

BLACKFRIARS

Fr. Richard considers two special questions, the force of the counsels and the nature of practical moral truth. With the attraction of the more perfect not rarely comes the thought that it would be a sin to refuse it. This subject calls for clear decision, great delicacy and deep understanding, not the unexplained affirmations of some spiritual books. Fr. Richard's study should be of the greatest value for spiritual direction. He deals with the relations of precept and counsel; his conclusions avoid false heroism on the one hand and spiritual stodginess on the other.

The subject of the second study is more for the technical theologian. Concrete cases are often baffling to moral science, especially when the conscience is faced with a conflict of opinions on a particular point of action. Since the seventeenth century, the course of moral theology has been strewn with wreckage from various systems that set out to discover a way of solving moral doubt. Fr. Richard opens a way that is at once more direct and more closely developed from the natural dynamism of human action than is possible to a system of reflex and quasi-judicial principles.

T.G.

IN CHRIST. By Fr. Cuthbert, O.S.F.C. CHRISTIANUS. By Abbot Vonier, O.S.B. Burns, Oates & Washbourne; 5/- each.)

The chief merit of Fr. Cuthbert's book lies not, as the publishers suggest, in a 'notable addition to the theology' of the doctrine of Christ's Mystical Body (which is not justified, *cf.* Summa Theologica, 3a : III : 8) but in his insistence on the rôle of human free-will in the work of personal sanctity. He surely does not exaggerate when he says that the life of sanctity which is open to all, is entered upon only by the few. Progress in sanctity is measured by the willingness with which man gives himself to Christ and to the influence of grace in the Sacraments. Fr. Cuthbert describes the position which Christ occupies in relation to man's sanctification. He is at once the image of the perfect man and the source of grace which alone can restore that image in fallen humanity. The Christian life is a constant striving to reproduce the life of Christ in order to approach to that ideal which has the divine sanction. Fr. Cuthbert writes with simplicity and with a wealth of illustration from the Gospels and the epistles of St. Paul.

In *Christianus*, a study of the ideal Christian in practical life, Abbot Vonier displays that same theological accuracy and penetration of a problem that characterizes all his writings. A short essay on Discipleship gives the key-note for the seventeen essays that follow. The nature of Christian discipleship,

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which is the following of a unique Person, gives to all Christian activity a character of its own. The central reality is the Sacrifice of the Mass where the whole Christian Body meets to offer to God a common prayer and worship. Abbot Vonier describes the different phases of Christian activity and draws out the implications of the common life. He has some strong words for that exaggerated individualistic religion which is quite alien to the traditional Christian spirit.

R.B.M.

FLORILEGIUM PATRISTICUM, Fascic. xxxv., St. Augustini Textus Eucharistici Selecti. Edited by Hugo Lang, O.S.B.

It is a joy to see this collection of Eucharistic passages. Who has not felt puzzled when reading the Homily of St. Augustine for Corpus Christi? He seems on the verge of an explicit declaration on the Real Presence but stops short. Was it the exigencies of the discipline of the secret that checked him? He is certainly conscious of it when he says in his sermons: 'Norunt fideles.' The passages here given are but a selection; they could be doubled or trebled, as Fr. Lang well knows. He has given us the patent allusions as being the more valuable, yet it is rather the *obiter dicta* that appeal to us, such, for instance, as that the repudiation of Christ's teaching in St. John vi was 'the first heresy,' *Enarr.* 1. 23 on Ps. lvi; that we drink the Precious Blood, *Sermon*, cccx. 2, cccxx, 1—2, *cf.* the doubtful *De Feria Quarta*, 5; that Christ took His own Body in His hands at the Last Supper, *Contra Enarr.* i, 10, ii, 20 on Ps. xxxiii; the many references to daily Communion, *e.g.* *Ep.* cxxx, 21; the allusion to Augustine's chapel, 'the place where the Sacraments of the faithful are celebrated,' and the account of how Marcellinus—soon to be a martyr—kissed Augustine's hands, as he said: 'I call to witness the Sacraments which these hands offer that neither before nor after my marriage have I sinned against chastity,' *Ep.* cli. 5 and 9.

Fr. Lang says he has followed the orthography of the edition printed in Migne, yet he prints *Cataguensis* whereas Migne has always *Cataquensis*. We are puzzled too by the prevailing practice of referring for example to *Sermo* 56, 6, 10. There is surely no need for this. The figures 6 and 10 refer to the division into chapters and sections respectively, the latter are not subdivisions of the former, but an independent numbering; moreover, since the division by sections is more minute than that by chapters, a more precisely-located reference is obtained by giving the section. The only exceptions to the above are the *De Civitate Dei*, the *Confessions* and *De Genesi ad Litt.*; references to these should, for example, run: