

THE HOLY COMMUNION. A Symposium by Various Authors. (S.C.M.; 6s.)

The Eucharist is the central religious act of every Christian religion. Where, therefore, there is diversity in Christianity it will be found to be most disjunctive in regard to the worship concerned with bread and wine. It was a bold and constructive idea of the Editor of the S.C.M. Press, the Rev. Hugh Martin, to gather a group of essays from the main Christian bodies as an attempt towards their knowing each other in the most fundamental aspect of their beliefs. The essayists he invited to contribute were very competent, E. C. Ratcliff and Gerald Vann, O.P., for instance; and the book is consequently valuable for the essays in themselves. But whether the whole contributes towards mutual understanding as is intended will appear to many readers doubtful. Father Vann points out the way that Providence has watched over the development of the Mass, using practical things for symbolic purposes; and then in the Anglican Church we are told of 'Cranmer's genius as a maker of liturgies' which is exhibited in the Book of Common Prayer; the Presbyterians, while showing a great fidelity to Scripture are within that field able to make their liturgies as they go along, making a variety according to nationality and temperament; with the Baptists and Congregationalists it is left still more to the choice of the minister and his people, there being no fixed order; and the Society of Friends or Quakers, whom we find to our surprise also included among the Christians with a Eucharist, have no outward liturgy at all. That is only one element in the Eucharistic worship of God, and yet even that represents such uncompromising differences that the reader might well despair of all movements for re-union. But certainly it is right to understand these fundamental divergencies before setting out to bring Christians together. It is merely foolish to re-unite, or rather attempt to re-unite, on the social platform while blinding our eyes to the fact that it is erected over a vast chasm of difference regarding the fundamentals of Christian life. Christian life is social life but social life springing from the Eucharist. This book then is of value at least in a negative way—it is a pity that it has a photograph of an unattractive modern chalice on the jacket.

JOHN HUNSTER

GOD'S AMBASSADRESS. By Hellen M. T. Redpath. (The Bruce Publishing Co.)

This is the life of St Bridget of Sweden, who lived between 1302 and 1373. She was one of those saints who from earliest childhood seem to have been surrounded by the supernatural. She wanted to belong to God only, but at the age of thirteen she was obliged to marry Ulf, who like herself was of the old nobility of Sweden. They had eight children.

In later years when Bridget was about forty-four, both husband and wife made a vow to enter religion. Ulf did not live long enough