

of sanctity in Christian tradition (not without occasional donnish disapproval of medieval exuberance), and appendices give lists of emblems and notes on the representation of such categories as bishops, monks, deacons and popes. Occasional sketches illustrate the biographies, and a convenient format ensures the usefulness of an agreeable addition to the guidebook literature on English churches. It should be added that Mr Milburn confines himself to English churches, which in this context includes Cornwall, where, as he rightly says, the local saints are more naturally linked with Wales or Ireland than with England.

I.E.

THE IMITATION OF MARY. By Thomas à Kempis, edited by Dr Albin de Cigala. (Mercier Press; 10s. 6d.)

The term 'Marian age' like that other 'age of enlightenment' is so used and abused today as to have become a mere cliché. Yet as far as either term can be truthfully applied to the world of the first half of our present century it has been the reverse of 'Marian' in as far as real understanding of the place of Mary in the divine scheme of redemption and the practical devotion which necessarily follows, is concerned; and as far as 'enlightenment' is concerned, it can pretty well be said that it is the age in which the greatest quantity of education (?) has produced the smallest returns of enlightenment, i.e. of real culture. Here, thank God, the parallel ends. For while in the former case, the dark period having been reached the dawn is already breaking, in the latter, we seem from all mere human indications to be on the verge of the darkest age of anarchy and ignorance in regard to the basic principles of justice, law, order, truth and beauty. We might well give way to despair unless as true believers we knew that the now dawning of the 'age of Mary' will in the next half of this century reach the splendour of full daylight, and that by this light from above alone will the gathering darkness of the material world be dispersed.

Yes, Mary, who had become a mere devotional appendage to our 'following of Christ' has now taken, at least with the most up-to-the-age Catholic thinkers, her proper place as the indispensable link between fallen mankind and his divine Redeemer. Most fitting then and surely another unmistakable herald of the 'dayspring from on high' that the world should now be given, as companion to that spiritual classic the 'Imitation of Christ', an 'Imitation of Mary'. Who ever dreamt that amidst the writings of the illustrious Thomas à Kempis there lay such treasures of Marian spirituality as Dr Albin de Cigala has so ably gathered and arranged for us? We have here again the same noble prose 'poetic and rhythmic' as we very early learnt to love in the 'Imitation', yet with its own special quality, best described perhaps by the word *chaste*, and so perfectly appropriate to the sublimity, sweetness and purity of the subject. One feels compelled to compliment most highly the Dominican

Sister who has done the work of translation so well that her part in the work will be easily overlooked because she makes one forget there is a translator. But the riches and beauty of the work itself as well as the skill of the translator will be best seen by a passage which is the key to the whole theme.

My soul is breathless at the sight of Jesus, since it knows that in Him alone is found its happiness.

Show me this mysterious treasure which you keep hidden within you, Mary! Yes, I believe that he is the only-begotten son of the Father, and I also believe that he is your first-born, mysteriously born of your virginity. I know that he is my God, my Saviour, and my Father, and I know that He chose you for His mother.

Oh! I wish through you to see Him, your Son, and I wish to adore Him in your arms.

O Mother you have closed Him in your flesh. Hence He cannot be seen without your aid.

And if you do not deign to show Him to us, who will ever merit to look upon Him?

Through you alone we have access to the Son, and through the Son we shall reach the Father. . . .

Here indeed is a book to satisfy the real lovers of Mary, when it is so hard to find anything in modern writings adequate to sustain that love.

Finally Dr De Cigala has shown courage in placing his own commentary in the shape of homilies and meditations side by side with the text of Thomas à Kempis, but I feel his daring has been justified by the excellence of the result.

I would like to draw the attention of Spiritual Directors of the Legion of Mary to this 'Imitation of Mary'. To my mind it is the book we have waited for to provide us with inexhaustible material and a wealth of inspiration for our weekly allocutions. More so because the whole of the matter is set to the Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary of Our Blessed Lady.

ESMOND KLIMECK, O.P

THE TEACHING OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. Edited by Canon George D. Smith, D.D., Ph.D. (Burns Oates; 2 vols.; 50s.)

These two large volumes of over 1,300 closely printed pages are a revised edition of the series of little books published a number of years ago entitled 'A Treasury of the Faith'. It is re-edited now by the original editor, Canon Smith, with certain additions. An admirable production originally, its value is greatly increased by the changes introduced in this new two-volume edition. The work is intended as a more or less complete presentation of Catholic doctrine for the English reading public. It is the combined effort of a number of English theologians each of whom is responsible for one or more chapters. The chapters were originally separate books with the exception of one entitled 'The Church on Earth'