

A contrast is made between the power of holiness in the sanctified Christian and the inability of Satan and his angels to dwell in holiness. For the unclean spirit rest has become impossible—'the earth's surface burns the sole of his foot'. His only chance of repose is a sinful conscience. And so in 'Christianus' we read: 'The periodical desecration or profanation of vast Christian lands becomes as simple in this explanation as the advance of a Napoleonic army. Satan wants to find rest, so he must destroy, if he can, every stronghold of holiness, be it a church spire, be it a crucifix by the wayside, a convent, a school of Christian truth, or a conscience that is in the grace of God. With such things confronting him on all sides Satan cannot rest.'

In the third book, those points of Christian doctrine are emphasised which strengthen hope of eternal happiness in the world to come.

The editor relates a delightful incident illustrating the Abbot's reverence for the dignity of a human soul. One day whilst out walking he met a Catholic mother with her recently-born baby. Before and after speaking to her, quite naturally, he uncovered his head and bowed to the sleeping child.

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

OBEDIENCE. (Blackfriars Publications; 16s. 6d.)

This is yet another book in the series on Religious Life for which Blackfriars Publications has made itself responsible. The subject is treated in a logical order, starting with its history and following this with the theology of obedience. The article contributed by P. Motte is particularly clear and places before us the sound thomist principles of obedience. Unless obedience is understood in its right relation to the other virtues, it is impossible to give it its true value and importance. In the psychological and experimental section there is a very great deal of most useful matter. If all those responsible for the training of young religious would only take in these pages, much unhappiness would be avoided and fewer square pegs would be found in round holes. After all, here we have the findings of experts not only in the practical sphere but in the speculative as well.

P. Marie Adrian Corselis, O.F.M., does seem to 'push' the Franciscan ideal a little and make it appear the only really authentic form of religious life. He says (p. 44): 'Solicitude for one's personal perfection is nothing compared with the practical exercise of charity'. But surely 'solicitude for one's personal perfection' is one of the chief exercises of charity? See S. Thomas, II-II, 26, on the order of charity. Again, speaking of the structure of the earlier orders, he says, in the original French, 'Un fait nouveau et extrêmement significatif . . . sera que les ordres naissants du XIIe siècle rejeteront précisément ces structures au moment même où elles vieillissaient et s'effritaient partout, n'ayant plus leur raison d'être'.

This in itself seems something of an overstatement, but the translator makes the latter part even stronger by translating '... at the very moment when it is becoming outmoded, and stale, and has ceased to justify its existence'. 'Outmoded' is hardly the word, nor is 'stale', and certainly not 'ceased to justify its existence'. On page 100 surely we should read 'stature' for 'statue', and Mass should always be spelt with a capital (p. 224)! But these are very small points in an excellent book. May we hope that the *Vie Spirituelle* will continue to convene the meetings which have so far resulted in these books, and that Blackfriars Publications will continue to translate them.

DOMINIC J. SIRE, O.P.

RELIGIOUS ACCORDING TO THE SACRED HEART. By Saint Margaret Mary. Translated by a Daughter of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. (Mercier Press; 7s. 6d.)

The subtitle of this book is 'The Individual and Collective Instructions of Saint Margaret Mary to her Novices'. It is a translation from the French of part of Volume II of *The Life and Works of Saint Margaret Mary* by Monsignor Gauthey. It consists of seventy-six instructions to novices who have dedicated their lives to the Sacred Heart. All these instructions are extremely practical, the first fifty being addressed to individual novices or sisters. They are written in a style which, though it lacks smoothness, never lacks clarity and often has extraordinary power. This is due not so much to originality of thought and expression, but rather to its unmistakably authoritative tone. On occasions one suspects the saint is merely repeating the very words our Lord has used to herself.

Saint Margaret Mary was Mistress of Novices for only two years, and she had only seven novices. This little book enables anyone with sufficient courage and generosity to increase their number. Here, surely, is an authoritative guide. If anyone doubts the strength of his love for Christ; if he thinks he is spiritually a heart case; here are full instructions as to treatment. Saint Margaret Mary is the perfect heart specialist, and her instructions the perfect cardiograph of a healthy heart. It must not be thought that this book is limited to novices in its appeal. There is a sense in which we are all called to be religious according to the Sacred Heart. That is not something achieved in a noviciate; it takes a lifetime. This little book, of just over a hundred pages, is not one which should be read quickly once. It is a book to be read slowly and prayerfully, a few moments at a time, and often.

The publishers are to be complimented on keeping an authoritative work within the reach of many, even if this means the use of paper backs.

SIDNEY F. BREEN