

## REVIEWS

HOLINESS IS WHOLENESS. By Joseph Goldbrunner. (Burns Oates; 5s.)

BAPTISÉS DANS LE CHRIST. By A-M. Carré. (Editions du Cerf.)

THE MEANING OF RELIGIOUS LIFE. By Benoit Lavaud, O.P. (Blackfriars; 4s. 6d.)

In the wrong hands Father Goldbrunner's book would do harm, but only because a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. In the right hands it is a most valuable and important contribution to pastoral spirituality. From the beginning it must be understood that what we call psychological disorders are not in themselves morally reprehensible; they may be the result of sin, more often they are the result of mismanagement, stupid perhaps but still innocent enough, our own or other people's mistakes. Father Goldbrunner then seeks to isolate two sorts of pain to be found in the process of sanctification. One is essential and utterly wholesome; it is the pain of renunciation and recognizing our own nothingness. The other is unwholesome because it finds its origin in our unconscious unwillingness to renounce ourselves. 'Contorted' pain of this sort comes when the celibate tries to keep his vows by an unreflecting 'Down, Satan' or an *agere contra*. Call it repression if you will, this is not the Church's way of renunciation; the Church's way is that of Father Damien, St Theresa, St John the Evangelist who accepted the talent of love as a gift from God. They faced the fact that they had powerful forces of love in themselves which would not be quenched. They faced the fact, too, that because they were sinners (original sinners) they would want to use this talent, all their lives probably, to satisfy their own cravings; but it would only be happily used in the way its maker intended. This certainly involves pain, the pain of self-forgetfulness, which is so different from self-contradiction for it transforms a man into a vital and powerful person in whom suffering burns and glows but does not torture or waste. The same is true and more fundamentally, I believe, although Father Goldbrunner does not enlarge on it, of obedience. Here we must face the fact that our will is only perfectly realized in doing the will of God and at the same time face the fact that we shall always be strongly inclined to self-will. Then there is no question of obedience destroying or quenching the will; it only quenches that which is itself poisonous to a healthy will, namely selfishness or self-will. Here again we have a lifelong struggle to admit with the whole of our being, not just to give a notional assent to the fact that we are incomplete people whose fullness and glory is found in co-operating with God. This is a truth as important for every single Christian as for men and women vowed to obedience.

Father Goldbrunner's book sets out to distinguish between true human suffering and the 'illegitimate illnesses' which are contrary to nature and need not form part of a man's road to perfection. It must be clear that he is preaching no new doctrine or any kind of naturalism, but is developing the principle that grace builds on nature, a thing which the great spiritual teachers of the Church have done for other ages.

During Lent 1954 'Station' Masses after the Roman fashion were celebrated on Friday evenings in the churches of the Latin Quarter of Paris. Père Carré's book comprises the sermons preached at these six Masses. The whole course was planned as a preparation for Easter Communion and the renewal of Baptismal vows; in fact, for some members of the congregation who were converts just completing their course of instruction it was the last lap before Baptism itself and reception into the Church. Naturally, therefore, Baptism is the theme running throughout the conference. In his preface the author explains that it has been possible to present only *les articulations maîtresses du sujet*, but these main outlines are so stimulating that we have here the groundwork for a thorough study of and much meditation on Baptism. Père Carré's main lines are two—the public and private implications of the sacrament. Conversion and 'burial for resurrection' are the private pre-requisites of Baptism. Yet Baptism cannot possibly remain a private affair; we are a holy people, part of the whole Christ, adorned with the gifts of the spirit, essentially a public body. Baptism then touches the whole man; we are not just sprinkled or washed, we are steeped in Christ, buried with him, and our second life is *altogether* new. Christ did not die to save our souls, intellects or wills, but to save *us* complete, body and soul. The Christian looks forward to the resurrection of the body, and we looking back can now see a fuller meaning in Father Goldbrunner's *Holiness is Wholeness*. There is such a thing as Christian good health which is the vigour of people like Father Damien and Monsignor Quinlan who might even triumph physically as well as morally over brainwashing processes and concentration camps. Baptism does not give health as the world gives it, but as Christ gives it, so that even with the worst physical conditions a man's body is still the temple of the Holy Ghost and he may experience the fruit of joy as Father Gerard did in the Tower after torture. Taken together, these two books make stimulating reading.

Father Lavaud's book may at first seem starkly anatomical. That is as it should be, because it is intended for a simple guide to the structure of the religious life. But it is not merely a book for religious. It is intended for everyone. The first chapter in particular is most valuable; it might do something to settle that futile dispute, is religious life better than the

married state? Father Lavaud explains what is meant by Christian perfection which is the goal of all followers of Christ, and distinguished it from what is called the 'state of perfection' where the word 'perfection' is used in another sense. Altogether Father Lavaud's work is practical and instructive.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

JESUS IN HIS TIME. By Daniel-Rops. (Eyre and Spottiswoode, Burns and Oates; 30s.)

This is no ordinary life of our Lord (can *any* life of our Lord be ordinary?), but an outstanding achievement first as a literary work. For this book has sold better than any other non-fictional work, and it has now been translated into fifteen languages. More striking however is that this outstanding achievement is of one who manifestly and firmly believes. The whole book could be looked upon as a sort of external act or profession of faith—that act which is expected of all of us at various moments in our life. All the while an immense amount of information is conveyed about New Testament times, peoples, conditions, and mentalities: and this is done without pedantry in a way calculated to make the Gospel message seem yet more alive against its very real background, geographical, historical, social, etc. The author owes much to the labours and findings of the Dominican *Ecole Biblique* in Jerusalem, and he would be the first to acknowledge this. Much of the biblical renewal which we know today stems from sound foundations laid at the school of St Etienne. The *Bible de Jérusalem* is but one of its many fruits.

However, the style and personal touch remain and there are moments of sublimity (even in translation), as when he comments on our *Lady's Magnificat*: 'So, on the threshold of the Gospel we encounter the moving figure of Mary, in whom Christians reverence the double ideal of that supernatural purity for which even the most depraved retain a secret longing and of that illimitable all-embracing tenderness which motherhood according to the flesh bears to the children of its flesh. The image of the Virgin Mary is at the heart of Western society, a presence so familiar that it would be impossible to compute how many things would be different were that presence effaced. So many names of women, girls and flowers, days in the calendar, places dedicated to her, customs, landscape, language and literature, all bear her sign. . . . The most tender of Christian traditions is this love for the humble young maiden who was the instrument of the will of the Most High; by it, each one of us seeks to find our way back, through the most intense of our sufferings, to that secret, never attained but never abandoned desire, the pure heart of our childhood.'

And, of course, this 'life' of our Lord is thoroughly up-to-date,