

EXTRACTS

WE are glad to find an appreciation of the life and character of the Abbé Kothen in *Evangeliser* (Nov.-Dec., Brussels). The Abbé's death a year ago at the age of fifty-four came as a surprise to many of his friends, who were almost as numerous in this country as in Belgium. His great, apostolic spirit had been one of the mainstays of the inauguration of the Y.C.W. in England, and the up-to-date appraisal of religious and social movements in this country in his monthly *Fiches Documentaires* showed that he had the Christianity of England very much at heart.

The intimate source of this fruitful life and the secret of its unity lay in the virile, ardent and effective love for the Person of the Word Incarnate. From his youth Robert Kothen had been fascinated by the imposing picture of Christ the King. As described by Pius XI in his encyclical *Quas primas*, and as long ago depicted by St Paul in his Epistles, The Kingship of Christ appeared to the young student as the essential goal of the creation and redemption, as the remedy for the evils of mankind, especially of those of our present epoch. Robert Kothen gave himself to the service of the Great King with a complete dedication; the greater part of his letters conclude with the formula 'In Christ the King'. He never ceased to be inspired with the desire to promote, by every possible means, our Lord's Kingdom in the contemporary world.

Fr van Steenberghe's description of the Abbé's source of inspiration provides an admirable pattern for the spiritual life of any apostle of today. Abbé Kothen's reward must surely be great as it can be measured by the gracious fruits of his labours during his life. May he rest in peace.

The Italian counterpart of THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT has blossomed in the last year into a review of great value with a carefully and scientifically organized programme. All its issues for 1956 were devoted to a study of the Spiritual Exercises; and now besides the three large issues of *Vita Christiana*, the papers, essays and critiques are available in book form in three volumes (*Gli Esercizi Spirituali—Libreria Editrice Fiorentina*). The work was the result of an inquiry which resulted in the contributions of 124 correspondents. 'An evident sign', as Padre Colosio, O.P., says in the final July-December issue, 'that a problem exists which is very much alive and which presents real difficulties.' The problem arises mainly from a difference of opinion as to the method to be adopted in using the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises during retreats. Bishop Caminada insists that the Ignatian Exercises be used with a stress on its catechetical method, following a logical development of the themes

of God, Jesus Christ, the Church, hell and heaven, the fundamental virtues, etc., and he suggests that the Catechism will help to fill out these main themes. Padre Pani, O.F.M., suggests surely more profitably, that if the Spiritual Exercises are to be used they should be filled out and deepened by a direct use of the Gospels. But a Spiritual Director takes the bull by the horns in distinguishing the 'Ignatian' from the 'Theological' method of making a retreat. He evidently prefers the theological method but considers that the two can to some extent be combined, or, as he says, 'conciliated' by considering one as the complement of the other.

The Ignatian method in fact emphasizes by preference and with more insistence the negative aspect of the interior life: it rectifies the use of creatures with denial and the neutralization of disorderly affections: for St Ignatius indeed 'any method of preparing and disposing the soul for removing disorderly affection . . . is called Spiritual Exercises. . . . The other direction, however, in which holiness is not equated with the degree of denial but with the degree of grace concentrates by preference on the positive aspect of the interior life, namely the union of the soul with God and the elements which constitute that union: the 'gratia virtutum et donorum'.

He therefore concludes that one could begin with the Ignatian method of detachment from creatures, but from there one must proceed to the attachment to God by grace.

ON THE SUBJECT of Retreats, Fr Thomas Dubay concludes his enquiry on 'Sisters' Retreats' (in November *Review for Religious*; St Louis, U.S.A.) with the results of his questionnaire on the subject-matter of these exercises. The results show that an overwhelming majority of sisters in America desire positive guidance and instruction on the mysteries of faith and of the way to holiness as the themes for their annual retreats. But the statement of a positive theme does not always mean a positive treatment; one sister wrote back to the author:

In fraternal charity stress these points: rash judgment, gossiping, curiosity, selfishness, self-assertiveness, self-complacency, and stinginess in every shape and size.

It seems, however, that this was not the usual tenor of the replies.



REVIEWS

THE SPLENDOUR OF THE CHURCH. By Henri de Lubac, S.J. Translated by Michael Mason. (Sheed and Ward; 15s.)

This is the translation of the second edition of a work called *Méditation sur l'Eglise*, and as its French title suggests, it is a meditation in the