

BLACKFRIARS

- TABLET (July 2): *Catholicism versus Fascism*: Fr. Hilary Carpenter, O.P., shows their fundamental antagonism; (July 9) Fr. Gerald Vann, O.P., announces the Holy Father's blessing and encouragement to the Union of Prayer for Peace.
- VIE INTELLECTUELLE (June 10): P. Tonneau, O.P., has a fine article on putting the Encyclicals into practice, on the role of Christian liberty and obedience in Catholic Action. Canon Cardyn introduces a terrible document on immoral conditions in factories and on how the J.O.C. is trying to deal with the horror.
- VIE SPIRITUELLE (July) includes several important and valuable articles on Christian unity: on *Unity of Faith: Realism and Formalism* by A.-D. Chenu, O.P.; on *The Unity of the Church and its internal dialectic* by M.-J. Congar, O.P.; on *The Sacrifice of Unity* by A.-M. Rouget, O.P.; on *The Conditions of Unity* by "Apostolus"; on *Cardinal Mercier* by J. Guittou and on *The Abbé Portal* by A. Gratieux. Dom de Chabannes appeals for congregational Mass (sung or dialogue) as the means to real unity among Catholics. PENGUIN.

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HISTORY

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. By Hans Lietzmann. (Ivor Nicholson & Watson; 10/6.)

This is the translation of the first volume of Dr. Lietzmann's new history of the Church, and in its 400 pages the first two centuries of Christian life are compressed sporadically. Its earlier sections deal with the contrast between the religious thought of the Diaspora and of the Palestinian synagogues, the last chapters analyse the final development of Marcionite Faith and the system of Basilides. Throughout it is a history of speculation and of sentiment rather than of action. The reputation of Professor Lietzmann as a scholar, his position as Dr. Harnack's successor at Berlin, his years of personal influence at Bonn and Jena, all gives his conclusions a significance which perhaps otherwise they would not possess. They would seem to represent, authoritatively enough, the present tendencies of opinion among non-Catholic German scholars. It is characteristic that the most important section of the bibliography refers to works published since 1920.

Standpoints of antithetic 19th century schools seem united in a new strange syncretism. Peter is in Rome, but he is still irreconcilably opposed to Pauline Christianity, the Mandaeans have no connection with the Baptist, the Naasenes are probably

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of Iranian origin, Christ works miracles and has four brothers and several sisters. The early history of the Church is created by a triangular conflict between the traditions of the Palestinian apostles, the teaching of the Pauline churches illustrated by the Johannine writings and churches of the ministry of Stephen represented into the second century by the Church of Rome. The conflict found its ending in the slow victory of an emasculated Paulinism. Throughout the technique seems a trifle raw. There is no consistent attempt to convey the complexity of the subjects studied and solutions are emphasised at the expense of problems. Oddly enough the standard of factual accuracy does not seem to be high; in the case of the Corinth synagogue the archaeological evidence is strained beyond bearing (p. 113), the revolt of 65-70 is said to have had no echoes in Galilee (p. 72), and Juvenal is quoted as a contemporary of Hadrian (p. 106).

Granted that this volume has its failings it would be of interest to discover their cause. They are certainly not due to the personality or to the qualifications of its author; the *Kleine Texte* have sufficiently shown Dr. Lietzmann's pre-eminence as a scholar. It seems possible that they are due to his object; the rather grim determination to achieve another short text-book to Church history. For an efficient text-book must be an attempt to compress, to simplify and therefore to deform the real.

Perhaps the most original achievement of modern European civilization has been the new development in scholarship. It has brought with it a fresh realization of that multiplicity and complexity of the finite which to a Thomist is a necessary mirror of the Divine. Through its source criticism it has given us the power to form opinions on historic fact and know they are not certitudes. Through its emphasis on the objective search for the minutely true it might yet bring us back from the facile dogmatism of bias and the long slow wallowings in gutter-apologetic. But modern scholarship may have itself created its Frankenstein monster in text book ideology and technique.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

HISTOIRE DE L'EGLISE: LA PAIX CONSTANTINIENNE A LA MORT DE THEODOSE. By J. R. Palanque, G. Bardy and P. de Labriolle. (Bloud et Gay; 60 frs.)

Two contrasted tendencies still seem apparent in the modern French studies of the early Church. The first is represented by the *Antiquité Chrétienne* of P. Jacquin; monumental in its scope, robust in its conclusions, strictly Tridentine in perspective. The second is represented by the present volume, gracefully tentative with its light sanity and its sense of period and its absence of theological preconception. If P. Jacquin is an heir to Lenain de