

CORRESPONDENCE

'WAR AND THE CATHOLIC.'

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS.

SIR,—Mr. Francis McDermott, in his article *War and the Catholic*, makes many statements which invite discussion; but they are, I think, of minor importance in view of the fact that he obscures the issue as a whole by failing altogether to broach the greatest difficulty. If we decide, hypothetically, that there is just cause for a war, and that it can be justified also in its results, we are then in a position to tackle that difficulty: Mr. McDermott leaves it severely alone. The Catholic, he writes, 'wonders whether . . . hate propaganda and the deliberate attacks on civilians can ever in any circumstances secure justice.' No doubt he does; but even if he were to decide that they can, he would still have to go on to ask whether, whatever their effects, they are in themselves right or wrong. Because, if wrong in themselves they can never be justified, however excellent their effects. Christianity is not utilitarianism. And the trouble is that in themselves they *are* wrong. Mr. McDermott makes the common but catastrophic mistake of forgetting the question of means. The Catholic may be faced with a situation in which he regards war—a war—as a duty, but at the same time knows that *this* war—the war which will in fact be arranged for him, on principles other than those of Catholic theology—will adopt methods which are in themselves evil.

That situation is one of the most tragic in which a man can find himself. I do not know why Mr. McDermott regards theological conclusions which reject the use of evil means as being based on emotion and not on reason; but I understand still less how he can think of such conclusions as a 'facile solution.' The facile solution is surely that which consists in ignoring, as does his article, the bulk of the problem.

I am, Sir, yours, etc.,

GERALD VANN, O.P.

Points from other Letters.

SIR,—So now even BLACKFRIARS has lined up with the recruiting sergeant; or is Mr. Francis McDermott's articles on War and the Catholic merely intended as an expression of the bewilderment of the layman before the imbecile profusion of injustice that hangs over Europe to-day?