

## BLACKFRIARS

position is not to oppose' (its precise function is not expressly designated): little bits of Capitalism and Communism will be patchworked together into an ideal Commonwealth, pervaded by a faint odour of piety, and presided over by 'Christian British Labour,' which, a few paragraphs before, has avowed its dislike of controlling anything. This kind of muddled Utopia will satisfy no one. As an ideal it is watery, as a policy it is unworkable.

Finally the main point of impact between Communism and Europe escapes Mr. Wood's notice: that point of impact is the family, already weakened in our Capitalist society by the State's disregard of the indissolubility of marriage; in this matter many forces are allied with Communism, which would indignantly repudiate any suggestion that they were furthering the Communist triumph. On this point the Church is fighting single-handed, but if the battle is lost here, it will be lost all along the line.

So far only the omissions from this book have been mentioned; nothing has been said of its merits. This book is an admirable analysis of the intellectual basis of Communism: the chapter on the *Importance of Tools*, with its reiterated refrain that 'every tool ever invented is a triumph of mind over matter,' and the consequent assertion that the history of tools refutes rather than confirms Historical Materialism, should be re-read time and again by all those 'Economic' Historians who wish to constrain History within the narrow frame of their 'Economic' minds. There is indeed enough of Catholicism in this book to make it the duty of every Catholic to read it.

D.T.H.K.B.

NAZARETH OR SOCIAL CHAOS. By Vincent McNabb, O.P.  
(Burns, Oates & Washbourne; 1/6.)

Father McNabb inveighs against absenteeism in all forms—the remoteness of modern man from all the foundations of life. He calls for a return to Nazareth—the small city-unit, based on agriculture, of human society, where the majority of the population live directly from the soil. Only by so living, he says, can men return to first principles and recognize the true end and therefore the true value, of things. We have become caught up in a complex of substitutes—token finance, canned food, mechanized music, everything at second-hand. Father McNabb is not always strictly logical—for instance, he deplores the destruction of forests for newspaper pulp and yet advocates wholesale adoption of wood fires (first-hand fuel) and wooden houses (first-hand material), which would enormously hasten the destruction he deplores. Clearly, a great migration to the soil of

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England might solve many of our social discontents, but even Nazareth, as he says, was not a purely agricultural community. Where then is industry to stop—all labour at work not producing the primary necessity, food? And though the Land Movement may be an alleviation for present evils, is it beyond human ingenuity to find a complete cure, by rationalising and controlling the modern industrial system?

P.D.F.

FÉLIX RAVAISSON—TESTAMENT PHILOSOPHIQUE ET FRAGMENTS. Précédés de la notice lue en 1904 à l'Académie des Sciences morales et politiques, par Henri Bergson. Texte présenté, revu et augmenté d'inédits, par Ch. Devivaise. (Pp. vii, 197; Boivin & Cie, Paris; 20 fr.)

This is the first appearance of the *Testament Philosophique* in book form: a previous edition was published in 1901 in the *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*. It was pieced together after Ravaisson's death in 1900 from the notes and outlines of a last work found on his table, this second edition incorporating passages from papers discovered later and making some changes in the selection of the material. In addition to M. Bergson's charming appreciation of Ravaisson's Life and Works which serves as an introduction to the *Testament*, it is supplemented by Notes consisting of parallel passages from unpublished writings; there are also four longer 'Fragments' (the first being an 'Outline of a Philosophy' in seven pages), explanatory notes by the editor, and a short bibliography of Ravaisson's more important philosophical and aesthetic works.

Reading an author whom one knows to some extent at second-hand is reading him through coloured spectacles. 'Aristotle with a tinge of Leibniz and Schelling' is a formula for Ravaisson; but he was an *artist* by temperament and training, and there is no formula for lyric. His thirst for Beauty and the Heroic accounts for his rejecting as unspiritual those philosophies which explain the world by principles themselves subject to the forms of Order and Beauty, whether these principles be the atoms of the Greek Sensualists or the abstractions of Intellectualists. The Aristotelian interpreted his Master as explaining the world by living movement; the artist in him saw *grace* as the expression of divine movement which gives its beauty to the living whole; and his *katholon* spirit, his *Geist des Ganzen*, led him to evolve a philosophy of purified Love in contact with 'la vive réalité vivante, âme mouvante, esprit de feu et de lumière.'

Just because there was such joy in the reading of this lyric, was there regret that a mind recognising that the best and