

Book Reviews

still, in every grade He is the perfect model. The five pictures are beautifully worked out.

'Enough to say, that on the whole you see *that* in Our Lord which you are able, at the time, to see. This once more consoles us if we meet good men who are unable to see in Jesus Christ Our Lord more than a Jewish working man, more than a perfectly good man, or more than a Prophet beyond all other spokesmen of God that this world has met with. Let us leave Grace to do its gradual work.'

This is a good point to notice; for whereas the non-Catholic is apt to consider himself opposed to Rome as White to Black, the Catholic sees himself distinguished rather as one who possesses the Whole while others possess only a Part.

The sermons bring that sense of personal contact with Our Lord which is characteristic of Fr. Martindale, and can be read many times.

N.H.

THE CARTHUSIAN ORDER IN ENGLAND. By E. Margaret Thompson. (S.P.C.K; 21/-).

To reclaim any tract of the past it is necessary first of all to be quite sure of its relics, to gather all the authentic traces it has left: this may be called the first or scientific element of history. It has been very well done by Miss Thompson. Her book deals thoroughly with the French origins of the Carthusians, with the establishment and growth of the various houses of the English province and with the fate of that province under the Tudors. Her work is satisfactory because it is evidently based on critical research, on a critical study of a great number of sources, and because it is wide. She has written, for example, chapters of great interest on the Carthusian Rule, on English Carthusian libraries and on English Carthusian writers. That she has established anything absolutely novel is a claim she would not want to make. But as a solid and reliable account of the development of the English province of the order, this book is undoubtedly a success. The most important modification it suggests to the ordinary view of that development is that the Carthusians, like other religious orders—though by no means to the same extent—suffered a certain slackness and decline in spirit as the Middle Ages waned. We venture to agree with Abbot Butler, and to disagree with Miss Thompson in her suggestion that the Benedictine and Carthusian Orders are of the same species. It seems to us that no two orders could be more fundamentally divergent; the latter being a modified

Blackfriars

revival of the old individualistic eremitic type of monasticism, and the former being social in its essence. The fact that there are material borrowings from Benedictine observances and that their end is the same really proves nothing. The end of all religious orders, as indeed of all Christians, is the same—the twofold love of God and their neighbour: it is by the means taken that they vitally differ.

The second element of a history is the reconstruction of its relics. That particular group of human beings must be made to live again, and not just photographically, but as seen in their full significance and inner meaning. This requires not merely the facts but also an imaginative perception of the facts. It is history as an art, and only as such can it have a compelling interest. We cannot admit that Miss Thompson has secured this achievement. Learned, accurate, critical—her book lacks *life*. Certainly a difficult task with a subject so retiring and unostentatious. But that group of figures who passed through this world in the Middle Ages were men and have all the interest and fascination of humanity. And if the historian is to hold us it is just that that he must recapture. This book has laid the foundation: someone else must build.

A.M.

THE PRAYER OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS. By Dom Fernan Cabrol, O.S.B. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne; 5/-).

What is the purpose of such a book as this? Let us at least be clear as to what its purpose is not. The liturgical movement is not an attempt to reproduce in their material integrity, the forms of a past age. That would be still more stupid and calamitous than even the Gothic revival. Liturgy is not archaeology. We study the early liturgies because they are the classics of Christian prayer. A book is a classic because it is the perfect expression of a perfect idea. We reach that idea through its material expression. But just as it would be fatal to imagine that the mechanical repetition of classic phrases would assist us in forming a style of our own, so of the early Christian prayers it is not their material statement we wish to memorise, it is the idea, the energy, the *spirit* behind them that we seek.

What was the characteristic which made that early prayer so tremendously alive? It is, of course, the spirit of Christ, of *Christus totus*—to use St. Augustine's phrase, Head and members. There was a vigorous awareness of the fact that Christian prayer is with Christ and through Christ, and that since the Body of Christ is one—united in the Head and among the mem-