

EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

ECUMENICA. The importance of *The Sociological Factor in the Problem of Christian Unity* is perhaps not so little realised by reunionists as Mr. Christopher Dawson in the April COLOSSEUM seems to suppose. But the fact does not detract from the importance of his article or the originality of his argument which reaches the conclusion that:

It seems to me that the present age is more favourable to the cause of reunion than any time since the Middle Ages When Christians allow the conflicts and divisions of the natural man to transgress their bounds and permeate the religious sphere the cause of God becomes obscured by doubts and divisions and schism and heresies arise. But when the Church is faithful to its mission, it becomes the visible embodiment of this positive divine principle standing over against the eternal negative of evil.

I believe that the age of schism is passing and that the time has come when the divine principle of the Church's life will assert its attractive power, drawing all the living elements of Christian life and thought into organic unity. For since Christ is the Head of the Church and the Holy Spirit is the life of the Church, wherever there is faith in Christ or the Spirit of Christ there is the spirit of unity and the means of reunion. Therefore it is not necessary to talk much about the ways and means, for the ways of the Spirit are essentially mysterious and transcend human understanding. It may even be that the very strength of the forces that are gathered against the Church and against religion will make for unity by forcing Christians together, as it were, in spite of themselves; or it may be that the Church will react positively to the situation by a fresh outpouring of the apostolic spirit, as Blessed Grignon de Montfort prophesied two centuries ago.

Mr. Dawson does not mean, of course, to exclude the need for human study of the problem or for human co-operation in its solution. An important article by Dom D. C. Lialine, O.S.B., outlining a practical policy for the development of an "irenical" attitude and method, deserves particular attention. It appeared in the January-February number of IRENICON and has already been summarised in THE TABLET. It should not be missed by any Catholic perplexed as to how to approach the problem of Christian unity. A section of LA VIE INTELLECTUELLE of March 10th is entirely devoted to the understanding of the mentality of our separated brethren, and notably that of the French Protestants. The

section opens with an authoritative article by P. Congar, O.P., in which he outlines the manner in which the mentality of dissident Christians should be approached. He mentions the important place occupied by popular hymns in the conscious or unconscious formation of the Evangelical outlook. This hint is followed up in greater detail in an article on the *Rôle du chant dans les images protestantes* by C. Vignon, and in a commentary on Luther's famous hymn *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*. There are further studies of the French Protestant outlook and mentality as expressed in its literature by M.-M. Moufflard and L.-E. Halkin. The whole section indicates a valuable line which should be followed up, *mutatis mutandis*, in other countries where there is so little understanding of our separated brethren. A useful outline of the ecclesiology of Johann Adam Möhler, whose significance for the solution of the "ecumenical problem" is becoming increasingly recognised, will be found in the April HOCHLAND. The continuation of the Abbé Couturier's *The Universal Prayer of Christians for Christian Unity* appears in the March REUNION. Father M. Bévenot, S.J., in a letter of "mild protest" in the April CATHOLIC GAZETTE gives an example which should be followed when misrepresentations of non-Catholic movements and ideals find their way into our Catholic press.

E.G. AND WORKERS' OWNERSHIP. In the March number of IRELAND TO-DAY Professor Hogan of Cork offered some very interesting criticism of views attributed in recent months to Mr. Eric Gill. We were awaiting Mr. Gill's reply before making more than a passing reference. Unfortunately, the March number of that promising review has proved to be the last; whence Mr. Gill's reply has not been able to appear. We believe the matter to be one of such widespread interest, not only as a personal statement on a matter which has caused much perplexity, but also by reason of its inherent importance, that by courtesy of Mr. Gill we print here his unpublished letter *à titre documentaire*:

Sir,—I am gratified by the inclusion of my article in the same issue as Professor Hogan's and honoured by his criticism of my views. I agree with practically every word he says and had he not mentioned my name, should have no occasion to write.

