

BLACKFRIARS

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THE ENCYCLICAL

THE great Encyclical on the Mystical Body was given at Rome more than ten months ago. But men have been too occupied with the problems of disunity among nations to pay much attention to the secret of a universal, i.e. catholic, unity. They are anxious that the Pope should condemn Germans or Italians for participation in an unjust war, and so add to the confusion and disunity; they pay no heed when the Pope in fact performs his first duty, and performs it so opportunely and with such perfection. The Holy Father has pointed to the basis of the Christian way of unity, when to have condemned persons or policies would have been to join his voice to the babel of cries of hate and propaganda. Few have listened, therefore, to this positive teaching on the unity of the Body of Christ; had he taken the other course many would have lent an ear, but they would have confused the papal voice with the voices of presidents, prime ministers, and dictators in the slanging match which is necessary to wip up the fighting spirit.

Through this positive teaching on the basis of real unity and peace, the Holy Father has also encouraged and adjusted some of the principal means of obtaining union within the Church, in particular that of the Liturgical Movement. It is clear from a letter to the Bishop of Mainz, written at the beginning of this year but, so far, only known in part in this country, that Pius XII intended by his encyclical to adjust some disorders in the movement by grounding it more thoroughly in its central doctrine. The encyclical should in fact be regarded as the Charter of the Liturgical Movement. The movement has gathered considerable momentum in this country as well as in Germany; it possesses all the most effective powers of uniting or re-uniting mankind round the Cross of Christ, renewed on the Altars of the Church; so that the highest authority was needed to set it on a firm foundation.

From this letter to the Bishop of Mainz we learn that the 'liturgical question' is still under careful consideration at Rome ('the question is being dealt with here in a calm and broad minded manner by the cardinals charged with its clarification'), but that some of the main points had professedly been dealt with in the encyclical. The Pope then emphasises three of the main warnings implicit in *Mystici Corporis*: '(1) That the liturgical movement does not, by a one-sided emphasis on their psychological effect, push into the background the meaning of, and the esteem for, the grace-giving effect of the Sacred Mysteries; (2) that the consciousness of the fundamental significance of the eternal truths and the struggle of the individual against sin, the striving of the individual for virtue and holiness are not marred by exaggeration of the liturgical side; (3) finally, that alongside the task in the liturgical sphere other tasks are not overlooked.' These words are of the gravest importance and should not be applied with hypocritical censoriousness to the Catholics in Germany, but taken to heart by ourselves in our search for peace in the unity of Christ's Body.

Finally, we may here suggest a 'Companion to *Mystici Corporis*' which should be acquired by all who wish to follow the Holy Father's positive lead towards union. This is *The Eastern Churches Quarterly*,¹ which has now happily resumed its quarterly appearance after a period of only two issues a year. The problems it deals with are typical of all problems of union; and the peace and unity of Christendom will be achieved to the extent that they are solved.

THE EDITOR.

¹ Single copies, 2s.; annual subscription, 8s.; post free, from Coldwell, 17 Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1.