

REVIEWS

SEEK YE FIRST . . . From the Addresses of His Eminence Cardinal Griffin, Archbishop of Westminster. (Sheed & Ward; 12s.6d.)

From the first moment of his accession to Westminster Cathedral Cardinal Griffin made it clear that he would devote himself wholeheartedly 'to the poor, that is to those in need of spiritual and material help and assistance'. This was the burden of his address on the occasion of his enthronement. 'When I was saying farewell to some working men, a man came up to me and said: "When you go to Westminster, please don't forget the working man". I made him a solemn promise.' His public pronouncements since that time are a striking record of the Cardinal's fidelity to his high purpose. The wide range of his practical interest in all the many problems of today and the unfailing wisdom of his approach to them could not easily be appreciated unless it were possible to secure in a single volume a comprehensive and intelligent survey of these pronouncements. Happily such a survey is offered in the present volume. The compiler's purpose has not been the obvious one of recording the Cardinal's addresses in full and in chronological order; it has been the more immediately valuable one of illustrating the Cardinal's mind upon the major topics that are causing deep concern not only to Catholics but to the world at large. For this reason he has exercised choice not only in the addresses themselves but in offering extracts, often enough, rather than the full text. Moreover he has grouped them in sections, thus: *The Catholic Faith, Catholic Morality, Family Life, State and Citizen, International Relations, Human Labour, Education and Youth*. From this intelligent use of material a most satisfactory and at the same time handy volume has emerged.

It would clearly be impossible to quote adequately by way of sample without quoting the whole volume. But yet some examples of the Cardinal's acute penetration of problems may be permitted. 'I should be the last to say that there are no Protestants leading more Christlike lives than many of my own Catholic brethren. . . . To state a conviction is not to attack those who do not share it.'—'The future of medicine in this country will depend on whether doctors are going to consider the medical profession as a trade or a vocation.'—'The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world. Don't let others rock that cradle and deprive you of your power and influence over the world.'—'It is rather amazing that whilst people spend long years of training for the professions, little attention is paid to preparation for the great vocation of marriage.'—'It is a common but nonetheless erroneous view which holds that civic responsibility begins and ends on election days.'—'Once a sense of authority is lost by the people democracy becomes an empty name.' These quotations are chosen at random out of a

hundred similar ones. They give the true flavour of the whole feast of practical wisdom.

The volume is produced with the taste and care that one has come to associate with Sheed & Ward. The illustrations are aptly chosen, and include, as a Frontispiece, the admirable pencil portrait of the Cardinal which appeared in the *Sunday Express*, as well as the now famous cartoons by Giles (of the *Daily Express*) and Vicky (of the *News Chronicle*). The period covered is from 1944 to 1948. Since the latter date His Eminence has provided ample material for another volume of the same sort, notwithstanding his deeply regretted period of illhealth, and we look forward to its early appearance.

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THE FAMILY AT BETHANY. By Alfred O'Rahilly. (Cork University Press: B. H. Blackwell; 12s.6d.)

This particularly welcome publication is best described as a *gospel study*, the first of a series of gospel studies which, we are glad to hear, are nearly ready. Would that more and more—layfolk and clergy alike—would read this work of a layman, take to such studies, and ceaselessly foster richly profitable commentaries on the Sacred Text. These studies are certainly devotional in the sense of well-informed, enlightened devotion; in reading them we are well away from the plaint of those who assert that in biblical commentaries they find hardly anything to raise their minds to God, nourish their souls, and foster their interior life, and therefore maintain that recourse should be had to a spiritual and so-called mystical interpretation.' (*Divino Afflante*, C.T.S. Edition, § 30.)

The method followed is: first, a literal translation of the passage chosen for study, then 'Notes on the text', calculated to bring out the full force of the literal rendering; then the 'study' in various sections, sometimes bringing out an apologetic aspect, or developments in topography (as with the tomb of Lazarus), or representations in early Christian art. The least satisfactory side of this book is the apologetic. There is an excessive preoccupation with effete situations; we do not live in an age that dotes on Renan's vagaries. More successful are developments on the Martha and Mary theme and piquant remarks on the failure of modern English law to recognise the place of contemplative life in society. Careful examination of the evidence leads to the conclusion that the Sinful Woman, Mary the sister of Martha, and Mary Magdalen are, in all probability, one and the same woman. It is clear that the author has put immense, and loving, labour into these 'studies'; and it is pleasing to see the wide range of his reading, his use e.g. of Matthew Black's *Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* or Donatus Baldi's *Enchiridion Locorum Sanctorum*. And the whole result reads passing well, were it not for some arresting idiosyncrasies of language, e.g. 'how could the Heart of Jesus resist this love-sped missive?' (p. 36); and sometimes a strange 'raciness',