

IN PRAISE OF WORK. By Raoul Plus, S.J. (Burns Oates; 10s. 6d.)

In one of his Epiphany sermons Tauler said we must always be on the lookout to see whether God wants us at the moment to be working, praying or suffering. We cannot be equally engrossed in all three occupations at the same time. Work, alas, is getting less and less popular, though for most of us it is the open road to heaven. The chief fault of Father Plus's exhilarating book—it might not be so exhilarating if the fault were remedied!—is that it practically begs the crucial question of the industrial age: is man meant to be happy doing sub-human work? The depressing thing to note about industrial man is that he seldom asks for more opportunity to stretch his mind and muscles, but only for more money, continuing to be a cog-wheel.

Father Plus tells you what work has been and could be to mankind—first in general and then in particular professions. These begin with peasants and end with priests, and the joys of each toilsome life are illustrated by examples. No pool promoters appear, or cinema usherettes, or in fact any of the characteristic figures of 1952.

H.P.E.

ENGLISH CASUISTICAL DIVINITY DURING THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. By Thomas Wood. (S.P.C.K.; 12s. 6d.)

This small volume develops the pioneer work of Dr H. R. McAadoo, *The Structure of Caroline Moral Theology*. It deals in some detail with the positions of the chief seventeenth-century Anglican moralists and notably those of Jeremy Taylor.

These divines are shown to stand in the medieval Catholic tradition, basing their thought on the principles of St Thomas. Their writing is marked however by a strong reaction, not untinted with Jansenism, against the post-Tridentine moralists and in particular against the Jesuits. Jesuitry was then universally equated with treason, and by an abuse of the system of probabilism some Jesuit writers admittedly fell into laxism.

The confessional, though oftener used in the Church of England at this time than is sometimes supposed, was more occasional and differently regarded. Anglican casuistry in consequence never became separated as a science from ascetical theology; the two were developed together as the means by which the clergy could assist the laity in building the devout life. In the Catholic Church, especially after Trent, moral theology was increasingly treated as the science by which the priest as judge assessed the quality of sins for absolution, ascetics being that by which as physician he helped the penitent to health of soul.

Because they overlooked this fact the Anglican casuists' criticism of the doctrine of attrition, and the distinction between mortal and venial sin, loses much of its point; it caused them to condemn without understanding. Emphasis on moral theology

however and comparative neglect of ascetics have at times resulted among Catholics in the principles proper to the judge being applied by the physician, to the detriment of deep-rooted spirituality.

Mr Wood's book opens up many points of discussion, and the larger work on the same subject that he is writing will be awaited with interest.

HENRY ST JOHN, O.P.

STUDIES IN MODERN EUROPEAN LITERATURE AND THOUGHT (Bowes and Bowes; 6s. each volume.)

*Baudelaire*. By P. Mansell Jones.

*Rainer Maria Rilke*. By Hans Egon Holthusen, trans. by J. P. Stern.

*Paul Valéry*. By Elizabeth Sewell.

*Benedetto Croce*. By Cecil Sprigge.

These are the first four volumes of a new series, admirably printed; each study is to be less than thirty thousand words in length. 'Modern' in the general title is taken to mean the last century and a half. What is 'European' to mean? The list of twenty-odd 'titles in preparation' includes no writer from Eastern Europe, and there are writers included who scarcely deserve a place among the first twenty in such a series. Confidence in the series as a whole will depend on the general editor's judgment and explorations. The experience of Europe and of its commonalty has been made lucid in languages not publicly heard at North Atlantic Treaty conferences.

The series opens auspiciously with four works that fully merit the title of 'studies'. Professor Mansell Jones first discusses the 'situation' of Baudelaire and then concentrates on the architecture and significance of *Les Fleurs du Mal*. The result is the best introduction to Baudelaire yet written in English and the frequent emergence of judgments that are appropriate and deeply considered, for example: 'his actual achievement [is] that of a major, not a great, poet'.

There is an equal discrimination in Herr Holthusen's remarkable essay on Rilke. This, indeed, is a criticism written for poets and has its arcana. It is truly exciting and its successful translation is a *tour de force*.

Miss Sewell provides a piquant, acute, and very individual study of Valéry, and makes a gallant effort to Christianise as much as she may of his thought. 'He held no beliefs', she too assuagingly writes, where it would be just to say that he played Hector against God and made a vanity of it. Valéry certainly has his interest and Miss Sewell shows it, but was he more than an important minor poet?

Mr Cecil Sprigge gives us a disciple's generous appraisal of Croce. He sketches his career against the background of Italian