

the supreme Good towards which all holiness must tend. Indeed the whole economy of God's creative work in the world, and the purpose of the redemption achieved by his Son, is that we may enter into the divine life of the Trinity. 'This Infinite Love who envelops us desires to associate us even here below with all his blessedness. It is the whole Trinity that abides within us, all that mystery which we shall behold in the vision of heaven'. Sister Elizabeth can go on, then, to say that 'the Trinity is our dwelling-place, our home, our Father's house which we should never leave'.

We must be grateful to the Benedictine nuns of Stanbrook for providing so excellent a translation of a book which should find a warm welcome among English-speaking Catholics. The publishers, too, deserve our thanks for making available this well-printed American edition.

I.E.

THE INSIDE OF THE CUP. By Ferdinand Valentine, O.P. (Blackfriars Publications; 6s.)

This book is described as 'the Second Theophila Correspondence'. Like its predecessor, *Whatsoever He Shall Say*, it consists of an interchange of letters between the author and the imaginary 'Theophila'. In this book another letter-writer appears, David. *The Inside of the Cup* deals mainly with prayer. Prayer dangers are faced. There is a careful explanation of what Quietism is, and why it is condemned. There is a useful chapter on distractions and one on the Rosary. We do not agree with the author's sweeping statement on page 59 that 'devotees of the Rosary love it best as a private devotion'. We should prefer to say *some* devotees, but not all. We well remember someone once comparing the public recitation of the Rosary to the rhythmic crash of waves—waves breaking at the feet of God.

On page 110 the author speaks with deep reverence for 'the simple, poor, ordinary "man-in-the-street" Christian who has been faithful to our Lord all the way through'. To such as these we feel the close reasoning we find in *The Inside of the Cup* would not appeal. But then no book is of universal appeal.

Young men and women, members of study circles, teachers, and students will find the book priceless. We should like also to introduce it to Novice Masters and Mistresses and to Confessors.

GILES BLACK, O.P.

OF CLEAVING TO GOD. (De Adhaerendo Deo). Attributed to St Albert the Great. (Blackfriars; 2s.)

The making of books must go on: there is a market and a public whose imperious demands must be met. In our day it is perhaps altogether too Spartan a standard to require that a writer should not fall to writing until he has something to say. Given willing publishers and eager readers, no author should, one supposes, be asked to wait for more.

But it may be doubted whether this hearty commercial rule is quite good enough for writing upon the spiritual life. And yet, no one who has kept an eye upon the output of spiritual work in recent years can fail to have felt what one might call the impact of sales. From the frankly 'scenario' manner of certain American writers to the graver (but hardly more adequate) approach of some authors nearer home, we have been treated to a succession of clever productions that no one would think it unkind to describe as, largely, would-be best-sellers. A very spiritual Carmelite Prioress lately expressed to the writer her wonderment that certain recent spiritual books were published at all; they seemed to say no more than what had been often and equally well said before. Gone apparently are the days when the reader looked, with St Francis de Sales, to see whether the author's name began with the letters St. The incursion of a finished writer like Mr Aldous Huxley into the field of spiritual doctrine has familiarised everybody with the language of the spiritual life; and it is hardly surprising if authors have felt that this area is now as open to them as any other. They have in consequence tried their hand in a quarter where it is more emphatically true than anywhere else in the world that only *ex abundantia cordis os loquitur*, and have aspired to be pipes in a field in which, St Bernard assures us, only full cisterns can hope to succeed.

It is not easy to say what should be done about it. But there is *one* thing that can be done, and it is being done very effectively by the Dominican Fathers in their Blackfriars productions of acknowledged first-class medieval ascetical writing. There is nothing like the genuine outpouring of a soul filled with God to unmask by contrast the brilliant ineffectual imitation. The work before us is a perfect little gem of the interior life and must take its place with the great medieval spiritual classics—midway, I would suggest, between the sympathetically human manner of *The Imitation* and the austere selflessness of *The Cloud of Unknowing*. The (probably anonymous) author has attached to his work the name of St Albert the Great, for the excellent reason that much of his doctrine comes from the great Dominican Doctor. But he has laid under contribution other 13th and 14th century writers—a passage of the 7th chapter is easily recognisable as St Bonaventure's—and the whole book presents in its purest form the spirituality of an age that was on the one hand greatly pre-occupied with divine things and on the other enviably free from the omnipresent commercialism of our time. The book is written by a religious, apparently for himself, but there is little in it that is not pertinent to the interior life in men of every state. The warmest praise is due to Blackfriars Publications and to the competent translator for giving us (and for only 2/-!) so valuable a book: it cannot be too emphatically commended to the serious reader.

O.F.M.