

the attempt' (p. 246).

Having said all this, honesty compels me to admit that I have never missed an opportunity of using the Knox translation when reading from the pulpit, and I am very grateful to him for it.

REGINALD GINNS, O.P.

O B I T E R

A CATHOLIC VIEW of the Ecumenical movement is provided by Father Ian Hislop, O.P., in *Dieu Vivant* (No. 9). He insists that the Catholic attitude to Protestant eirenical activities must spring from 'fundamental theological considerations'. Arguments from history, national culture, political theory and so on are useless, and may be positively harmful, unless they are related to the basic question to which the theologian must seek an answer: what is the will of Christ for his people? The motives which have inspired many Protestant reunion movements—the need for unity in face of a growing paganism, embarrassment caused by denominational rivalries in the foreign mission-field, the desire for a common social action—may be noble in themselves, but they are inadequate as expressions of the full content of our Lord's prayer for unity. An immediate need is 'the expounding of Catholic doctrine in such a way, and with the use of such terminology, that Protestants may understand what it means'.

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SPINAL INJURIES, it seems, have strange effects. F. Hansen-Löwe, writing in *Wort und Wahrheit* (No. 8), quotes the view that Kierkegaard's fall as a child is the Cleopatra's nose of existentialism:

According to the subtle researches of Magnusson, Kierkegaard's 'prick of the flesh' is nothing other than a slight maladjustment of the spine due to a fall from a tree in his childhood. This fall was to determine Kierkegaard's destiny, both in its inner and exterior aspects.

In *La Vie Intellectuelle* (October), Père D. Dubarle, O.P., a professor of the Institut Catholique of Paris, considers the impact of the material on the spiritual at what is perhaps a higher level in an authoritative article on 'The biological sciences and Christian dogma'. After a lucid summary of modern evolutionary hypotheses, Père Dubarle concludes that

a clear return to the balance established by the theology of St Thomas between, on the one hand, primary causality and the system of secondary causes, and, on the other, between nature and

super-nature, will still provide the most effective key to a problem handed over to Christian thought by the renewal of biological science.

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THE POLISH GROUP of the Sword of the Spirit (51 Eaton Place, S.W.1) has published a useful documentary record of the Catholic Church in Poland during 1945-46. The Anglo-Polish Catholic Association, in its latest Bulletin, prints an interesting article by Denis Gwynn on the possible effect of a Polish immigration on the Catholic life of this country. Drawing an analogy from the Irish immigration of a century ago, Dr Gwynn concludes:

It might seem that from strong local settlements, enabling the exiles to overcome the sense of loneliness and strangeness, united with the sense of co-operation fortified by the Catholic Church and inspired by the Catholic Faith, the results may indeed be fruitful.

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THE CHANGING WORLD, in its second number, includes Gabriel Marcel's 'Testimony and Existentialism', Lewis Mumford's 'Social Effects of Atomic War', and an excellent 'American Letter' by Kenneth Douglas. The Editor promises the continuing collaboration of writers from outside England, and rightly maintains that

it would be a sterilising limitation were we to try to discuss the questions at issue purely in terms of what is being written in England. This applies obviously to political and social questions on which the 'national' outlook everywhere has become an expensive burden. . . . Minds in England are suffering badly from the lack of fertilisation through adequate contact with thinking in the larger European campus. During this last war Englishmen were cut off from fellow-Europeans as they were during the Napoleonic wars. The results of these separations of one people from another would be worth an historical study. Now various European governments are seeking amongst other solutions to their post-war economic difficulties what is in fact the isolation of their citizens from those of other countries. If this seriously helps to bring a solution to one disaster it can only be a short-sighted one and breed another.

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THE CHANGING NATION (Contact Books, 5s.) considers Stevenage and Arthur Horner, suburban architecture and the economic prospects of South Wales. Mass-observation provides an analysis of 'Marriage and Divorce in Postwar Britain', and with its usual knowledgeableness gives us the embarrassing pleasure that comes from overhearing private conversations. But for those whom the Registrar General's reports are not congenial reading, this article provides the facts which Whitehall itself admits are 'sufficiently startling to render the matter of more than statistical significance'.

