

## BLACKFRIARS

his class and time. It is only through the sincerity of his own mystical experience that he chances to escape sporadically from the clogging influence of a single school; the intricate subdivisions, the conception of mysticism as a freak and contemplation as an abnormality, of levitations, ecstasies and locutions as phenomena of intrinsic interest. Perhaps the relation of the lay contemplative to the inadequate theologian is the ultimate *trahison des clercs*.

Seen in such perspective the *Mystique* of M. Hermans remains ultimately unsatisfying. It is a series of essays in the school of Bremond marked by delicate perceptions and intelligent phantasy. The studies of the Rhineland school and of Berulle have an especial charm. But to our own problems they are barely relevant. It is not enough merely to escape from the artificial flowers of 19th century French devotion and the waste lands of hagiography. Our need is for a direct return to the two central traditions of Catholic spirituality; the urgent practical wisdom of St. Gregory and the speculative vision of St. Thomas and of the Dionysian-Augustinian schools. In these last months we have had Dom Wilmart's edition of the mordant aphorisms of Guigue's *Le Chartreux*, the epigrammatist among medieval Gregorians, and the *Meditations* of Bishop Prohászka, whose devout discursive thought maintained the traditions of the homilies in 20th century Hungary. But the tradition that should be its complement is barely represented and practical advice without speculative vision will never free us from those smug pigeon holes in which we crowd. It is only vision which can bring with it the shattering of our content and the passion to be alone with the Alone.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

## NOTICES

CHRISTIAN MORALS. By the Very Revd. M. C. D'Arcy, S.J. (Longmans; 5s.)

The pre-war guide to conduct was too often an uneasy combination of a residue of Christian principle with a collection of non-Christian and often enough anti-Christian conventions. The post-war world has rebelled against the irrationality of much of this amalgam; but in doing so it has failed to distinguish: "rational principles are confused with Victorian conventions, and it is assumed without question by many writers to the Press and by novelists that moral convictions are bound to be relative and based on feeling." If the Christian position is to be argued, therefore, we must first begin with this distinction, endeavour to show the absolute value of the principles which form the natural basis of the Christian moral system. This task Fr. D'Arcy has set

## NOTICES

himself in the present volume. "I have tried to show that the best thought of Greece and Israel and Rome is built into the edifice of Christian philosophy, and that that philosophy does give us a definite and high conception of human nature and its destiny. Once we understand man and what he can become we are in a position to lay down what is good and what is bad for him." The first part of the book consists of recent broadcast talks on this subject: the foundations of morality, the ideas of dignity and personality, duties, the Christian ideal. The second part consists of additional essays, elucidating the principles dealt with in the first: the Greek moral ideal, as represented especially in Aristotle, moral judgement, the spirituality of the soul, birth-control, pacifism, marxism. The argument throughout is carried forward with Fr. D'Arcy's accustomed grace and persuasiveness of style; sometimes one would wish for a greater decisiveness, directness; a greater emphasis on this or that aspect of the subject under discussion; but there has been urgent need of such a book as this, to correct many a misunderstanding, and it should prove helpful indeed as an introduction to Christian moral thought.

G. V.

LIVES OF THE SAINTS. By Alban Butler. New Edition by Herbert Thurston, S.J., and Norah Leeson. Vol. vi. June. (Burns, Oates; 7s. 6d.)

