

REVIEWS

those presuppositions have been accurately thought out, and whether the interpretation that has been put upon them does not give an unduly biased—and jaundiced—turn to the group's general outlook.

CONTEMPORANEA. CATHOLIC TIMES OF SOUTH AFRICA runs a useful series on *Catholic Action* by Bonaventure Perquin, O.P.

CLERGY REVIEW (June): The case for the establishment of Young Christian Workers presented *ad clerum* by Fr. Bernard Goode.

ECHANGES ET RECHERCHES (May): Fr. P. Doyère on *L'Être collective dans la Cité chrétienne*.

IRENIKON (March-April): P. Congar on *The Ecumenical Significance of the Work of Moehler*.

MONTH (June): *Good and Evil*: Fr. Martindale up-to-the-minute and down-to-brass-tacks on the "amazing duel."

TEMPS PRESENT (June 10): Strong *Fascismes* number.

VIE INTELLECTUELLE (May 25): *Quand les chrétiens s'égorgent* by F. Perroux: an authentically Christian case against indiscriminate conscientious objection.

VIE SPIRITUELLE (June): Several illuminating articles on the presence and indwelling of God in our souls, and of ourselves in Him.

PENGUIN.

REVIEWS

CATHOLIC ACTION

QU'EST-CE QUE LE CATHOLICISME? par le R. P. Sertillanges. (Editions Spes; 4 frs.)

ENTRETIENS SUR L'ESSENCE DU CHRISTIANISME. par P. Bernard, O.P. (Desclée, de Brouwer; 18 frs.)

L'ESSOR. Jean de Courberive. (Editions Spes; 10 frs.)

ENTREVISIONS DU CIEL. par Henri-Pierre Faffin. (Editions de la Cité Chrétienne, Bruxelles; 22.50 B.fr.s.)

Catholic Action is far removed from chattering activism: nor can directors of Catholic Action be satisfied with the hysterical lip-service induced by propaganda. If Catholic Action is to be fruitful it must be based in the supernatural life of "persons now." Hence the insistence by all authentic exponents of the Lay Apostolate on *formation*. Without Sacred Doctrine there can be no true apostolate. Catholic Action is primarily a call to integral Christian life and the end is union with God through Jesus Christ. "En quoi consiste le Bonne Nouvelle évangélique . . . En ceci que l'homme est appelé à nouer avec Dieu des

rapports non pas quelconques, non pas comme ceux, si nobles qu'ils soient, qu'eût pu rêver un Marc-Aurèle et que voudraient reprendre un Jules Simon ou un Harnack. Non. Il est appelé à l'intimité divine. Intimité commencée ici-bas." (Sertillanges) "Entre la création et la Créateur, il n'y a nulle continuité naturelle . . . Si quelque raccord existe . . . il est rigoureusement surnaturel puisque divin." (Faffin.) It is precisely because of the lack of natural continuity between man and God that we dare not, without grossest presumption, neglect the Sacred Doctrine which bridges the gulf between created and uncreated intelligence.

Modernism, religious and otherwise, has driven us Christians back to our foundations. It has led us to a more profoundly interesting knowledge of our Faith. "Dans le Christ, voyez-vous, tout est profond, et dans le christianisme tout doit être poussé a fond. Sans quoi, on ne comprend même pas de quoi il s'agit." (Bernard.) The four books under review all share this concern with foundations. In this sense they all "cater" for the modern mind. They all merit the title of P. Sertillanges' essay: *Qu'est-ce que le Catholicisme?* Reading about the Faith can be, and should be, an exciting experience. The danger is that the experience can be an end in itself. M. de Courberive in his wholly excellent *Méditations Fondamentales* will correct this complacency. "La méditation proprement dite n'est donc qu'un moyen. Quel est son but? Son but, c'est l'union avec Dieu." "La perfection de la vie chrétienne réside essentiellement—quoique non exclusivement—dans l'union avec Dieu par la charité."

Is it sectarian patriotism to see in the Dominican *contemplata aliis tradere* the perfect expression of the kind of action all must aim at to-day? The layman would do well to learn his faith more deeply at the conferences of P. Bernard, O.P., here collected as *Entretiens sur l'essence du Christianisme*. Here he will receive a formation in rich Christocentric doctrine, lucid and compelling. Then, since each of these books is concerned with "le lieu propre et définitif de l'être humain, la terme de sa destinée," we add a much needed book on the theology of Heaven, "une étude, non pas poétique et fantaisiste, mais doctrinale et précise, sur la vie et la béatitude du ciel." We should not shelter behind a polite agnosticism in these matters. St. Thomas indeed spoke of his work as straws in the wind. But until we have tried to satisfy our *fides quaerens intellectum*, we have no right to such humility.

To call for a translation of these books would be defeatist. When English Catholic Action has discovered itself as French Catholic Action has done, similar books will be written because they *have* to be written. We cannot go on for ever admiring other people's efforts.

CEOLFRID HERON, O.P.