

Incarnation and its continuance in the Mystical Body. Despite the sublimity and difficulty of the Christian calling, Christianity can never be an esoteric religion nor the Church a congregation of an *élite*. Here the writer is at her best. She is painfully aware of the sharp contrast between Christian theory and Christian practice, and horrified by the spectacle of contemporary bourgeois Catholicism, the 'prudery, vulgarity, cant, pharisaism, lack of intellectual candour, emotionalism' of a typical devout Catholic, 'Have you ever watched a Christian street-procession, studied it as a procession of physiognomies, and not felt depressed and repelled by the spectacle it offers?' But she sees 'how utterly God threw everything into the hazard when He delivered Himself up to reality, and the truly terrifying, humble, heroic obedience of the Church which dares to take upon herself the burden of humanity just as it is, to deliver herself up to it, to expose herself to a martyrdom of degradation . . . That I call taking the mystery of the Incarnation seriously.'

It is a magnificent book, and if sometimes it would seem to overstate its case, it should for that reason be all the more powerful as a corrective to degenerate misconceptions of our Christian calling and inheritance. It is filled with hard sayings; but those who can receive them would do well to ponder upon them and communicate them in simpler form to others, for its message is for *all*.

Fr. Vann's Introduction shows how much of the argument can be re-cast in vigorous but more homely English.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

THE WAY OF SIMPLICITY. By W. E. Orchard, D.D. (Putnam; 5/-).

The theme of this book is the essential simplicity of the spiritual life in practice, a point which much needs stressing in relief of those many whose subconscious persuasion, anyway, is that on the contrary it is very elaborate and complicated—almost as if God had fitted us with one kind of nature and had then made demands upon us which it would require a quite different one to meet. No doubt, as Dr. Orchard says in his first chapter, this erroneous impression is very largely due to the bewildering wealth of didactic, analytical, expository, and hortatory (not to say minatory) literature on the subject which is almost thrust upon all who begin to take their spiritual life seriously—the wood smothered by the trees. His effort, therefore, is to show (and he succeeds) that in loving and serving God, in aiming at the highest ideal that we can see, we are not doing violence to our nature but are fulfilling it.

REVIEWS

St. Augustine says that God has so made us that we can find rest and peace nowhere else than in Him : and again, that if we *wish* to love Him, the thing is done, 'Amicus Dei esse si voluero, ecce nunc fio!' As Dr. Orchard insists, directly or indirectly, in every chapter of his book, the desire to make progress (as we somewhat self-centredly call it) must be real, must be the dominating desire among no matter how many others, must be the genuine statement of my true self : after that the way is simple. He does not say that it will be simple in the sense of making no call upon our strength and courage, upon our faith our hope and our charity : certainly not. But it will be simple in the sense that the issue and its implications will be clear, the way quite definite, the truth unequivocal, the life harmonious.

Many people do not believe this : they are persuaded that if a thing is worth having it must be difficult to do : that if knowledge is worth having it must cost much to acquire. They are right : but they forget, or have never understood, what they might so easily have learned from the words of Christ Himself, that to follow Him means without doubt to carry a burden and to bear a yoke, yet because by so doing they are making themselves one with Him who alone perfectly obeyed that one simple Great Commandment—the *unum necessarium*—to love God above all things, the very pain and labour that they still will not cease to feel will become to them no other thing than sheer happiness and complete contentment.

R. H. J. STEUART, S.J.

USE YOUR REASON. First of all about God. By Joseph O'Connor. (C.T.S. Pamphlet ; 2d.)

It seems to us that this pamphlet is so important and so valuable, notwithstanding its necessary brevity, that it should not be allowed to pass without special notice. It is intended primarily by the author for children about to leave school, and he has a remarkable gift for reaching the young mind and capturing it. (Already his *Between Ourselves* Talks to Boys pamphlets published by the C.T.S. have exceeded a circulation of 100,000.) But he provides in fact a treatise in Natural Theology that will provide mental food in a palatable and, even more important, in a digestible form for people of almost any age or education. In these days of agnosticism and atheism no Catholic will deny the urgent need of a reasonable defence of the very fundamentals of religious belief, but only those whose duty it is to formulate this defence will know the difficulty of presenting it simply and intelligibly in the vernacular. With remarkable success the author of this pamphlet has undertaken to reduce the sublimest philosophical truths to the level of comprehension of children. He deals with the Existence of God, with the nature of Being and