

on to the fifth, to hymn and glorify the queen of virtues, for "when we carry love, it carries us above all the heavens to Him whom we love"; then "all the faculties of the soul rejoice, the veins swell and the blood grows hot with the desire of fulfilling the glory of God." But in his exultation he by no means forgets the foundation on which the love of God is built: "For patient suffering is the wedding-garment which Christ put on when He took His Church as bride at the altar of the Cross, and with the same garment He has clothed all His family. . . . If you would be exalted, you must needs suffer." For sanctity is not to be had save after the model of Christ, and it is one of the glories of the book that our Lord is held up to us for imitation from first to last, He the "Example and Singer of God's praise here and hereafter." And in His traces we reach at last the final steps, the contemplative life of union with the Trinity and of "annihilation" in God's essence. But here he touches on the sublimest things which can be understood only by those who have attained to the highest stages of sanctity. It is here, too, that the obscure passages occur which are discussed in the Introduction—but who could blame the mystic when words fail him and theology deserts him before the ineffable union, before which even a St. Thomas confessed that all he had written was straw?

Though small in size, the "Seven Steps" are big with Christian wisdom, a very authentic ring in the chain that connects Dionysius the Areopagite with St. John of the Cross. More, it is one of those rare books of transparent humility which makes us entirely forget their author and imperceptibly leads us to prayer, surely the greatest thing a work of the human mind can do.

(H. C. GRAEF.

"JUST FOR TODAY." By a Benedictine of Stanbrook. (Burns Oates, 6s.)

This is an extremely valuable little book, for it not only introduces us to two great spiritual writers, St. Thomas à Kempis and St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, but it does so in a way at once practical and effective. The Imitation must be read and read again if it is to give up its secret, and it is the same with the writings of St. Theresa; especially is this true of *L'histoire d'une Ame* (her autobiography), from which most of the quotations in this book are taken. Both St. Thomas à Kempis and St. Theresa present us with the same difficulty, their writings are in each case so full of spiritual treasures, so closely knit together and so concisely expressed, that it is most difficult to concentrate upon one simple passage and not to be distracted by the wealth of spiritual teaching contained in the passages surrounding it. We are apt to suffer from spiritual indigestion, to feel it is more than we can manage,

and to lay the book aside without really assimilating the message and making it our own. The author of this little book solves the problem by arranging these spiritual treasures in tabloid form to be taken once a day. For every day in the year there is set a passage from the *Imitation*, with its parallel passage from the writings of St. Theresa. In this simple manner we are invited not so much to study as to meditate, and meditating, to contemplate the marvellous unity underlying all Catholic piety. More than this, we shall be led, as we meditate, to realize not only the unity of Catholic piety, but also its endless variations. Each saint points the same truths under different aspects. The saints do, not rival one another, they complement each other, for they all form part of a divinely ordained and an exquisitely manifold pattern. St. Thomas à Kempis provides us with a sustained treatise on the spiritual life; he gives us the vital principles. St. Theresa's writings, on the other hand, are the spiritual life personified, and he presents the same vital truths in terms of everyday life.

This little book, which, by the way, contains a gem of an introduction by Mgr. R. A. Knox, by its combination of the principles of the spiritual life on the one hand and their very human application on the other, preserves a perfect balance. It should be of real value in the formation of souls at a time when the rush of life so easily prevents us seeing the details, which form that very rush, in their true relationship with those supernatural truths and principles which alone give life and movement any meaning.

VERNON JOHNSON.

WHAT THE CROSS MEANS TO ME. A THEOLOGICAL SYMPOSIUM.
(James Clarke; 7s. 6d.)

Any symposium is bound to fluctuate in quality, especially when the contributors represent such divergent schools of thought as do the writers here: Anglican and Nonconformist, Modernist and Traditionalist, Quaker, Catholic and a member of the Russian Orthodox Church. It may, however, be fairly claimed that this book has to some extent achieved its object "to contribute something of value to the discussion." It contains such familiar names as Conrad Noel, John Middleton Murry, Charles Williams, but two striking essays come from a Quaker—J. Armstrong Hughes, and a Russian Orthodox layman, Evgheny Lampert. Mr. Hughes airs a very important and neglected theory of creative art and appreciation—"only through suffering are great works created and only through the fellowship of suffering can they be understood." M. Lampert explains the oriental "affective" approach to theology. It is a mentality modern western Europe cannot hope to grasp thoroughly, but she does need to comprehend the gulf