

the clearest indication not so much of a vocation as such, but of the particular form that vocation should take. In the gifts of birth, and the opportunities in life that every man has, is to be seen always the finger of Providence shaping the future. That a man should never have had the opportunity of learning the humanities is not, for example, an unfortunate chance that debars him undemocratically from priesthood; it is the design of God who may be preparing him for the positive vocation to sanctity of a lay-brother.

(Concluded)



EXTRACTS

POVERTY is the groundwork of the Christian life. *La Vie Spirituelle* gives most of its February issue to the subject of the poor in spirit.

Poverty, writes the author of the first article, inaugurates Christ's message. It occupies a primordial place. Not that it is the essential; the essential is love: it is by love that we are to recognize his disciples. But even the pagan philosophers were aware that love is the daughter of poverty. That is why poverty comes first. It is the first step without which there is no second. God's very first intervention in history had in fact been a call to renunciation, to detachment: 'Leave your country, your family, your father's house' (Gen. 12, 1). This, the first word that Abraham heard, balances exactly the Beatitude which opens the new Alliance.

He goes on to show how progress in the spiritual life is a progress in poverty, a progress in being dispossessed.

FOR RELIGIOUS, Fr MacEntee in *Review for Religious* (January) applies the doctrine in a practical if rather banal manner. He considers 'the squirrel within us', and how a religious will often collect books (because they may not be in the library), clothes (because they may be necessary in an emergency of weather conditions). . . . The tendency of certain religious to collect oddments has often been noticed; but, as Fr MacEntee says, as

he will have none of them at death the religious should begin to die now and to dispossess himself of everything but the really necessary.

ALL THIS is important for the apostolate as well as for the individual's spiritual life. Mgr Cardijn, the founder of the Y.C.W. movement, in a most vigorous address to priests (*New Life*, Jan.-Feb.) was really speaking of the same basic principles of Christian life when he said:

A thousand million workers' families are communist . . . this is every priest's problem and I am going to ask each priest to solve that problem through his priesthood, because the priest alone can solve that problem by his priesthood in every parish. There the problem must be solved if we are to solve the problem in the world . . . that is the spirit of this *little seed*, my little way, one boy one girl. Begin the salvation of the world in your parish, in this little way. It is foolish if we see it with the eyes of our body, but if we see it with the eyes of Christ, *nolite timere, pusillus grex*, fear not, little flock, I will give you the world. The greatest problem is the salvation of the working class. Without the working class the Church is not the Church of Christ. *Ite pauperibus, ite pauperibus, mitto vos ad oves perditas*. Poverty, charity and the apostolate of the poor are surely bound up in the Christian obligation of 'Almsdeeds'; and perhaps with this in mind the Editor of *La Vie Spirituelle* followed up the issue on Poverty with one on Almsgiving (March). The apostolate of the poor and the primacy of poverty cannot be realized without a true attitude to property and its obligation. Père Henry, O.P., shows that the two principles of common use and private ownership, far from being contraries, are complementary—and almsgiving links them together and keeps the balance. It is in fundamental doctrines such as these, which are so often overlooked by Christians, that the powers of the apostolate to the workers and the 'answer to communism' is to be found.

DEVOTION is mostly understood to mean an emotional reaction to sense stimuli in church—soft lights and sweet music. Fr Anthony Herring, C.P., recalls us to the true theology of devotion in an article in *Sursum Corda* for March.

True and essential devotion can exist without an overflowing

from the highest faculties of the soul into our emotional life. True devotion is not something that we receive from God. It is something that we *give* to God. True and essential devotion consists in the gift of ourselves to God, that act of the will by which we offer ourselves to the service of God.

Religious life, then, is of its nature a 'devout life'; devotion is of its essence since the religious has given himself to that service.

INCIDENTALLY, the Editor of the *Supplement of La Vie Spirituelle* in a blurb to the very excellent spring issue (No. 40) gives a clue to the main scope of this review. 'One of the objectives of this review is to bring its contribution to the objective and valuable discussion between the psychiatrists (from neurologists to psychotherapists) on the one side, and theologians and pastoral clergy on the other.'

And also, *Review for Religious* in the issue already cited announces the inauguration of a new department in its structure—'Survey of Roman Documents'—which will be of great value to English readers.



REVIEWS

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST JOHN. With an Introduction and Commentary by C. C. Martindale, S.J. (Stonyhurst Scripture Manuals. Longmans; 7s.)

More than a year ago we had occasion to welcome the first of the Stonyhurst Scripture Manuals, on St Mark's Gospel. The series, of which the present volume is the second, is intended primarily for schools and particularly for those preparing for public examinations. This first purpose is fulfilled by giving the fruit of Catholic scholarship in such a way that the result is no mere school book but a work for which many an older layman will be grateful. Its use in schools in any case supposes the guidance of a teacher and teachers will find it a welcome addition to their shelves. The form is, as in the earlier volume, that of a short Introduction to the Gospel followed by a verse-by-verse commentary printed under the text. The notes seldom exceed a short paragraph but are skilfully done and of real value. While the General Introduction disclaims the use of 'devotional comments or applications