

scholars may quibble over the simplification of many quotations. Such simplification however does not distort the truth, it merely cuts away problems and difficulties which will never arise for most readers to consider. It is therefore a learned book for the unlearned, the sort of thing that is not written often enough these days. Mgr Ryan examines the nature of the Church from the evidence of Scripture, tradition and the events of the last two thousand years, and the book should be valuable to many sorts of people, the student, the schoolmaster, the neo-convert, the enquirer. The directness of approach is matched with a simple honesty in facing facts, pleasant and unpleasant. Because he has the facts at his finger-tips and shows no desire to keep any of them up his sleeve Mgr Ryan is in a very strong position when he wants to point out that Borgias could produce a saint as well as a bad Pope. It is refreshing to find a few shrewd comments on the limitation of that overpraised book 'The Robe', and even shrewder remarks (p. 90) on the true nature of loyalty. It is a pity that such a good book is marred here and there by lapses (clearly unintentional) into stock 'ecclesiasticisms' of speech, e.g., 'his successor must *needs* be bishop. . . .' These things are inclined to muddle the clarity of the thought. The book is good enough to deserve to have them corrected, and perhaps the printers might be persuaded to follow a consistent policy in the use of Greek and Erse type. It is good to see most of the Greek and Erse words printed in their native characters, but difficult to see why Roman type should be used for a few.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.



EXTRACTS

FATHER GERARD SITWELL, O.S.B., is contributing a series of articles on Walter Hilton to the *Downside Review*. The second of these (Winter 1949/50) deals with contemplation in the *Scale*, and shows in particular the stress Hilton lays on the illumination by love; charity proceeding from 'love unformed, that is God himself' causes all this illumination in knowing. Father Sitwell points to a peculiar characteristic of Hilton's description of contemplation—that it is judged by 'a lively feeling of grace and privy of heart'. A man who is high in the grace of God can experience the presence of grace within him, which is one aspect of the experiential knowledge of God brought by charity. For St Thomas this experience brings only a conjectural knowledge of grace in the soul, but it is typical of a great deal of English spirituality, particularly in rather exaggerated forms among non-conformists, that the pious man should receive some sort of assurance of God's love. Few other mystical writers lay any stress on a 'feeling of grace', but Fr Sitwell shows that it is not a sensible feeling but a transitory awareness of God's

gracious presence. Hilton, he shows, is fundamentally traditional in his treatment of contemplation.

ANOTHER UNUSUAL FEATURE of certain medieval mystics is treated in a large volume of 600 pages—essays offered for the golden jubilee of Père Viller, S.J. (3 numbers in one, for 1949, of *La Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique*). In this impressive collection of studies for the history of spirituality Père Cabassut deals with the conception of our Lord as Mother. Readers of the LIFE OF THE SPIRIT who remember the articles on this conception in Mother Julian will be interested to find her here set in a wider context. The devotion towards Christ as Mother seems to have originated with St Bernard and to have been a favourite with many medieval recluses. It appears also in certain popular devotions, notably in a medieval English prayer beginning 'Welcome my gracious Creator' and containing among its 32 invocations: 'Welcome my tender nurse. Welcome my loving mother! Our Lady has of course been granted the glorious position of personifying this aspect of God: goodness towards his creatures, but it is worth while remembering that God still retains this attribute himself in our regard.

PROFILE OF A PREACHER is the title chosen by Fr Tindal Atkinson to introduce Italian readers to the character of Fr Vincent McNabb. The article appears in *Vita Christiana* for November-December 1949. He begins with the picture of Hyde Park as the scene of Fr Vincent's most spectacular prowess. But he is shown also as the friend of man in every level of the social structure in England 'which is one of the most complex'.

Many of his friends were anglicans and nonconformists, and among them were three archbishops of Canterbury, Davidson, Lang and Temple, as well as a great number of other members of the clergy, with whom he was always ready to discuss their hopes for restoring Christian unity in England, and to co-operate with them, within the limits of possibility, by way of projects and committees on social welfare. . . . Some who only saw him in Hyde Park and in his public conduct during discussions found in him something of the dramatic which seemed to be rather divorced from his inner conscience. His gestures, above all an occasional and disconcerting habit of going on his knees and kissing the feet of his antagonist, gave rise to this remark. Granted that it was done a little dramatically, we must however note that its source was to be found in the character of the man himself; it was a spontaneous result of his apostolic zeal.

