



**The Morality of Imperfections.** By Rev. James C. Osbourn, O.P., pp. 247, with index. The Pontifical Faculty of Theology, Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D. C. \$2.75.

Since the days of Pope Leo XIII, there has been a conscious, determined effort to bring Catholic theology back into relation with the lives of ordinary Catholics, an effort to make the Thomistic system once again the practical plan of human living instead of a classroom discipline. Symptoms of the revival have been noticeable here in America, as elsewhere. The most recent of these symptoms, the appearance of the first number of a contemplated series of *Thomistic Studies*, is perhaps the most encouraging of them all. For the Preface to the Series, unusual in its frank attitude toward, and plain speaking about the state of modern theology, sets a purpose for the whole series which, if honestly and intelligently worked for, can do much to "renew the face of the earth."

*The Morality of Imperfections* is singularly apt for the first number of such a series. It is both truly traditional and highly independent in its attitude. It is, in fact, a ringing condemnation of some of the compromises made by modern theologians, and a recall to the older and sterner teaching. Again, it is in some respects pioneer work; it is the application of the teaching of St. Thomas to a field to part of which, at least, it had never before been adequately applied. Hence it is really representative of the work which the editors of *Thomistic Studies* hope to accomplish.

Fr. Osbourn's purpose in this work is simply to determine whether modern theologians are correct in teaching, as they commonly do, that concrete human acts can fall into one of three categories: sins, morally perfect acts, and moral imperfections strictly so called—acts, that is, which are good, not sinful, and yet lacking some of the perfection they could have had.

The treatment of the question is painstakingly thorough. In the first section the history of the question is taken up. Here all the defenders of the existence of moral imperfections are lined up and speak for themselves; then the opposition, numerically far inferior,

is heard. The second section attempts to trace the doctrine to its original sources. The pertinent writings of Suarez are examined first, then those of the spiritual authors such as St. Vincent Ferrer and St. Teresa of Avila. The third section takes up the relationship between the doctrine and the writings of St. Thomas and his great commentators. This is by far the best and most complete section. The value of the eighth and ninth chapters, in particular, which show the impossibility of moral imperfections from a consideration of the natural law of finality and of the demands of the supernatural virtue of charity, can hardly be overemphasized. They are sound, reasonable, based on clear tradition; they add up to a powerful condemnation of the modern theory, a condemnation all the more impressive because it is so thoroughly Thomistic.

Obviously, this work is highly theological. It is not intended as a popular, easy exposition of the Thomistic teaching on a particular point; rather it is a scientific and often technical examination of the roots of what that teaching should be. Therefore its appeal will be chiefly to those who have some theological background. The style is, of course, exact and didactic, but there are occasional humorous touches which are very welcome.

The real importance of the work lies in the practical conclusions which follow from it. If the more common teaching about moral imperfections is false, then innumerable Catholics are daily excusing themselves from many actual sins of which they are in fact guilty. They are being deceived. Because of this, *The Morality of Imperfections* is a book which those who are responsible for the care of souls cannot afford to ignore.

V.A.S.

---

**History of Bigotry in the United States.** By Gustavus Myers. pp. 504, with index. Random House, New York. \$3.50.

Bigotry has been defined as an "obstinate and unreasoning attachment to one's own belief and opinions, with intolerance of beliefs opposed to them." A bigot, then, is "one who through ignorance adheres obstinately to a social, political, or religious belief, opinion, or practice, and is intolerant of others who hold different views." Bigotry can be, therefore, social, political, or religious.

Mr. Myers, the author of *History of the Great American Fortunes*, has given us in his last work (he died in December, 1942) a comprehensive picture of bigotry in the United States. His litany of instances of bigotry should be read by those who wish to see a reasonable tolerance and liberty in this land of liberty. In his 495

pages of text, the author describes acts of bigotry amongst the earliest settlers, through the bigoted days of the ante- and post-Civil War periods, right into our own twentieth century days of enlightenment. Movements such as Nativism, Know-Nothingism, the A.P.A. and the Ku Klux Klan come in for investigation. It is background reading for all interested in fair play and tolerance. Samuel F. B. Morse's bitter opposition to all things Catholic will be a revelation to many. Another interesting study concerns the Maria Monk "disclosures" of the 1830's and the subsequent proof of their fraudulent nature.

Coming up to present times, Mr. Myers treats such subjects as the *Dearborn Independent's* attack on the Jews, Lindbergh's activities in the "America First" movement, Fr. Coughlin's radio talks and writings in *Social Justice* magazine. It seems to the reviewer that it is a bit too early for an historian to pass judgment on such recent events. Years must pass before any true and accurate history of our times can be written. This brings to mind the Chinaman who, when asked for his opinion of the French Revolution, replied that the event was too recent for him to judge it.

