

with any human polity, I believe that the whole of what little I have written on the relation between religion and politics stands in refutation of that charge. Nor can I end without expressing very genuine regret that Mr Woodruff should find my plea for 'the primacy of truth and the way of good will' not to be 'very practical . . . or calculated to help either our fellow countrymen generally or the Catholic body in particular', because in this I was merely echoing the words of the Holy Father in his Allocution, *Confirmat fratres tuos*, to the Cardinals last Christmas Eve, words which I happen to think very practical indeed:

We remind all those who glory in the name of Catholic Christians of a two-fold sacred duty, indispensable for the improvement of the present condition of human society:

1. *An unshakable fidelity to the patrimony of truth, which the Redeemer has brought to the world.*
2. *A conscientious fulfilment of the conception of justice and love, which is necessary for the triumph on earth of a social order worthy of the Divine King of Peace.*

To the upholding, however incompetently and obliquely, of these two principles my paper was intended to serve.—Yours, etc.,

ÆLRED GRAHAM.

Ampleforth Abbey, York.

OBITER

EUROPEAN POLITICAL PROBLEMS feature largely in an excellent number of the *American Catholic Review of Politics* (April: from Duckett, 18s.6d. per annum). Klaus Knorr analyses the 'Problems of a Western European Union', distinguishing the growing idea of a permanent 'Union' of the States outside the Soviet hegemony from the conception of a federation in which power resides in one centre and which in the present state of mutual distrust and unrest would be impossible. The problems of unification, as Mr Knorr shows, are many and varied; but with Britain's decline as a great power, French jealousy of Britain and hatred of Germany, and at the same time the common threat from the East which urges 'union', Germany is placed in a key position.

The Germans will increasingly come to occupy a favourable bargaining position; naturally they will be dissatisfied with anything less than a status of equality in a western partnership. What other peoples would act differently under such conditions? . . .

A sober study of German reactions against the Versailles settlement reveals that it is unwise to continue repressive policies until they can no longer be maintained in the face of mounting German pressure and Western doubts. . . .

At the same time a number of smaller nations regarding the hope-

lessness of a union on such terms are only too anxious to establish a permanent neutrality.

Bernard Wall, the perspicacious editor of *Changing World*, in this same issue of *Review of Politics* presents a cross-section of Western Europe at the end of 1948 through his own personal experiences of Britain, France and Italy. The picture makes the desire for neutrality the more understandable. In England the decline of the popularity of the Socialist party offers little positive hope of another constructive policy.

There is today a deadness and a boredom about English life which is without parallel in victorious or liberated countries. With the decline or suppression of the old middle classes on whom British mercantile expansion depended has come a discouragement of initiative.

Nevertheless Bernard Wall suggests a certain strength of mind in England which he notes as absent on the Continent where people are too anxious to forget the future and enjoy the deceptive plenty of the 'fat years' of black market and Marshall aid.

Thus, to take the two extremes, England and Italy, there are many people who say: 'The crisis may soon grow worse. Who knows what the future may hold in store?' But in Italy they add: 'Therefore let us enjoy the present while we may', whereas in England they add: 'Let us pull our belts even tighter and so prepare for whatever lies ahead'. In countries where there is little or no response to the challenge life has quickly returned to 'normal' in appearance at least. But the whole social structure is precarious.

Sir Stafford Cripps seems to be the modern Joseph: may the lean years be no more than seven.

* * * *

'The great question of our time', writes Mr Christopher Dawson in the Spring *The Wind and the Rain*, 'is whether we can regain control (over the anonymous forces and impersonal techniques we have set in movement) or whether the change has gone so far that Western man is destined to go the same way as the Red Indian and either disappear or survive for a time in a United Europe Reservation.' This is perhaps the gloomiest view of a possible European 'Union', but at least it occasions an interesting chapter of autobiography as it has induced Mr Dawson to write the memoirs (from which we have quoted above) in order to perpetuate the ancient traditions which have so suddenly come to an end. He writes as a work of piety—'the cult of the family and of the native place' which is the first debt we owe to society and to the Christian commonwealth. This is the safety device of St Paul's sailors,

throwing out four anchors to stern and waiting for the morning. If and when our morning comes we shall find this anchor in Wessex, Welsh and Yorkshire rural life of the 1890's a useful link with *terra firma*.

* * * *

This issue of *The Wind and the Rain* is full of good things, including 'From Existential Existentialism to Academic Existentialism' by Jacques Maritain. And although this subject is almost flogged to death, for practically the first time those who have been trained to a Thomist way of thinking will find this tantalising philosophy expressed in a terminology which is intelligible.

St Thomas reconciles intelligence and mystery at the heart of being, at the heart of existence. And by this means he sets free our intellect; he returns it to its own nature in returning it to its object. By this means also he enables us to create unity in ourselves. . . .

