

BLACKFRIARS

contain the whole of acquired truth, and progress is demanded whenever new objects or methods of knowledge are discovered, or a thinker penetrates beyond the powers of his predecessors. The *philosophia perennis* will be the living foundation of tradition on which to build. It is doubtful whether any philosopher has cut completely loose from tradition; even where he leaves it he enriches it by his opposition.

Inevitably there must be points which we cannot praise. That the author seems to us to overestimate Newton's influence on Kant, that he almost ignores the existence of Logistic, are examples. His references to St. Thomas are unsatisfying, though as a rule his footnotes are valuable; his cross-references to other sections of his essay are particularly helpful. An introduction should indicate where to seek material for further study, and Professor Meyer has done this very fully; he has also put the student on the way to study profitably.

QUENTIN JOHNSTON, O.P.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

PEACE AND THE CLERGY. By a German Priest. Translated by Conrad M. R. Bonacina. (Sheed & Ward; 5/-.)

"The teaching of moral theology in regard to war," Cardinal Faulhaber has said, "will speak a new language. It will remain true to its old principles, but in regard to the permissibility of war it will take account of the new facts." The Pope, taking account of the new facts, has condemned modern war as a "monstrous crime" and "mass murder." Difficult to get round these terms. Moral theology has to remember that, to take one point only, "it is absolutely certain that actual war to-day is directed consciously and *directa intentione*, and so not *per accidens*, also against the civil population" (p. 156)—a thing which it has always condemned as immoral. What are we Catholics doing about it? "If the Churches forbid war," said the Minister of War in Wilson's Cabinet, "the Governments cannot carry it on" (p. 120). The Pope in calling it murder has forbidden it; but we have not followed his lead. This is sometimes said to be due to the fact that "when Catholics are in the minority . . . there frequently prevails a positively unworthy, almost pusillanimous fear of being regarded as insufficiently 'national'" (p. 108). If this is so, it is ill-considered as well as unworthy. For it is the idea that the clergy are militarist, not that they are pacifist, which has helped to bring about what the Pope has described as "the greatest scandal of the nineteenth century": the fact that the "Church has lost the working classes." "The proletariat feel their existence

REVIEWS

threatened by the sacrifices which capitalism and militarism impose upon them, and what embitters them more than anything is the idea they have that the Church is in league with these powers" (p. 138). In a letter to the German Fellowship of Reconciliation, quoted in this book, a writer describes how the people "have had to witness, if not to endure in their own persons, any amount of undeserved misery, a want and distress in face of which the Church and the State have always failed them. The Church for the most part only offers phrases and exhortations, references to a life beyond, while her representatives in the vast majority of cases give loyal support to capitalism which cares nothing for the life beyond." This is the reason why "these people, whose whole life is a heaven-crying indictment of all the institutions of a complacent bourgeois society, reject with an *indescribable hate*—let us call it by its true name—not only the Church but everything that has anything to do with religion. The people are against war, are in favour of promoting a good understanding between nations, and similar efforts on the part of Socialist bodies have received considerable support from them, but their mistrust of bourgeois or for that matter religious organizations is insuperable" (pp. 132-3). Facts like these are not pleasant; but no more urgent duty confronts us to-day than that of facing them and remedying the situation they describe. It is the duty of all Catholics, and of the clergy in particular (to whom therefore this book is primarily but by no means exclusively addressed), to follow the lead of the Pope, to "speak a new language" in regard to war, to "establish or encourage Catholic Peace groups," to pray and to work for peace. On the Continent there are international organizations offering up the Mass every month for peace (pp. 158 sqq.); it is sad that we in England should be behindhand in this respect. There is a special duty incumbent on those concerned with the education of the young to foster a Christian attitude towards other nations and avoid the false nationalism which begets war (pp. 83 sqq.). There is a special duty incumbent upon journalists to remember the words of Benedict XV and to avoid "intemperance and bitterness of language," the atrocity-mongering and scare-mongering which lead to war. There is the duty incumbent upon all of us to work for peace in every way we can: the argument of this book, like that of Father Stratmann's *The Church and War* and similar studies, is one which we cannot allow ourselves to neglect. The need for Catholic action in this respect is paramount. We may be tempted to regard the situation as hopeless and to relapse into the inactivity of despair; but Christianity forbids us to do so, for it commands us to believe that "the power of grace is stronger than the power of sin," that Christ is stronger than Satan.

GERALD VANN, O.P.