

Trese's meditations. He deals many a shrewd blow at clerical weaknesses, though his ascetical practices do not sit very easily on him. (At his time of life he ought to know, without debate, whether an afternoon rest is a necessity or an indulgence.) Moreover, his book seems to derive from the pre-liturgical age. Liturgy is not an optional extra in the same class as confraternities and guilds.

However, the framework is artificial, as we have said, and perhaps these are not Fr Trese's real habits or opinions at all. Incidentally, it must be a very long time since the genuine spiritual diary of a priest was published. We are remarkably reticent, perhaps wisely.

The cost of the book is too high, the dust-cover is attractive, the 'blurb' bloated.

J.D.C.

MYSTERY MAN. By Aloysius Roche. (Burns Oates; 10s. 6d.)

The main criticism of this book is that it is entirely negative. It is written in the racy, spicy style of a gossip column of a Sunday newspaper. You read of the kind of family a priest normally comes from, the boy he probably was, the studies he did, the clothes he wears, the money he has, the number of visits attending the dying may entail, but you will read nothing of the ideal of the Catholic priesthood, nothing of the mystery of the 'Mystery Man'. A non-Catholic reader would draw the legitimate conclusion that the Catholic priest is no more than the Catholic version of the Jewish priest or Protestant minister—there is nothing to show that the Catholic priesthood is specifically unique.

Irritating phrases abound: 'The Church introduced celibacy under pressure of what she conceived to be the common or greater good' (p. 118). 'The parochial clergy may not attain to any very elevated degree of contemplative prayer, but the kind of life they are required to lead would seem to justify the presumption that they are not called to such heights' (p. 141)—and the peculiar justification of that statement, 'difficulties might arise if there were. . . . any general addiction to visions, transports or ecstasies' (ibid). 'When priests become sceptics or rationalists. . . .' (p. 176).

There are a lot of gossipy anecdotes in this very belittling book on the Catholic Priest, the *raison d'être* of which one cannot fathom.

TERENCE TANNER.

APOLOGETICS FOR THE PULPIT. By Aloysius Roche. (Burns Oates; 18s.)

This work was published shortly before the war, in three volumes, and it is an indication of its usefulness that the publishers should have decided to reprint it in an omnibus edition. There are no changes from the earlier edition. There are three sections, each of forty chapters. The first is called 'The Grounds of Belief,' and discusses the existence of God, sin and redemption, revelation, our Lord, and the Blessed

Trinity; the second section is concerned with the Church, the third with the sacraments. The book was intended by the author, himself a parish priest, to help the clergy in the preparation of instructions; but its clear, readable exposition makes it a book which can be recommended to the laity also.

A.R.

THE SEVEN SWORDS. By Gerald Vann, O.P. (Collins; 5s.)

This book is based on a series of Lenten sermons, and consists of an introductory chapter and seven meditations on the Sorrows of our Lady. The author is at his best. The book can be warmly recommended for Lenten reading, but it will be kept and pondered upon by those who have it, because of its lucid and warm treatment of spiritual principles.

A.R.

THE HIGH GREEN HILL. By Gerald Vann, O.P. (Collins; 7s. 6d.)

The High Green Hill is composed of a series of addresses and essays. The author tells us that no single theme or thread of thought runs through the book. It is simply a collection of independent papers. Nevertheless, it does possess a certain unity, since all the essays deal with many aspects of the Christian life. Its fifteen chapters are simple, interesting and instructive.

To many of us, the august mystery of the Trinity seems to be something abstract. Consequently, it is never applied to our lives. However, Father Vann with exceptional ability overcomes this difficulty. He takes the 'Fatherhood of God', the 'Friendship of the Son' and the 'Indwelling of the Holy Ghost', and deals with them in such a way as to encourage timid souls. The practical importance of the Trinity is shown clearly. To quote the author's words: 'It shows us—a thing we could otherwise never know—what man's total response to God is meant to be, and how, in the totality of that response, man himself is made whole'.

'Confession and Health of Soul' is another chapter worthy of mention. Penance restores life to the soul. Yet some of the effects of our sins may remain, and the full restoration of health may have to be gradual. For that work of restoration the grace of the Sacrament is intended to give us strength and courage. The author shows us another and wider function of Penance. 'It is medicinal to the life of the Church as a whole. We retard the Church's work by our sins; we can help it on by the use of the Sacrament.' In short, the practice of confession is described in a way to attract the neglectful. Here, then, the reader will find many valuable ideas, as old as Christianity itself, but presented with a verve and punch very suited to the needs of the times in which we live.

PATRICK J. O'MAHONY.