THE CROSS AND THE PLOUGH (Michaelmas) continues its sturdy battle for first principles in agriculture. 'We consume a great deal more than we produce, and our production is largely not primary'. American figures are quoted to show the greater productivity of small farms compared with large, and the present fashion for mechanised methods 'does nothing but delay the satisfaction of our supreme need'. To the layman, the debates of agricultural theorists seem as acrimonious and inconclusive as the vendettas that divide the various sects of modern psychology. But it is something to be grateful for that *The Cross and the Plough* is not afraid to focus the light of common sense (not to speak of the Christian sociology which is based on it) on the pretensions of the experts.

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THE MONTH (October) has a characteristic 'Approach to Fatima' from Father Martindale.

THE EASTERN CHURCHES QUARTERLY has a carefully-reasoned study on the Definition of the Assumption of our Lady by Dom Thomas Rigby.

THE DUBLIN REVIEW (Autumn), in an excellent number that recalls its former glories, includes 'Tendencies in the Church of England' by Humphrey J. T. Johnson, which one may hope will be read by the (anonymous) authors of Anglican 'chronicles' in the current issues of *Irenikon* and *Dieu Vivant*.

SOUNDINGS (October) prints Colm Brogan's view of 'Our Schools and Schoolmasters'. 'In teaching, as in nursing, the sense of vocation is dying fast. It is surely more than a coincidence that vocation is dying as belief in God is decaying.'

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FROM GERMANY letters are reaching us to express the gratitude of German teachers for the generous response of our readers to the appeal for books we printed in the September issue of BLACKFRIARS. Some parcels have arrived without an indication of their origin, and we are asked to thank all those who have helped. A teacher writes from Geilenkirchen: 'Life is very hard here. But we will confidently hope that we get through. Sometimes we feel very depressed. I think hunger might make saints. All we can do is to hope and to pray that finally all hatred and need may be conquered by love'.

ALDATE.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

The Catholic Action Girls Organisation (C.A.G.O.) continues its praiseworthy campaign for the re-Christianisation of Christmas by providing, among other things, a selection of Christian Christmas

Cards. The ten designs which are here offered at from 1½d. to 6d. each are attractive and varied in what may be described as a clean modern style. Miss Brenda Rutherford contributes two new designs and readers will already know her simple and unsophisticated production. A complete set of Sample Cards may be had for 2s. 11d. post free, and envelopes are supplied at 5d. per dozen. (Write to: C.A.G.O., 22 Bramham Gardens, S.W.5).

EDWARD R. WESTBROOK is not to be forgotten when Christian Christmas Cards are in question. He adds to his selection year by year with his own designs and those of Doris Pailthorpe, Kathleen M. Leighton, Gilbert Sheedy, W. S. Kesterton, and again Brenda Rutherford. He now also ventures—and it is a very risky venture—to reproduce Old Masters. The Government have encouraged this risky performance by reducing the purchase tax on them from 100% to 33½%. He has selected Filippo Lippi and Raphael (C.A.G.O. also supports the latter) and his venture is comparatively successful. Altogether he offers 40 subjects in various sizes and colours with envelopes to match and in addition to these his catalogue contains many more prayer cards and book markers. The prices are moderate and the styles will suit most tastes. (Edward R. Westbrook, 11 Dorset Road South, Bexhill).

REVIEWS

THE EARTH'S FACE—Landscape in its relation to the health of the soil. By Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, M.D., with a Foreword by Sir R. George Stapledon, C.B.E., F.R.S. (Faber; 12s. 6d.)

It is perhaps too seldom noted that the religious attitude towards the soil was determined in Genesis, and that no divine countermand has been issued abrogating Adam's orders to live in a garden, work it and watch over it. Such a concept of agriculture is a challenge to all of us: especially as, since its decay among those patriarchal Catholic communities who, in Europe, clung to it longest, it is being revived now, in the most ardent and practical spirit, by biologists who, whatever they are, are certainly not Catholics. Many of us, the Distributists for example, have felt that the persistence of Christianity was bound up with the right ownership and use of the land; and the Holy See has reiterated this doctrine ever more forcibly as the spiritual and material ruin wrought by proletarianism has become ever more evident. There are some of us—but not so many as is supposed—who cannot take active measures to help heal the earth's wounds, even though these wounds infect not only our bodies but our souls. All, however, can welcome as allies those who do. From that standpoint Dr Ehrenfried Pfeiffer's new book is—as Sir George Stapledon suggests in the preface, he counts it 'a privilege' to write—a privilege, a duty and a very great pleasure to read.

No book could be less difficult or dull. Although the Swiss biologist