While on the subject of Thomistic studies we must draw attention to the work of the 'Cercle thomiste' at Caen, a work which might well be copied by some joint effort of the Aquinas Societies of England. For not only does the *Cercle* run regular courses of lectures and study-circles in scholastic philosophy and theology, but also it now publishes a *Bulletin* which carries on these courses in serial form. The *Bulletin* (Cercle Thomiste, Saint-Nicolas de Caen) contains general articles on aspects of St Thomas, 'Le Course de Logique', 'Le Cours de Metaphysique', History of the Summa, and the Social Doctrine of S. Thomas. Surely an English *Bulletin* of this nature would be unique and invaluable; until it appears readers are directed to this brave pioneer work.

* * * *

INTEGRITY (346 East 86th Street, New York) fights the battle for Distributism with energy and humour, and it is encouraging to find so lively a review 'dedicated to the task of discovering the new synthesis of Religion and Life' in terms of ownership and craftsmanship. The March issue, devoted to 'Ownership', treats of Distributism, the Economics of the Christian Family and similar topics. The aim is realist enough to avoid the impossible ideal of jettisoning all factories and industries, and the fundamental principles of 'Restoration of Property' are applied to existing conditions.

Those factories which are necessary or useful should be in the country (a growing tendency, even now, because of real estate prices) in order that each workman should be also a landed proprietor. He would own his own house and at least enough land to grow vegetables and fruit for his family, to keep chickens and rabbits, a cow or a goat. The number of employees in such a

factory would, because of the greatly reduced hours, be at least double that presently employed, but the cost of the finished article would not increase, since the worker who produced a substantial part of his own food will need a proportionately smaller amount of cash.

Whether this proposal is sound economics may well be challenged, but the spirit in which the problem is tackled is definitely of the realist type which we need so urgently.

* * * *

THE WEST OF ENGLAND is, according to the categories of broadcasting, a Region. By any standard it is a part of the country with a character of its own, and the B.B.C.'s contribution to the cultural vitality of the West has been considerable. *Broadcasting in the West* (Broadcasting House, Bristol, 1s.0d.) is a record of twenty-five years' work and it should interest anyone who cares for local loyalties. It is too easily assumed that British broadcasting has imposed a metropolitan uniformity on the country as a whole. Certainly the regional services deserve still greater autonomy, but their achievement so far deserves acknowledgment. Minorities serve more than themselves, and the problems of Somerset farmers or the survival of the Helston Furry Dance are part of a national diversity that makes for a unity that is organic and alive.

* * * *

THE CORNISH REVIEW (Barn Cottage, Lelant Downs, Hayle; 2s.6d.) appears some fifty years after the last number of *Cornish Magazine*, edited by 'Q'. It is concerned with 'the Cornish people and their cultural activities, with Cornwall as a creative centre', and the first number includes articles on Cornish Culture (by that veteran of Celtic revivalists, Morton Nance), on painting and sculpture in Cornwall, a 'portrait of Penzance', as well as reproductions of pictures and carvings by artists living in the Duchy.

Narrowing down the area of western allegiance, one comes to *The Taunton Standard* (16 Trinity Street, Taunton; 4s. a year, post free), a monthly review edited in the county town of Somerset. Its aim is 'Christian without being "pious", serious without being highbrow', and in over a year it has established itself as a model of what a local paper may be. Large generalisations about world affairs can divert attention from the real problems of Christian society, and *The Taunton Standard* shows that a conscience about local life is a primary obligation. The application of Christian standards of judgment to the Town Council's proceedings and to the difficulties of local industries may be less exhilarating than abstract discussion of human rights. But it may be more rewarding, and it is undoubtedly more readable.

L'ÉVANGILE CAPTIF is the title of the latest *cahier* issued by *Jeunesse de l'Église* (Rond-Point Petit-Clamart, Seine; 275 francs) and has all the usual features of an excellent series. The obstacles to evangelisation are not to be sought only in the hard-heartedness of a pagan world. The Christian world itself needs to be converted, and this symposium of articles by, among others, Père Montuclard, Père Dumant, Emmanuel Mounier and a number of non-Catholics, reveals the awareness of a difficulty and of the means for its resolution. The editor is also author of *Rebatir le Temple*, a second 'Letter to the Impatient', which looks to a fresh understanding of the significance of the Church in the modern world.

* * * *

LOURDES and DON BOSCO are the subjects of two special numbers of *Fêtes et Saisons* (Blackfriars Publications, one shilling each). As usual, a lively text and brilliant illustrations reflect intelligent editing, and once more one laments the absence in this country of such admirable aids to the apostolate. The Lourdes number is concerned particularly with the question of miracles, and full particulars are given of the careful process of examination, with all the help of modern scientific equipment.

* * * *

GROWTH AND DECLINE is an American translation of Cardinal Suhard's notable pastoral, *Declin ou Essor de l'Église*. It should be obtainable through a Catholic bookseller, and is published by Fides Publishers, 325 Lincoln Way West, South Bend 5, Indiana, at \$.25.

* * * *

'THE CINEMA, with its showmanship, its ritual, and its text, is really a weekday church; and 'Monsieur Vincent' with its plain illustration of what goodness means in a man, is worth a dozen sermons preached from some wooden pulpit to blocked ears.'—Miss Lejeune in *The Observer*. ALDATE.