

(thrice); errors in Hebrew on pp. 46, 95, 103 and 353; errors in Latin on pp. 30, 71, 89, 106, 256 (twice), 313 (twice), and 363; errors in German on pp. 64 and 298; errors in English on pp. 109, 196 and 209. There is a mis-translation from the Latin on p. 65. There are erroneous statements on the incidence of biblical words on pp. 47 and 103. Many of these errors can be laid up to faulty proof-reading, but others cannot, and the reader's confidence in several chapters of dubious quality on scriptural ethics, is hardly thereby restored. Also one wonders why the book eschews the use of the German *umlaut* throughout, and then applies it to the lone instance of Hans Küng's name.

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THE INTERIOR FOUNTAIN, by Michael Day, Cong. Orat.; Geoffrey Chapman, 8s. 6d.

Professional Christians are commonly obligated by their Rule to the practice of daily meditation or mental prayer, a task generally agreed by them to be well beyond their unaided powers and nearly impossible in any case. An abundant literature, if that is the word, has accumulated to supply the necessary help. It is difficult to say how much of it is of value, tastes vary so greatly. But one hears people occasionally recommending such and such a book of 'meditations' as helpful to them and the variety of themes and methods offered at different times should ensure the satisfaction of a huge public.

Fr Day's book is rather different from most. Not only is it unapologetically theological, but, in this too unlike so many, it neither portrays nor analyses but seeks to penetrate and unify. At this point one should make a declaration of non-interest: this is not my meditation book, though most likely there will be many another it will suit. Yet I am not altogether disqualified from commenting. Taken isolated, these meditations stirred in me neither thoughts nor feelings incentive to prayer, but read *in extenso* they were profoundly stimulating to thought. This was not assisted by their style, which is generally scholastic, relieved only to a degree by occasional poetic diction. And the sentences are at times too long and too complex for ready use in meditation. Also it is the ratiocinative mind that is at work rather than the imaginative or intuitive, providing matter for meditation rather than prayer. The opening sentence seems to guarantee this approach: 'The Christian lives in the light of reason enlightened by faith; his life is based on the certainties of reason and revelation grasped in their harmony.'

Despite all this the book is well worth reading and thinking about. On one's prayer its effect may be only cumulative and oblique but it offers solid help in remote preparation. The subject and its arrangement are simple enough. The former may be described by saying that it consists of the thesis that we enter into three distinct realities, ourselves and others and God, at the same time, by the same path, in the same measure; the answer, in a sense, to the Bishop of Woolwich though not advertised as such. The arrangement is to approach this basic theme

in different ways, in a series of different meditations—'The Creative Source', 'Faith', 'Baptism', 'The Holy Spirit', 'Christ our Model', 'Love in Christ', etc., etc. Each theme is drawn together in a final paragraph showing how it is exemplified in the mother of God.

The book is claimed to offer 'a biblical theology for everyday life'. This seems an inaccurate characterisation of what it does. It is biblical in the sense of giving a rationalised and abstractly expressed theology drawn from biblical sources, it is not biblical in presenting the concrete, colourful, sweaty, dramatic proclamation of salvation which the Bible offers. Nor is it the ideal book for the everyday life of many, though teachers of scholastic disciplines, still a large class, may well profit thereof.

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VISIONS AND PROPHECIES, by Karl Rahner; Burns and Oates, 12s. 6d.

The latest of Professor Rahner's contributions to *Quaestiones Disputatae* to be translated into English is also the least exciting. Rahner is admired for his ability to treat an urgent problem with vital elucidity. The value of his work is that it takes our present concerns into account. How far are Catholics interested in visionaries today? Some may be grateful for further information about the peculiar history of the Fatima narratives, but it is to be feared that often enough such things are merely curious bases for ghetto jokes.

Some of the examples Rahner produces are decidedly unfunny. It is abundantly proved that saints are saints for reasons quite other than having visions. St Mary Magdalene of Pazzi watched Jesus write his name on her heart with the milk of the Blessed Virgin. St Catherine of Siena believed that our Lady had revealed to her that she was not conceived immaculate. Bl. Margaret Ebner was instructed by the child Jesus 'how his holy circumcision was performed', and believed she heard the voice of the Lord bidding her give suck to the wooden statue of the child Jesus which she kept in a crib. Visions in general appear less interesting after such particulars. Sometimes, however, the visionary has a nice hit at the theologian, and this shews some new facets of Rahner's character. He is shocked that St Catherine Ricci should see Savonarola as a prophet and martyr, and work for his beatification. He is not amused when Lucia of Fatima, on being told that something an angel had declared to her was 'theologically impossible', quietly replied, 'the angel may just not have studied theology'. Rahner gets his own back when Lucia is quoted as claiming the assistance of the Holy Spirit in writing down supplementary material twenty-five years after the event. This, he says, 'makes any further discussion difficult'.

Rahner is dissatisfied with the manualistic account of visions, an account which emphasises their private character and their lack of positive guarantee by the magisterium. He wonders how it is that something God reveals can be unimportant for the community, and if it be said that visions add nothing to the content of public revelation why does God employ visions to reveal these things 'instead of