

There is much incidental wisdom, particularly regarding the relationship of Christianity to the Hellenic mysteries: the author has done well to lay the spectre of syncretism in this context. Excellent, too, is his review of the contribution which the Northern peoples have made to historic Catholicism. "The Germans constitute the element of perpetual unrest in the Church," yet for that very reason "the entrance of the Germanic peoples evokes as its first result a splendid flowering time of the Roman Church." The last chapter on *Fulfilment of the German Nation through Fulfilment in the Church* is as splendid as it is courageous. But, in the improbable event of a second edition being called for, the mushy theology in the earlier pages should be drastically revised.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

## HAGIOGRAPHY

Attitudes towards saints' lives may be various and varying with a diversity which exemplifies the happy freedom of the Catholic mind. Thus there is an approach marked by a pre-occupation for unadorned, well-attested historical facts, by an impatience of legendary excrescence, a *Bollandist* approach; and in this *genre* is *LA GESTE DES MARTYRS* of Fr. P. Hanozin, S.J. (Desclée de Brouwer, 12 frs.)—translations of authentic *Acta* of the first three centuries, eloquent in simplicity. And the May volume of BUTLER'S LIVES OF THE SAINTS, published by Fr. H. Thurston, S.J., in collaboration with Miss Norah Leeson (Burns Oates; 7/6) is as scholarly as other volumes in this series; but with the re-writing of old and the insertion of new biographies Alban Butler is definitely relegated to an ancestral pedestal.

Written in quite a different strain is *PERE LAMY*, by Comte Paul Biver, with an introduction by Jacques Maritain (Burns Oates; 5/-)—notes of conversations with a saintly parish priest working in well-nigh Godless Parisian *banlieue*; numerous visions of Our Lady, converse with angels and saints—all set down with a sublime unconcern about the raised eyebrows of more "critical" hagiographers. Be that as it may, it is good to read that Père Lamy had at heart the conversion of England and the reconciliation of Anglicans. Full too "of the simplicity, piety, and devotion which is the spirit of the Ages of Faith" are the *LITTLE FLOWERS OF ST. ANTONY OF PADUA*, from a fifteenth century version of the *Liber Miraculorum*, edited by P. L. Guidaldi, O.M.Conv., and admirably translated by Canon George Smith (Burns Oates; 2/6).