The Catholic Church in the United States has been fairly treated by Mr. Myers. But in his discussion of the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages, there is something to be said in the interests of the true history of the times. The author merely repeats the oft-repeated prejudices leveled against the Church by non-Catholic historians of the past centuries. Without making any attempt to use original sources and interpret the mind of the Church from her official pronouncements, Mr. Myers, using Gibbon as one of his chief authorities, takes for granted that the Catholic Church was steeped in bigotry in her teachings and acts. Study of this period of history has had a revival recently, but Mr. Myers seems to have failed to investigate any of the findings of these studies.

That there is a mass of information and facts in this book, no one will deny. The author has done a great work in amassing the material. Mr. Myers does not confine himself to bigotry in the United States but goes far and wide over long periods to cite examples. In fact at times the book seems to take us away from the American scene to the European theater. A large portion of the work is concerned with bigotry in Jewish history and the persecutions Jews endured in all countries and times. Some account of the persecution in Nazi-occupied lands is given in these pages.

Educators, sociologists, and all interested in a spirit of tolerance would benefit by a perusal of these pages. Though the author does not attempt to analyze bigotry, yet his work will serve as a basis for

further study on many aspects of the problem. More books of this nature should be written to bring light into dark places where prejudices hide.  
C.R.A.

---

**The Social Message of Jesus.** By Igino Giordani. Translated by Alba I. Zizzamia. pp. 381, with bibliography and index. St. Anthony Guild Press, Paterson, N. J. \$4.00.

"Does the Gospel justify a Christian system of thought? Or, in other words, does the original teaching of Jesus contain directive social principles?" To answer this is, in brief, the aim of Igino Giordani's fruitful combing of the Gospel in search of the social message of Jesus. In the attainment of his purpose he endeavors to steer a middle course between two extremes: 1) the denial of any social implications whatever to Christ's teaching; 2) the finding of concrete solutions "for the most immediate problems of social and political economy." The author's candor dispels immediately any doubts that his work is *the* panacea for modern social ills—an impression which the title, at first glance, may engender. Emphatically and repeatedly, he warns the reader that his approach to the problem "has no apologetical intent whatever and does not postulate any particular premise, political, economic, or social. It attempts to make Jesus and His authorized interpreters speak directly, and discusses, therefore, the practical applications of His teachings. . . ."

That the original teaching of Jesus does contain directive social principles is the inevitable conclusion; but the author's affirmation must be clearly understood as circumscribed by definite limitations, namely, that: "Jesus never passed judgment concerning financial and industrial activity, just as He never did concerning any of the practical and immediate economic, political, or social factors. All of these come under the great evangelical law only in that they must be bound absolutely by its ethics."

The present social dilemma of hostility between principles and practice has its roots in history, stemming mainly from the Protestant Revolt. In the Introduction, the author presents a pithy cause-and-effect analysis of this epoch-making revolution, confirmed in its comprehensive accuracy by the labors of such specialists as Sorokin, Berdyaev, and Dawson.

In any literary endeavor, quotations and footnotes can be likened to the proverbial straw and the long-suffering camel. But Mr. Giordani's readers soon discover that they have a light and agreeable burden. His effective quotations from Protestant scholars reveal his sensitive grasp on the faint pulse of Protestant religious thought. He



is not content with mere generalizations but specializes in particular illustrations. His abundant footnotes are refreshingly instructive—a literary accomplishment rare in modern scientific exposition. Like the social message of the Gospel, which is the theme of this first translated book of a completed trilogy, Mr. Giordani has a universal perspective unrestricted by time, place, or people.

Only by hearing the completion of *The Social Message of Jesus* can the reader appreciate the coordination and synthesis of material which makes its clear reception possible. The extensive range includes not only the Scriptures and all other historical literature, both secular and ecclesiastical, but also the results of scientific research in the fields of philology, archeology, religion, and sociology. In accompaniment to this somewhat formidable array of scientific references, the author has skillfully interwoven the familiar Gospel parables.

The artistic translation achieved by Alba Zizzamia deserves special mention, particularly when we realize that the graveyard of literary masterpieces is piled with the mangled remains of so many works translated by sincere but artless penmen.

