

spirit and life into the dry bones of scientific exposition. She treats successively of prayer and the Will of God, prayer and life, distractions, the employment of Scripture as a basis of meditation, prayer and the spirit of adoration, with a chapter on affective and contemplative prayer. The last few pages are devoted to an explanation of God's purpose in prayer, in which she dwells on the idea that prayer is not individualistic but concerns the whole Mystical Body of the Church. It is a plea for unity that deserves our sympathy and endorsement. The book ends with a plan of meditations sufficient to cover a month, and a select bibliography.

HUGH TALBOT, O.Cist.

THE NATIONAL LITURGICAL WEEK. Reports for 1941 and 1942.
(The Benedictine Liturgical Conference, Ferdinand, Indiana,
U.S.A. \$1.50 each.)

The organisers of these American Liturgical Weeks are to be congratulated, not only for producing their reports so well—reports that have become an established feature of current liturgical literature—but for choosing the great central liturgical themes for consideration and for emphasizing the practical needs of the parish. We have, I think, viewed the liturgy from the point of view of the parish priest and parish priests have always taken a notable part in these conferences. This is important and consoling, for if the liturgy does not flourish in the parish, it can hardly be said to flourish at all. Palestrina in the Cathedral is no compensation for dumb congregations in the parish church.

The main theme of the 1941 Conference was "The Living Parish" beginning with the Mass as the centre of all things and working out to the "Liturgy and Catholic Action," the argument related step by step to the needs of the parish. In 1942, the subject was "The Praise of God," and while due place was given to the Mass, it was possible for the first time to give adequate attention to the Divine Office. I gather the impression that the prospects of restoring Vespers and Compline to their place in parish worship are even more remote in America than in England.

Excellent as these reports may be, I cannot help thinking that they are more important as records of the *way* Americans are thinking and of what they are doing about the liturgy. I do not recollect anyone saying this—perhaps they are too polite—but it needs saying that the individual papers rarely, if ever, provide new thoughts or cast new light on the ancient truths. They are nearly always highly competent, heavily documented, and, it must be confessed, a little dull. One would hardly read them for fun—not that one is supposed to—and even the almost verbatim reports of the discussions only rarely throw up such gems as "the jitterbug

priest." (A priest was the perpetrator of this.)

All the same, it is good to know that the reports of the 1943 Conference (which had to be curtailed) will appear shortly, for no one interested in the liturgy would like to be without these reports, which spur us on to emulate, if not the literary style of Americans, then certainly their energy and enthusiasm.

J. D. CRICHTON.

THE PILGRIM CONTINUES HIS WAY. Translated by R. M. French.
(S.P.C.K., 3s. 6d.)

Here we have an unexpected continuation of *The Way of a Pilgrim*, translated from Russian by Mr French in 1930. The first of its three sections is a simple narrative of pilgrimage in Western Russia, with all the attractiveness and interest of the previously published part. The other two sections are a discussion on prayer, in the form of very unconvincing dialogue, and are only doubtfully written by the same hand as the rest of the work.

Mr French remarks that in this discussion "some things are said which sound strange to Western ears." Perhaps "to many Western ears" would have been more exact. For what strikes the present reviewer is that, putting accidentals aside, these sections on prayer might well have been written in the West; much of what is said could have been written by, for example, the Carmelite Brother Lawrence. And one of its faults, the almost exclusive advocacy of a particular "method" of prayer, is a fault not unknown among Western devotional writers.

The English of Mr French's translation is refreshingly good; and he has given us not only a useful spiritual book but also a further small contribution to the better understanding of West and East.

D.A.

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The Ditchling Press, Hassocks, Sussex.