

REVIEWS

THEOLOGY AND WORSHIP

L'UNITE DANS L'EGLISE, ou Le Principe du Catholicisme d'après l'esprit des Pères des trois premiers siècles de l'Eglise. Par J.-A. Moehler. Traduit de l'allemand par Dom André De Lilienfeld, O.S.B. Avec une Introduction par Pierre Chaillet, S.J. (Collection "Unam Sanctam," II.) (Les Editions du Cerf; pp. 304, n.p.)

Since our periodicals have but recently been engaged—on the occasion of his centenary—in appraising the work of Moehler in all its wider bearings and depositing wreaths in his memory (see Penguin in BLACKFRIARS for June of this year) it will be allowable perhaps to deal here with this particular work of his, fully established classic though it is, in the summary way of ordinary first-time reviewing.

We have, then, an historico-theological treatise whose purpose is to build up an organic conception of the nature of the Church upon the basis of the theology and the living practice of the first three Christian centuries. Its theme is the Unity of the Church—not her merely experimental but her "original," divine Unity. The common adherence of the faithful to one body of truth and one centre of authority of itself denotes only an extrinsic relative form of unity, and of itself is liable to suggest a crudely institutional conception of the nature of the Church—as being, namely, essentially a system or framework into which the faithful are fitted. Against this perverted conception Moehler makes his stand, by undertaking to expound the essential generative principle of the Church's unity, which proceeds from the sanctifying activity of the Holy Spirit, is realised in a oneness of supernatural life, a oneness of divine breed in the faithful, to unfold and extend itself through the positive, "institutional" forms of the Church's visible organisation. In so far as Moehler's doctrine at this point can be freed from certain entanglements of which it remains to speak—it is doctrine of the highest value, not very new for us perhaps if viewed abstractly, but marvelously invigorating in the freshness and purity of its expression. Which declaration is meant to be the beginning and end of this review.

Meanwhile, however, the bulk of one's task must be to try to point out the error with which the work is pervaded. Partly through misguided emphasis of statement, partly through a confusion of two orders of reality, the psychological and the onto-

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logical, (which works out in a confusion of the formal and the material principles of the life of the Church) it is the effect of the book as a whole to represent the bodily structure of the Church as being essentially a derivative—a social reflection, a spontaneous means of propagation—of her mystical life, i.e. of her hidden life that proceeds from the self-communication of the Holy Spirit. For example, in his effort to rid the papacy of the character of a stereotyped *a priori* form of unifying government and to reveal it as a vital realisation, personification of Christian unity, Moehler can neglect entirely to view it as the primally effective force, the kind of sacrament of Christ's governing energy that it is.

His fundamental mistake would appear to lie in his failure to recognize in the structural body of the Church a divinely fashioned type or configuration of the Incarnate Christ, sacramentally alive with the virtue of His life, an instrument with which the Holy Spirit works to sanctify, to Christen the souls of men. Overlooking or foolishly abstracting from this aspect of the doctrine of the Mystical Body, the very specific *ratio* of the Church's Unity escapes him, the question of Institutionalism becomes insoluble, and when he comes to treat of the growth of the Church he is bound to be at fault—the sense in which the Church came down from heaven fully arrayed at Pentecost will be hidden from him. In short, as a scientific theologian he will be practically disqualified.

This was the first book that Moehler wrote. He quickly realised its essential inadequacy, and his later work can be regarded as his nobly dogged effort to make "reparation," which end was accomplished in *Symbolik*, his masterpiece. Still this first so imperfect work remains one which if read with proper circumspection (which Père Chaillet's Introduction finely provides for), offers a marvellous possibility of Christian enlightenment.

RICHARD KEHOE, O.P.

THE CHURCH'S DAILY PRAYER By Dom Ernest Graf, O.S.B.
(Burns, Oates; 5s.)

AN INTRODUCTION TO LITURGICAL LATIN. By A. M. Scarre. (Geo E. Coldwell; 4s. 6d.)

In these days, when the Breviary, for so many centuries past a closed book to the vast majority of the people, is again coming into its own as the Prayer Book of the Church, a book like Father Graf's *Church's Daily Prayer* is more than welcome.

It is a simple, readable book; not a work for the few, but for all. In spite of a style inclined to be, at times, almost sentimental, the author has instilled into the volume something of the