But as he has referred to me I must say this: What I have

written on the subject of workers' ownership as on other matters must be taken more as a challenge to opponents than as definite statements. I have neither knowledge nor ability to deal adequately with such a complicated subject. It is sufficient from my point of view if I can provoke discussion. The times are desperate. We are in danger of succumbing to mere inertia. But there is this to note: there is a certain method in my madness. When I say or imply that "modern civilization is absolutely committed to the present system of mechanized industrial production" I am not saying what I think but what on all sides I am continually told. Very good, I say, suppose it is so, let it be granted, what then? Such and such logically follows. If I can show the logical consequences, and if those consequences are or seem horrible or inhuman or unchristian then my opponents take note of the challenge. That's what I want them to do. Professor Hogan says I "leave out of account (i.e., in my demand for workers' ownership) the numerous small-scale industrial enterprises" even in England. Naturally I do; and so people come forward, as Professor Hogan does and rub the point in, and as a consequence the trend towards industrial amalgamation is seen in a critical light. Professor Hogan says that I say that the present trend is inevitable. I don't say so. It's the other people who say so. I only attempt to show them the consequences. "Nobody wants to go back to pre-industrial methods of production." That's what they tell me. All right then. If men agree to work in that way, however evil I personally think it to be, however destructive of all humane things, however inevitably leading to the philosophy of the Leisure State, well, it's not for me to say they mustn't. All I can do is to fight for a just politics and the first necessity is workers' ownership of the means of production. That is Christian politics. If we oppose that politics we shall lose the workers for ever and we shall deserve to do so.

Professor Hogan says I fail to make the distinction between state-collectivism and workers' ownership. But I am not concerned with state collectivism. I am concerned to demand workers' ownership—for the sake of the work, for the sake of the workers. Doubtless there are industries which are, in their nature, best owned and run by the "state." Of course it is so. What I am up against is the present prevalence of industries owned by absentee shareholders and run simply for the sake of profit to them—i.e. dividends. Because I confine myself largely to that issue, it doesn't follow that I oppose people who want something else as well. And of course I agree that "in the absence of wide-spread private property workers' groups cannot exist . . ." But we must define what we mean by "private." We must make it clear that it is for *the common good* and not for

individual aggrandisement that the claim to property is made; and that word "private" does not imply an *absolute* ownership, but a *personal* trusteeship confirmed by law (what's wrong with law?); for, as Gide says in his *History of Economic Doctrines*, English law, in common with the traditions of European law as a whole, recognizes no absolute ownership of the land except that of the Crown.

So I hope it will be agreed that my method is a good complement to Professor Hogan's and a good way of provoking our pastors and masters to sit up and take notice.

Professor Hogan's original article was an important contribution, and we hope that it too will be widely read and pondered.

CONTEMPORANEA. CHRISTIAN FRONT (April) goes all out for Government ownership and control of "America's basic natural resources and utilities . . . not for its own sake, but because it would appear that it is the only way to effect social justice, regulate our economic system, and prevent unwholesome private monopolies."

CLERGY REVIEW (April): Canon Smith discusses the Doctrinal Report under the heading, *Christianity without the Supernatural. Fear, Conscience and Deliverance* by Mgr. Ronald Knox is a profound essay on religion in general and Catholic Christianity in particular. Also excellent articles on *Marriage Converts* and *The Dormitories of Industrialism*.

CRITERION (April): Bro. George Every's assertion in a review that "the theological age has begun . . . in Russell Square," supported by a study of current French theological activity by Mr. Montgomery Belgium.

DOWNSIDE REVIEW (April): *Catholic and Roman* by Dom Christopher Butler: the papalism of St. Cyprian.

DUBLIN REVIEW (April): Articles on the Doctrinal Report by Fr. Vincent McNabb, O.P., and Mgr. R. A. Knox. *The American Church To-day* elucidated by Donald Attwater.

FRONTESPIZIO (March): Laments—with apologies—for d'Annunzio, from Piero Bargellini and Carlo Bo. An excellent *Preludio su Kierkegaard* by Ernio Francia.

MONTH (April): *German Vignettes* by J. K. Hay shows what the Nazi policy towards the Church means to individual Catholics.

SCRUTINY (March): Valuable critique of *The Modern Universities* by L. C. Knights.

SOWER (April): A sound editorial on *Education and Politics*, justifying this review's concern with the latter.

TERMINAL (Easter Term): *The Catholic Ideal of Education* by Frances Winrow.

PENGUIN.