Through the untiring energy of Father Thurston and his able assistant, Miss Norah Leeson, we are presented with yet another important volume of the revision and amplification of Butler's Lives. This volume contains 250 biographies of which 145 are new. "June," Father Thurston points out, "with the meagre exception of St. Antony of Padua and possibly St. Aloysius Gonzaga" does not contain many feasts of saints who have attracted to themselves a world-wide "devotion," but I think this is compensated for, especially in the new biographies, by the lives of many holy men and women in all walks of life. Thus we have Popes like Blessed Innocent V, Cardinals like St. John Fisher, and Bl. Gregory Barbarigo of the Secular Clergy, and Bl. John Dominici, O.P., and Bl. Bonaventure Daduario, Er. S. Aug. There are wealthy ladies like Bl. Castora Gabrielli, a Franciscan, and Bl. Osanna of Mantua, a Dominican Tertiary. There are workmen like Henry the Shoemaker, and the working women like Bl. Anna Taigi, mother of a large family, with her husband for a period unemployed. Of groups of martyrs there are the companies of Jesuits and Dominicans in Japan, the glorious band of negro martyrs in Uganda, and the many English martyrs who died in June.

W. G.

## BLACKFRIARS

THE DISSIDENT EASTERN CHURCHES. By Donald Attwater. (Coldwell; 15s.)

Mr. Attwater has provided a useful substitute for the *Orthodox Church and Lesser Eastern Churches* of Father Adrian Fortescue; the same ground is covered in less detail and there is a clear summary of many post-war developments. Throughout his work is marked by clarity of style and power of compression, and the section upon Palestinian Orthodoxy has an especial value. The historical approach is perhaps inevitably simplistic and the schism is considered to have been consummated by Cerularius. Yet recent research in Palaiologan theology and diplomacy has made such a viewpoint hardly tenable. In practice union would seem to have been sporadic in the medieval Levant and the schism as we know it seems to date from 1472 rather than from 1054. It is a more fundamental misfortune that so many of the carefully gathered facts should be relatively insignificant. Sites of monasteries and names of bishops matter so little; it is not the symptoms but the causes of Greek Orthodoxy which can help us towards its understanding. No study of the Eastern dissidents could be adequate without an analysis of hesychasm in the past and of sophiology in the present of the Oriental traditions in contemplation, and of the Byzantine conception of the Godhead and of the Incarnate Word. Such analyses will not be found in *Dissident Eastern Churches*. Yet this is not a criticism of Mr. Attwater but of the *genre* of ecclesiastical directories, and there is the common satisfying contrast between the sobriety of his introduction and the mild hysteria of the "blurb."

G. M.

### BOOKS RECEIVED

- BEYAERT (Bruges): *Vitae sanctitatis excellatis oportet: Monita Pii Pp.X et Pii Pp.XI ad Sacerdotes*, Can. H. Mahieu (Fr. 14 and 19); *Liturgicae Institutiones: Tractatus tertius, De Missalis Romani Liturgia*, C. Callewaert (Fr. 22).
- BLOT (Paris): *Elementa Philosophiae*, F. X. Maquart, 2 vols, (n.p.).
- BURNS OATES: *Wurzel Gummidge Again*, Barbara Euphan Todd (3s. 6d.); *Cardinal Merry del Val*, Mgr. A. Dalpiaz (7s. 6d.); *A Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, Bl. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort, tr. Father Faber (new edn.; 1s. 6d.; 2s. 6d. cloth); *Collected Poems*, Francis Thompson (3s. 6d.); *History and Religion: Occasional Essays*, Most Rev. Alban Goodier, S.J. (7s. 6d.); *The Benediction Choir Book*, ed. Sir Richard Terry, Mus. Bac., F.R.C.O. (5s.); *Catholic Diary*, 1938 (cloth 1s.; leather 2s. 6d.); *The Key to the King's Kingdom*, W. Raemers, C.S.S.R. (1s.); *Christmas*, Renée Zeller, tr. Mary Russell (2s. 6d.); *Brother Claus: An Historical Novel*, Marie Dutli-Rutishauser (7s. 6d.); *In Franco's Spain*, Francis McCullagh (12s. 6d.).
- CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS: *The Medieval Latin and Romance Lyric to A.D. 1300*, F. Brittain (15s.).
- CASSELL: *The Faithful Wife*, Sigrid Undset (7s. 6d.); *The Crisis of our Civilization*, Hilaire Belloc (8s. 6d.).