

## BLACKFRIARS

DAS KATHOLISCHE BERUFSETHOS. By Dietrich von Hildebrand. Pp. 25.

DER KATHOLISCHE PUBLIZIST. By Waldemar Gurian. Pp. 25.

CHRISTUS UND DER PRIESTER. By Engelbert Krebs. Pp. 32.

DAS CHRISTENTUM IM RÖMISCHEN REICH BIS KONSTANTIN. By Albert Ehrhard. Pp. 59.

DIE DOGMATISCHEN GRUNDLAGEN DER KATHOLISCHEN AKTION. By Rudolf Graber. Pp. 63.

(Verlag Haas und Grabherr, Augsburg; Mk. 1.20 each).

*Catholic Action* has an exotic sound to English ears: to give the words a meaning we think of them in French or Italian. Yet the *Ubi arcano* is a call to all Catholics and there is nothing regional in the classical definition of Catholic Action as 'lay co-operation in the Church's apostolic hierarchy.'

The Apostolate is intimately connected with our sacramental life. As the Hypostatic Union of the divine and human natures is the anointing of Jesus Christ, so we are anointed Christs by the sacramental character which makes our human activities divine. And as Our Lord's *apostolic* activities were more patently theandric, human *and* divine, than was His private daily life, so is the life of His Mystical Body chiefly manifested as theandric by the public activity of which the character of Confirmation is the dynamic supernatural principle. Thus Dr. Graber bases the Lay Apostolate upon the doctrines of Sacramental Character in Confirmation and the Mystical Body of Christ.

His essay is the twelfth in a series of which we have seen only five; but all five seem instinct with the same dynamic idea. Sanctity, the Imitation of Christ, is the primary vocation of every Christian: Christian Ideals must become incarnate in us. But this involves a *positive* response to their light, a response which we call devotion or service. Absorption of Christian Values results in their radiation, their expression: we are called to be saints that we may contribute to God's Glory. Sanctity is a dynamic attitude towards God, and particular callings are transformed into vocations in the measure in which they become vehicles of its expression, oriented in its direction. Evidently this orientation will take the form of subordination where a calling possesses a value of its own, elevating Society and enriching the personality of those who follow it, and thus contributing directly to God's Glory; but on callings which are mere means to something else it confers all their nobility. All callings which are not sinful may be made to proceed from Charity, as rendering service to the community; all provide some particular contacts with our fellow-men, and thus furnish opportunities for

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expressing our Catholic life; and all may be consecrated to God's service, not merely by subordination to His Will but by our consciousness of being live members of Christ.

The highest expression of this essential Christian service is the public liturgical self-oblation of the *Corpus Mysticum*. In conjunction with the Head Who alone can offer to God an honour worthy of Him and thus atone for the disorientation of Sin, the mystical Christ is offered liturgically, filling up the Sacrifice once for all consummated on the Cross. The liturgical priesthood of Christ is continued in the royal priesthood of God's people; and the ordained priest is the instrument. He must decrease, the Mystical Christ must increase.

The Modern Mind, formed by the publicists who educated the *bourgeoisie*, has come to suspect its teachers of an axe to grind. It sees in the Church a force making for Law and Order: theoretical doubt drives many to look for a practical anchorage. But Her doctrine is—well, *theoretical* and serves an interest. A Catholic Publicist with qualities such as those extolled in Kipling's *If*—, conscious of problems that are actual, sympathetic with modern doubt, yet neither surrendering to Relativism nor taking refuge in philosophical Cloudcuckootowns, must be more than 'a Man.' The superman may solve the problems of his time, yet his insight into the future is conditioned by his personality, by the present in which his feet are set. Conscious membership in the Body of the Saviour enables the supernatural man to give the eternal answers to ephemeral questions, without intrusion of his subjectivity. Catholic Eternal Truth must be shown as the key to situations which are regional and temporal; and here the Catholic historian has his task. Mgr. Ehrhard sketches the radiation of the divine, first into Hellenic culture and then to the institutions of Imperial Rome, the Church of God assuming these human elements and giving to them an eternal meaning.

Q.J.

THE HOUSE OF THE SPIRIT. By F. Pohl. (Burns, Oates, & Washbourne; 3/-.)

To the soul in search of perfection 'in the midst of the wear and tear of business life, social life, family life and so on,' is this book addressed. The author ingeniously links up the 'Modern Recluse of the Spirit' with the hermits and anchoresses of old, taking Julian of Norwich as an example. Much instruction and advice ranging from practical details of everyday life to the highest states of mystic union, is compressed into a surprisingly small space. A really helpful book.

M.F.