

infinite goodness except that on his part he is always doing good with no thought of self-interest, but rather giving his life and blood for those who were so far from deserving it?

Who but God could do this? From whose heart but his could such a deed have come? Could any man be so hard-hearted as not to be softened by this furnace of love? Who would not be conquered by so immense a favour? What does he love who loves not such goodness? For what blessing is he grateful who has no gratitude for this? Or whom does he serve, if not this Lord, or give his love to if it be not him? To end this subject, if you ask the reason for this glorious deed, I answer that it was solely, and simply, the infinite goodness of our most merciful Redeemer.

(To be continued).

REVIEWS

VITAE SANCTORUM BRITANNIAE ET GENEALOGIAE. Edited by A. W. Wade-Evans. (University of Wales Press; History and Law Series, No. 9; 21s. net.).

Nearly a hundred years have passed since the Rev. W. J. Rees published his *Lives of the Cambro British Saints* for the Welsh MSS Society. Rees's collection was drawn from "ancient Welsh and Latin MSS, in the British Museum and elsewhere, with English translations and explanatory notes" and was meant to supplement the *Liber Landavensis*, already published. It is scarcely surprising that Rees's work was far from accurate. Already, in 1892, Egerton Phillimore was referring to it as a "most unsatisfactory performance, teeming with blunders" (*Y Cymmrodor*, XI. p. 127) and more recently Dom Gougaud described Rees's collection as "very badly edited". Some of the more glaring errors were corrected in a collation of Rees's MS sources undertaken by Kuno Meyer, the Celtic scholar, in *Y Cymmrodor*, 1900. But *Cambro British Saints* has remained a standard work for want of any alternative.

The latest addition to the History and Law Series published by the University of Wales Press Board is a scrupulously exact text of most of the *Vitae* given by Rees. Its editor, Mr. Wade-Evans, brings to the task a lifelong devotion to early Welsh history. No one could be better aware of the defects of the earlier work, yet he avoids the temptation, common to those wise after the event, of devoting his introduction to ridiculing a predecessor deprived of many of the modern aids to accurate scholarship (of which easy access to manuscripts is not the least important).

Most of the *Lives* in the present volume are taken from Cotton MS. Vespasian A xiv, which contains (Latin) accounts of SS. Brynach, Cadog, Carannog, David, Gwynllyw, Iltud, Cybi, Padarn and Tatheus. The (Welsh) Life of St. Beuno comes

from Oxford Jesus Coll. MS 2, and the (Latin) Life of St. Winifred from a British Museum MS (Cottonian Codex A v). In addition, several tracts (pedigrees, etc.) are included. Some of the Lives included by Rees, e.g. those of SS. Catharine, Margaret and Aidus, are omitted as irrelevant to a collection of lives of Welsh saints.

It should be made clear that *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae* is only a collection of texts, with English translations (except in the case of the Lives of Beuno and David; although translations of these are printed elsewhere, they would have been welcome here for the sake of completeness). Apart from descriptions of the MSS by Drs. Idris Bell and Robin Flower of the British Museum, there are no notes or comments. This will be a disappointment to many readers of Mr. Wade-Evans's *Welsh Christian Origins*, who may have hoped for a taste of his lively methods in a critical study of these Lives, which bristle with all sorts of problems. For the most part they date from the eleventh and twelfth centuries (the Vespasian MS was apparently written at Brecon Priory, being intended as a supplementary legendary of Welsh saints for use in one of the new Benedictine houses of Norman foundation), and as such they can scarcely be expected to provide an objective record of figures who flourished six centuries before. Gougaud has indeed described the collection as "largely fabulous in content", and Canon Doble, in his recent study of St. Illtud, had little difficulty in showing that the *Vita Illtuti* is almost worthless as a historical account.

This collection will be valuable to those scholars who wish to have a reliable text, and—for the most part—a clear translation, of these medieval lives of Celtic saints. But it must be confessed that the value of the book to the general reader is seriously curtailed by the absence of any indication of the historical background of the lives, or of any hint of where additional information may be found—as in the published work of J. E. Lloyd, Hugh Williams, Chevalier, Duine, Gougaud, Doble and—not least—Mr. Wade-Evans himself. Perhaps the limitations are imposed by war-time economy: that at least has not prevented the Oxford University Press from producing an admirably printed volume on excellent paper.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

TOWARDS THE REALISATION OF GOD. By Stephen J. Brown, S.J.
(Brown & Nolan; 7s. 6d.).

"There is nothing whatsoever which a man can ever think or ever do which will not be influenced more or less by the thought and the belief he has in his heart concerning Almighty God". That is the basis of Fr. Brown's book, but it is his purpose to make the thought and belief concerning God a *realisation*. Religion can easily be based on one of two principles: a purely rationalised principle or a purely volitional or even emotional one. Neither of these alone can lead to the knowledge of the