

EXTRACTS

UNIGENITUS DEI FILIUS, the Apostolic letter of Pope Pius XI written in 1924 to the Heads of Religious Orders, is usefully resurrected in an English translation in *Review for Religious* (St Marys, Kansas) for July. The Pope writes:

Since it is of the highest importance that the knowledge of sacred science should be held in the greatest esteem and deeply imbibed by the ministers of the Church, the chief concern of this Our exhortation is to urge members of religious institutes, both those who are already priests and those who are candidates for the priesthood, to the study of the sacred learning, the absence of which would prevent them performing with full competence the functions of their vocation. For those who have consecrated themselves to God the one, or certainly the chief, obligation is that of prayer and the contemplation or meditation on divine things.

The Holy Father continues by insisting that all religious should continue without cessation their theological studies to assist them in their interior union with God.

GNOSTICISM true and false is brought out by contrast in *Sponsa Regis* (Collegeville, Minnesota) for July and *Vedanta and the West* (Los Angeles) for the same month. In the former A Carthusian of Miraflores writes of the doctrine of the Trinity and the controversies of the first centuries which seem to some 'only a barren strife about words'.

Such a concept is possible only to one who is profoundly ignorant of the relation of God to man in the spiritual life. On the outcome of these controversies depended the growth and the development of the relations between God and the soul of man in all the centuries that were to follow. . . . God is infinitely perfect intelligence. We must say of Him that He is intelligence rather than He possesses intelligence. . . .

And thus the Carthusian goes on to show how the Father knows himself in the Son and how we are caught up in the infinite flow of infinite intelligence and infinite love. The theology of the Blessed Trinity will never be fully absorbed by any Christian be he cleric, lay or religious, and therefore it will provide the centre of his necessary meditations and contemplation. But Aldous Huxley in *Vedanta and the West* speaks in a very different sense:

The obscure knowledge of what we really are accounts for our grief at having to seem to be what we are not, and for our often passionate desire to overstep the limits of the imprisoning ego.

The only truly liberating self-transcendence is into the knowledge of the primordial fact.

And this invasion into the infinite intelligence of God he describes: If we experience an urge to self-transcendence it is because, in some obscure way and in spite of our conscious ignorance, we know what we really are. We know (or to be more accurate, something within us knows) that the ground of our individual knowing is identical with the Ground of all knowing and all being; that the Atman (Mind in the act of choosing to take the temporal point of view) is the same as Brahman (Mind in its eternal essence).

The apparent similarity in some of the ideas of this school with those that try to express the true Mystery of the Logos shows how easy it is for anyone to weave his own fancies round the word of revealed religion and how necessary it is for true contemplation to be informed by accurate study.

The May-June issue of *Tydschrift voor Gestelijk Leven* is a double number devoted entirely to Penance, and is intended as a companion to a previous special number on the Eucharist (June 1951). There is first a general article on the Sacrament, followed by articles developing particular aspects—Contrition, Consciousness of Guilt, Examination of Conscience, The Penance, etc. All this gives, in the words of the editorial, 'a christian insight into the magnificence of the sacrament of penance; not mere theory alone, but the doctrine as lived, and with practical applications'.

Among the SOUTHERN HEBRIDES there exists a small island with the remains of an Augustinian Priory still standing. The island is called Oronsay, and George Scott Moncrieff writes of it in *The Scottish Islands* (Batsford):

Now the decay of the Priory buildings has been arrested by the Office of Works, and they stand a ruin substantial enough to be very pleasant. Iona apart, perhaps there is no place in all the Isles that more clearly demands rehabilitation and the return of a religious community able to put to true purpose the intense Hebridean loneliness, softened by the beauty of the green and purple sea and the bright turf and dark rocks; made various by the changing lights.

Perhaps one day we Catholics may take the initiative. . . .

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