

from the rest of our lives. One cannot isolate the sacraments from life, and the splendid way in which Fr Schillebeeckx proceeds to integrate his outline of sacramental doctrine into a general theory of Christian life should be of particular interest to layfolk. Briefly, if the rest of a man's behaviour is not a preparation for, an expression or intensification of, his sacramental behaviour, it must at least be a dissipation and annulment of it. One can have moments of greater depth or actuality of religious experience outside the sacraments, but the sacraments always remain the normal *points de repère*, the moments which epitomize the rest of our life. Every Christian's life is the visible sign of grace in the world. That the Church is the 'sign lifted up among the nations' is verified not only in encyclicals and pontifical ceremonies but also in the self-sacrificing love, the responsibility, the humble confidence, with which ordinary Christians face the trials of everyday life. Grace becomes manifest in the world in the personal holiness of each one of us: that is where God invites unbelievers to find him. People cannot be expected to believe in the Church unless they see that we love one another—unless the reality of charity is made present in their lives by their contact with Christians.

It is impossible to give an adequate account of all that this slim book contains. One might, however, in view of the revision of our attitudes to our separated brethren which is in process, draw attention to the useful remarks Fr Schillebeeckx has to make about the value of non-Catholic sacraments. All in all, one cannot imagine a work of theology which could be at the same time more solidly grounded in traditional doctrine and more engaged in the special challenges of living the faith at this time.

FERGUS KERR, O.P.

THE CONVERSION OF AUGUSTINE, by Romano Guardini, translated by Elinor Briefs; Sands, 18s.

This book manifests a profound and discerning sympathy with its subject. If, as may be feared, it does not succeed in generally communicating this sympathy to its English readers, the fault will lie with the style. It is too lush. Favourite words of the author are 'rich' and 'warm'. There are not a few imposing sentences which the more carefully they are read and re-read, the less they seem to mean. There is no reason to suppose that the translator has not done her work well (I have not read the original), and there are reasons to suppose that the author's style and mind are not well suited for translation into English, a light-minded language for a light-minded people. Take this last sentence of a footnote, for instance (p. 88): 'Ernest Hello in his book *L'homme* has deep things to say on the whole sinister problem of laughter and the laughable'. I suspect that Augustine himself would have been amused. Sometimes one would be inclined to suspect a little one-upmanship—if such behaviour were compatible with the author's undoubted seriousness; for example: 'Opposed to this attitude (an autonomous attitude towards life) is another, which—to avoid the negative

undertone the word "heteronom" has acquired—we shall call "allonom" (p. 115). Well, perhaps heteronom has acquired undertones in German that it is too neonym to have picked up in English.

It does indeed seem to be the case that the author is writing for a climate of intellectual discussion with which we are not very familiar in this country. But if the English reader will only be patient with this foreign climate and indigestible style, he will find Mgr Guardini a most shrewd and reliable guide to Augustine's *Confessions*, and indeed to his mind and character. The following quotation, from the same chapter as the preceding one (p. 131), must suffice to illustrate the substantive merit of this book: 'And He is the God of love. The Augustinian definitions of the God-relationship, of His universal efficacy, of grace and so forth, become intolerable to personal existence the moment they are severed from the decisive truth that God is the essentially Loving One. The importance of this for the whole problem of divine efficacy, of grace and so on, cannot be over-emphasized. Wherever Augustinian doctrine has become fateful for Christian life—I have in mind both the predestination heresies and the personal difficulties experienced by believers naturally prone to melancholy—it has been because in conceptions of God, divine omnipotence or justice dominated. Such conceptions are apt to be based on Augustine, but wrongly so. Augustinian thought can be truly appropriated only on the basis of Augustinian experience and conception of God, in which, mighty as divine power and just holiness are, it is love that predominates and guides'.

EDMUND HILL O.P.

THE CATHOLIC FAMILY HANDBOOK, by George A. Kelly; Robert Hale, 21s.

This is a book which I would describe not so much as a good book, though in some ways it is one, as an indication of a hopeful trend. So often Catholics lag behind the rest of the world in their approach to life—either solving problems in the terms of a hundred years ago, or sighing after a Christian society that has never in fact existed. This book, though it seldom rises above the level of intelligent common sense, is as up-to-date in its approach as Dr Spock, and sees the upbringing of children as it is in the world of today.

In so short a book (only just over 200 pp. including the Appendices), the treatment of any one aspect of the subject must necessarily be brief; its title, *Handbook*, gives a more accurate description than its rather grandiose subtitle—"The complete book of practical guidance and inspiration on every aspect of family life". As a handbook it is useful, but what should be the most useful part of it, the suggestions for further reading, has unfortunately not been adapted for the English edition, and all the books suggested are American, many of them not obtainable here.

Though up-to-date as a whole, some of the more specifically Catholic pass-