

the Confessor, Athanasius and Hippolytus. Some of the texts are well known, others are difficult of access otherwise.

It is good that now two volumes have been devoted to that intriguing figure, Hippolytus of Rome. The earlier one was his treatise on the 'Apostolic tradition', of which Gregory Dix of Nashdom produced an important study in 1937. The rediscovery of Hippolytus is barely 100 years old now, and one cannot help feeling that the learned Canon Bardy might have given us a little more about him in the Introduction than he has done. (Neither the important work of R. H. Connolly of Downside, nor the work of Dix are mentioned.) It would have been interesting to know if he has any new conclusions about Hippolytus.

Several of the volumes in this series are examples of patristic exegesis, and the present Commentary on Daniel is of quite especial interest since it is the first extant deliberate commentary on a book of the Bible by a Catholic writer (i.e. excluding homilies or passing points of exegesis). The exegesis is at once historical, theological, moral and allegorical. Hippolytus's historical background is somewhat confused, but his theology is orthodox. His moral considerations reflect the troubled times in which he lived (c. 200), and the constant preoccupation of the faithful of the time with the possible coming of Antichrist in the near future. Political unrest suggested that the power that 'restrains him' of II Thess. 2, 6-7 (generally believed at the time to be the Roman Empire) might be removed, and so the wicked one be revealed. But Hippolytus warns his readers not to expect that just yet. (The blurb calls the commentary an *œuvre de circonstance* suitable for the reader who also lives in a time when the political future is very uncertain.) Hippolytus's allegorizing (and of course much of the Book of Daniel is allegory), though often very elaborate, is not fantastic. The commentary on Daniel dates from before Hippolytus's schismatic adventure which ended with his martyrdom together with the Pope from whom he had seceded. Hippolytus was the last Roman author to write in Greek.

The Greek text, where extant, is given with French translation on the opposite page. Where the Greek is lacking, recourse is had to the Old Slavonic version, not given, but the translation is made from the German version in the Corpus Berolinense.

The production of the book is very pleasing. It is printed at Tournai and the Greek type is of a fount similar to that usually used in England, which is rarely met with in continental publications.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

DIFFICULTIES IN LIFE. By Rudolf Allers. (Mercier Press; 12s. 6d.)

*Difficulties in Life*, like most psychological treatises, is an attempt to analyse human behaviour with a view to helping people to adjust their lives to their social environment, but unlike most of them it envisages an end which is not social merely. Dr Allers, however, is

concerned with a man's destiny as an adopted son of God. The book is written for everyman in simple language and, in spite of a certain amount of needless repetition, is not difficult to read.

Of the three parts into which *Difficulties in Life* is divided the first is the most important, 'Of the Need and the Chances of Improvement'. In this section Dr Allers, persuasively and convincingly, shows that human character, contrary to general modern belief, is anything but immutable, and gives instances of character changes in human experience. He is most insistent on establishing this point, indeed it is the foundation upon which his whole work rests—characters can and do change, and not necessarily once only within the span of a human life; one instance alone would be sufficient to disprove any theory of immutability, but in fact there are many within the daily experience of everyone. Self-knowledge ploughs the furrow in which the seed of a new character may be sown. The difficulty about self-knowledge is that 'man judges all things, all actions, all events from his personal point of view. In many a respect he does not know where in fact he stands. His "standpoint" is hidden to him; he cannot see it, because he is standing on it'. From Dr Allers a sincere and careful reader may learn how to discover the hidden depths of his own character. Whether he will ever actually know them, of course, will depend upon himself; the writer does not pretend to be able to perform the analysis for the reader but only to show its possibility and the manner of its accomplishment.

Part II, 'On Troubles, Difficulties and Faults', reads rather like an examination of conscience. In it the sincere seeker after self-knowledge will recognise much of himself, whilst the reader who does not desire to know himself will have a grand time applying the faults to his neighbours in whom, in greater or less degree, they will certainly be found. *Difficulties in Life* will have nothing to offer this type of reader, one 'who is not as other men'. For him prayer and grace are the only remedies. 'How to Help One's Self', the third part of the book, subdivided into 'What to Know' and 'What to Do', adds little to what has gone before. After recapitulating, the Doctor makes suggestions designed to assist, in a practical way, a person who wishes to re-form his character.

This is a book worth having. It is sincere, instructive and helpful. Its tone is Catholic, its doctrine culled to a great extent from standard spiritual writers; if it fulfilled no other need it would be worth while to read this book as an exercise in humility. J. N. P.

COMPANIONS FOR ETERNITY. By A. Carré, O.P. Translated by Clare Sheppard. (Blackfriars; 2s. 6d.)

After explaining to a small group of reasonably alert and educated Catholic young people that St Paul, in describing marriage as a great sacrament, was not directly testifying to its being one of the seven, but calling attention to the mystery, the reviewer was asked bluntly,