

perfection required of him, by several French writers, we may add this thoroughly admirable treatise of our own Père Garrigou-Lagrange. The translator is a professor at Oscott College, in England, and deserves our commendation for an unexceptionable piece of translation. This is a book for every priest, for its outlook is universal.

J.P.R.

Elizabeth Bayley Seton. By Annabelle M. Melville. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951. pp. 411. \$4.00.

Elizabeth Bayley Seton was a remarkable woman. Such was the judgment of Archbishop John Carroll, Bishops Cheverus, Maréchal, Sibourd, Flaget, and the priests and laymen who formed the structure of the Church in early America. The reader of Annabelle Melville's life of Mother Seton must come to the same conclusion.

The author begins with a sketch of colonial New York a generation before Elizabeth Seton's own day and carefully traces the background, growth, and development of her eventful life. By a judicious use of reliable sources, particularly the abundant correspondence of Mrs. Seton and her friends, the narrative is unfolded without tedious historical interludes. The text reads smoothly, since historical sources are reserved for the large section of notes at the end of the book.

The events of Elizabeth Seton's life make a very moving story. She was a pious Protestant, a member of a socially prominent family in New York. Mother of five young children, Mrs. Seton faced and survived a terrible crisis when the death of her husband and her subsequent conversion to Catholicism left her destitute of the moral and financial support of her friends. For many years her life was a constant effort to strengthen her newly found faith and, at the same time, to provide for her children. With the help of an ever growing circle of Catholic friends, she was directed to a variety of undertakings before eventually founding the Sisters of Charity.

Elizabeth Bayley Seton was doubly a mother. Till her dying day she worked and planned for her children, at the same time directing and forming the character of her religious institute. It is remarkable that she could expend such energy in both rôles. However, it is as foundress of the Sisters of Charity that she is remembered and venerated to this day. For that work especially God directed her steps and made of her the great glory of the American Church that she is.

Miss Melville's biography of Elizabeth Bayley Seton is the result of serious and thorough historical research, and has all the merits of good history. It is a treat to read such a life without the distraction of multiple pious corollaries. The story is clear enough in itself to portray

the profoundly Christian and genuinely feminine character of Mother Seton.
W.P.H.

The Fatherhood of St. Joseph. By Joseph Mueller, S.J. Translated by Athanasius Dengler, O.S.B. St. Louis, Mo., B. Herder Book Co., 1952. pp. vii, 238. \$3.50.

The opinion that St. Joseph is the greatest of the saints after Our Lady is becoming daily more commonly held in the Church. The vocation Joseph was called upon to fulfill, like Mary's, was given to him by God Himself through the message of an angel. Following the principle that an exceptional divine mission calls for a corresponding degree of grace, how else can the Church conclude than by promoting the pre-eminence of St. Joseph, chaste spouse of Mary, as the virginal father of Jesus? But the great Saint has not reached this favored place without a struggle. It is in the defense of these great blessings of St. Joseph that Father Mueller has compiled his scholarly and effective theses in *The Fatherhood of St. Joseph*.

In his quest for the truth of the matter, Father Mueller has wisely brought forth the authority and the witness of Holy Scripture. For after all, whatever knowledge we have of St. Joseph's life here on earth, we owe to the inspired accounts. But with regard to the interpretation of these few texts, he relies upon the authority and the experience of tradition in the words of the great Fathers and Doctors of the Church. He devotes considerable space to the doctrines of St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Albert, and St. Bonaventure. When the author himself does advance his own opinion, he always follows the common teaching of the Church. On the whole, his exposition and defense should effectively convince the doubtful reader of the truth of the prerogatives under discussion.

Father Mueller in his preface expresses the hope that "the work, originally intended for theologians and therefore couched in somewhat technical theological language, may yet be of interest to other educated men and women interested in theological questions." The later chapters of the work, devoted to the cult of St. Joseph, give promise that the author's hope will not be in vain.
E.G.F.

Science and Christian Apologetic. By E. F. Caldin. London, Blackfriars Publications, 1951. pp. 44. 2/6. (No. 17).

The Meaning of Existentialism. By D. J. B. Hawkins, D.D. London, Blackfriars Publications, 1951. pp. 18. 1/6. (No. 18).

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