With the death of Fr Vincent in 1943 there passed one of the last of that outstanding type of hero and holy man that was possible before the levelling process which the world, even the Catholic

world, has adopted as an ideal, came to steam-roller all eccentricity, having labelled it unsocial and unchristian. But Fr Vincent had the eccentricity of a Christian saint and we need a resurrection of that type of prophet to save our present society.

SIR ERNEST BARKER pays a happy tribute to Fr Bede Jarrett, O.P., in *The Pylon* (January) in which he recalls some of his Catholic pupils in Oxford.

I shall always remember the glow of his face and the glow of his spirit. He was one of the finest students of his time: a genuine Scholar, with a passion for scholarship. If I taught him, I also learned from him: indeed he was the inspiration of a little book which I once wrote, on the Dominican Order and Convocation. . . . But Fr Bede Jarrett was not only a Scholar, and an inspirer of scholarship in others: he was also a statesman, if I may use that word, and a guide of policy. It was he who brought back his Order to a place of settlement and residence in Oxford exactly seven hundred years from the time when the Dominicans had first settled there in 1221. That is his lasting memorial. But he has also a memorial in the affection of all who knew him and remember the grace that shone in him.

It is encouraging to find these continual references from various quarters to this great and holy English friar. Recently Fr Hubert van Zeller, O.S.B., devoted a chapter of one of his many stimulating books to this master of the spiritual life from whom he learned so much. It is now sixteen years since his death in March 1934, and since then it has sometimes been rumoured that his 'cause' had been introduced in Rome.

CHARITY. The indomitable resourcefulness of the editors of *Fêtes et Saisons* has now led them to launch another series of *Albums*. The *Albums Liturgiques* are not concluded, but now hand in hand with them go *Les Albums de la Vie Chrétienne*, and the first of these very naturally is devoted to Charity. (Cerf: Blackfriars; 1s.) Amid the well chosen pictures and photographs there runs a commentary on this virtue—as friendship, as living with God, as a friendship with the outcast, not giving with words only, making Christ present, building up the Church and prefiguring heaven. It is full of practical detail both as a modern examination of conscience and as throwing a spotlight on certain deeds and words where charity is to be sought. And in the centre page a series of pictures shows how the chief virtue flows out from the seven sacraments into souls of all kinds.

MORT ET RESURRECTION DU CHRETIEN is the latest number in the Liturgical Albums series published by the Editions du Cerf (Blackfriars Publications, 1s.0d.). The Christian attitude to death is most truly mirrored in the rites of burial. As usual, the liturgical texts are translated and explained and their meaning underlined with

excellent photographs, not only of the rites themselves but of the theme of death and resurrection in Christian art. In addition there are given practical suggestions—and how necessary these are nowadays, in a secular society which has infected even Catholic families with its superstitious attitude to death—which should help to make a house of mourning into a house of hope. The lit candles and the holy water, the communal prayers and procession, are more than relics of another age's faith: they are signs which should animate the Christian community when one of its members has been called to eternity.

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BOOKS RECEIVED

- Burns, Oates and Washbourne.* Omer Englebert (Trans. Edward Hutton): St Francis of Assisi, 16s.
- Casterman.* Claude Quinard: Message de St François de Sales, 63 frs.
- Cloumore and Reynolds.* Thomas Hurley, S.J.: Father Michael Brown, S.J. 12s.6d.
- M. H. Gill (Dublin).* André Combes: The Spirituality of St Thérèse, 10s.6d.
- Herder (Freiburg).* Arthur Allgeier: Die neue Psalmenübersetzung. DM.9.80; Benedikt Baur, O.S.B.: Werde Licht, DM.7.60.
- Mercier Press.* Eugene Boylan, O.C.R.: The Spiritual Life of the Priest, 10s.6d.; Martin A. Jugie, A.A.: Purgatory, 12s.6d.; Henri Petitot, O.P.: An Introduction to Holiness, 8s.6d.; Canon C. Restieaux: Fifty Sermons, 10s.6d.
- Mowbray.* St Bernard: On the Love of God, 3s.6d.; Stafford Cripps: The Spiritual Crisis, 1s.
- Sheed and Ward.* C. C. Martindale: The Faith of the Roman Church, 7s.6d.; The Spirit of God, 7s.6d.; Jean Piquaveant: Jesus and I, 6s.

LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

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Devaluation. In view of the change in currency, the annual subscription to *LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* is now reduced to TWO DOLLARS for the United States. Annual subscriptions of three dollars received since September 31st, 1949, will be extended for a further period of six months.