

To end on a pleasant note: Dr Kendall gives our Lady her due place as one dedicated to reparation, and gives patristic evidence in support of that fact. In short, what a grand book this would be if only corrected in places by a Catholic theologian. We venture to suggest Mgr Francis Davis, who like Dr Kendall has associations with Birmingham University.

ARTHUR VALENTIN

AS STARS FOR ALL ETERNITY. By the Brothers of the Christian Schools. (Thomas More Books; 15s.)

According to the preface, this is an abridged and revised edition of *Considerations for Christian Teachers*. It contains fifty-two meditations on such subjects as the nature and mentality of pupils, authority, natural affection, coercion, and the virtues essential to the teacher. Each meditation consists of considerations drawn 'from the holiest sources and saturated with the traditions and skill of more than two centuries', followed by a practical application. It embodies 'almost every appropriate scriptural text', besides quoting copiously from Fénelon, Bossuet, and of course St John-Baptist La Salle. The preface suggests that the book will be particularly helpful to teaching sisters, who will find it 'a veritable *summa* of calm reflection and profound practical insight into the great vocation of teaching the young'.

In spite of these high claims the book will have a very limited appeal. The teaching religious seeking the inspiration which will enable her to combine the role of Mary with the arduous and ever encroaching one of Martha will be disappointed at the absence of a christocentric approach to her needs and problems. The emphasis throughout is on duty as duty, and *les raisons du coeur* find little place. The author takes no account of modern developments in Catholic pedagogical and psychological thought, and uses an idiom which is certainly not contemporary. The quotations range from the obscure to the platitudinous. But the book deals carefully with some practical details in the pursuit of perfection (use of time, negligence, patience, etc.), and those who like traditional French spirituality will perhaps find it helpful.

A.F.H.

MATISSE FROM THE LIFE. By Raymond Escholier. (Faber and Faber; 63s.)

The value of M. Escholier's book is that we are presented not only with an appreciation of Matisse as painter and sculptor, but also with nearly everything of importance written by the artist. Here are collected his own views on art and on his place as an artist in the modern movement. Extracts from letters and comments from various other sources

combine with well chosen plates and drawings, to lead us from the earliest days of his struggle, when he was befriended by the Steins, up to the fulfilment of his life's work with the construction and decoration of the now-famous chapel for the Dominican Sisters at Vence.

What sort of an artist was Matisse to have achieved this remarkable climax to his career as a painter? Were the four years of careful planning and design which went to make up *la Chapelle du Rosaire* merely, as some have suggested, no more than an 'artistic *divertimento*'? Hardly, for one who was able to say, as M. Escholier points out, 'I have always praised the glory of God and his creation'. Indeed there could not have been a better opportunity for Matisse to synthesise his life's work than this unique chapel.

For his life's work, as it unfolds in his letters and comments recorded here, was a search for clarity at the expense of all that was irrelevant, superfluous. In his own words, he sought 'an art of balance, of purity and serenity devoid of troubling subject-matter, an art which might be for every mental worker, be he business-man or writer, like an appeasing influence, like a mental soother, something like a good arm-chair in which to rest from physical fatigue'.

Yet Matisse was and remained all his life the original *fauve*, and in the paradox of the 'wild beast' who constantly *reflected* upon his purpose, we are faced with the phenomenon of a mature artist who was adult enough to be able to *play* in public, with all the intensity of the child who plays alone.

The search for 'an art of purity and serenity' served to separate him not only from his fellow *Fauves* but also from the more violent tradition of German expressionism. Yet Matisse was well aware of what was happening around him, aware too of those features in his own work which were to prove valuable for the future. 'The importance of an artist', he wrote, 'is increased by the number of signs he introduces into the plastic language.' For 'with signs we can compose freely'.

Yet the free compositions of Matisse are never mere virtuosity. The stations of the cross at Vence are the outcome of a sustained contemplation rather than sleight-of-hand.

M. Escholier has succeeded in producing perhaps the best kind of book for an introduction to Matisse and his work. Without overloading the text with his own opinions, he leaves us to discover for ourselves something of the man who was able at the end of his life to describe his work as 'devoted entirely to the search for truth'.

A.D.F.