

**LETTERS OF BEDE JARRETT**, edited by Bede Bailey, Aiden Bellenger and Simon Tugwell. *Downside Abbey & Blackfriars Publications, Bath and Oxford, 1989.*

Cyril Jarrett was born in August 1881, the son of an officer in the Indian Army. He was educated at Stonyhurst where he went in 1891. In September 1898 he joined the Dominican Novitiate at Woodchester in Gloucestershire, taking the name in religion of 'Bede'. Six years later, in 1904, when he had done his philosophy and part of his theology and was ready for ordination, his superiors took the surprising decision to send him to Oxford, where in 1221 the first Dominican house in England had been founded, to read modern history.

He took up residence in October 1904 at the Private Hall of the Benedictines of Ampleforth and was ordained at Woodchester in the end of that year. In 1907 he was among the nine who won first class honours in history. After that he spent a year at the University of Louvain, where he finished his theology. In August 1908 he was assigned to the London Priory of the Dominicans at Haverstock Hill and began work in the parish.

He had quiet good looks which he never lost; he was witty but always within the bounds of charity; he was humble and patient. He had a musical voice which was easy to listen to and which contributed to the making of him as a great preacher. He had natural charm and made friends easily.

The Dominican order is unique in the Catholic world in the place which its rule gives to democracy. Priors are not appointed but elected for a term of years. After only twelve years as a friar in solemn vows, Bede was elected prior of the London priory at Haverstock Hill. In 1916 he was chosen by the priors of the English Province as the Prior Provincial. He was then only thirty-five and the usual age of a Provincial is about fifty or more. He took it lightly replying to one letter of good wishes with a mock encyclical 'given in the first week of our provincialate' and promising that the letter, 'shall be put in the coffin with us when we go.' The Provincial's term of office is four years. Bede was re-elected in 1920, 1924 and 1928. In 1929 he was the 'runner up' in the election of the Master General. 'I never did believe' he wrote, 'that I should end up in Rome as the M.G. I thought better of the Holy Spirit than that. The great work of his life was to establish once again a Dominican house at the university of Oxford. This he did and Blackfriars Priory is the result.

The Dominican income is from the preaching of the friars. Father Bede was himself a main source during the whole of his life; in particular the money he raised for the building of the priory at Blackfriars made the enterprise possible.

In 1932, having been Provincial for twenty years there was a change. The Prior of Blackfriars was elected as Provincial and the Blackfriars community unanimously elected Bede into his place as Prior. In March 1934 after a brief illness he died.

This is the structure of Father Bede's life, with the omission of the central thing in it. This is that he was visibly a man of God, whose

garment it seemed enough to touch. His goodness was a radiation that cannot be described in words. His manner was easy. His work was unceasing and he got through it quietly. He was never in a hurry. Whatever he was doing he was always willing to be interrupted and never urgent for anyone to leave.

The authors have collected his many letters to his friends and have fortified them with seventy pages of 'biographical notes' of the persons mentioned therein. So that if there is to be what the authors call a 'full dress biography' here is the invaluable material needed for it.

I doubt if it will ever be written. For there are not words that can describe the most important thing about Bede Jarrett, which was his holiness. Sanctity cannot be written about in the way that Bernini has put into stone the ecstasy of St. Teresa or that El Greco has painted the depth of grief in his picture in the church at Toledo of the funeral of the Count of Orgaz.

PATRICK DEVLIN

**TO TOUCH THE TEXT: Biblical and Related Studies in Honour of Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J. edited by Maurya P. Horgan and Paul J. Kobelski), Crossroad, New York, 1989. Pp. xiv + 418. \$39.95.**

This *festschrift* in honour of Fr. Fitzmyer appears on the heels of the one published in the July 1986 issue of the CBQ (*A Wise and Discerning Heart*) on the occasion of his 65th birthday. The appearance of two major *festschriften* attests to the great esteem which students and colleagues of his have for one of the U.S.A.'s foremost biblical scholars and one of the world's leading authorities on non-biblical Aramaic. The quality of the studies in this present volume bears ample witness to the wide range of Fitzmyer's interests and achievements and to the influence that these have had upon other scholars. One can also see the marks of Fr. Fitzmyer's own style and methodology in many of the essays. In the four sections into which the volume is divided ('Language', 'Hebrew Bible', 'Dead Sea Scrolls', and 'New Testament') one finds a good representation of the current state of studies in biblical and related languages, the Jewish background of the NT and the importance of Jewish literature from the second century BCE to the first century CE for an appreciation of the New Testament, even though 'pure' New Testament studies dominate. Fr. Fitzmyer's own meticulous attention to detail and cautious approach to the application of parallels (he is fond of referring to S. Sandmel's seminal SBL address on 'parallelomania', alluded to without citation by D.J. Harrington on p. 324) is reflected on practically every page, to make for a collection of high quality and interest, not always found in a *festschrift*.

It is impossible to discuss all of the articles in a brief review. The reviewer would like to single out the following for being especially noteworthy as well as one which falls short of standards of technical competence set by the others. F.T. Gignac's discussion of the phonology of 1st c. Greek (based in part on other work which he has published) is here presented in a clear and easily accessible format; it is indispensable for students not only of NT Greek but also of the history of