As the social message itself begins to unfold in intimate detail the fullness of what the Christian way of living can and should be, the reader feels that his hand has, as it were, been linked with the hand of Jesus, the Son of God. Continuing his progress, the reader breathes in huge gulps of the air of the Gospels; he walks up Main Street with Jesus at his side; he greets Nick Waters and visits the Browns with the God-Man leading the way. For "the ethical principle of the Gospel is dynamic." But though "it makes action . . . the proof of faith," it is founded on the eternal law of love, without which justice would be at best a dead thing. The perfection of the interior life was therefore the purpose of the divine mission. Consequently, the divine message remains as pertinent today as it was for the Scribes and Pharisees. Now, as always, the Gospels stand ready to open "a new view, a nobler perspective of life" to the doctor and the lawyer, the laborer and the judge, the father and the child. Today, more than ever before, the Gospel can become a social blueprint for "a new and nobler way of living—the Christlike way."

Already our national legislators are thinking and speaking in terms of future world peace provisions. If they, and those leaders of their selection who will one day sit at the peace table of the world powers, will not merely read but study and prayerfully meditate on the modern Gospel recording of Mr. Giordani, the social message of Jesus will re-echo throughout the world to the realization of a lasting peace.

J.A.

**Humanism and Theology.** By Werner Jaeger. pp. 87. Marquette University Press, Milwaukee, Wis. \$1.50.

An invitation to deliver the Aquinas Lecture for 1943 at Marquette University presented the distinguished student of classical humanism and Greek philosophy, Werner Jaeger, with an opportunity of discussing the relationship between theology and humanism. It is this interesting lecture the University Press has now published. In it Dr. Jaeger essays a threefold task: to show the humanistic elements in the thought of St. Thomas, to describe the character of his age as a period of revival of classical culture, and to discuss the relations of theology and humanism and the two kinds of humanism.

The author points out that the first to be called by the name of humanists were the Renaissance thinkers. They were not opposed to religion, but their emphasis was entirely on this world, since they conceived of humanism as exclusive of theology. This view was wrong; there are truly humanistic aspects to the theocentric world of St. Thomas. If humanism means classical thought, especially of Greece, then Greek natural theology must be included under the term. St. Thomas used this natural theology extensively, as he did so much of Greek philosophy. The Aristotelianism of St. Thomas was "a true renaissance of the classical spirit in the 13th century." The humanism of St. Thomas is also apparent in his adoption of the Greek idea that the nature of man is that of a rational being, and that man's happiness consists in activity according to the rational faculty of his soul. Thus St. Thomas is humanistic in his use of classical tradition and in his rationalized, methodical thought.

In the second section, the author shows that there have been many revivals of Greek classicism. The Renaissance, with which we tend to connect the name of humanism exclusively, was only one such revival, albeit the most brilliant. The 12th and 13th centuries embraced another rebirth. The lifelong devotion of St. Thomas to an attempt to understand the Greeks was a truer humanism than the Renaissance poets' activity in imitating and quoting them.

In the concluding section, the author describes two types of humanism. One is presented by modern agnostics and sensists, although it can really be traced back to the Greek Sophists. It is anthropocentric, holding that man is the measure of all things. But, like Maritain in his recent *Twilight of Civilization*, Dr. Jaeger declares that there is also another kind of humanism, one which is based on a concept of man as a rational creature. This view is theocentric, considering God as the measure of all things. It is also Greek in

origin, stemming from the culture of Plato and Aristotle. The author shows that since the Greeks were originally a religious people and the scepticism of the Sophists represented a period of decay of Greek culture which was subsequently restored and ennobled by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, the second type, speaking from a purely historical viewpoint, can lay a better claim to the name of humanism.

These are the bare bones of the arguments which Dr. Jaeger clothes with a wealth of profound thought and historical detail. Especially interesting are the sense of historical continuity he manifests and his striking presentation of the parallels between our age and the period of Greek history just prior to Socrates. The world today needs another Socrates. It is the wisdom of his kind of humanism Thomists are striving to give to the modern age. They will be encouraged by the message of this profound and scholarly little volume.

R.P.S.

---

**Gilbert Keith Chesterton.** By Maisie Ward. pp. 653, with appendices and index. Sheed and Ward, New York. \$4.50.

The mere narration of the circumstances of Gilbert Keith Chesterton's natal days: his birth to the light of the world, his mental nativity soon after, and finally his palengesis to the life of God, would in itself make for fascinating reading. When to this is added an intimate delineation of the spaces of life between, the result is a biography of noble proportions and unparalleled worth. "A narrative which impresses the reader with the idea of moral unity, growth, continuity, personality," as Newman describes a Life in his *Historical Sketches*, is the unusual accomplishment of this definitive biography of Chesterton.

Not any easier than getting Falstaff into a hamper was the task of encompassing within the scope of even this ample volume the Gargantuan proportions of body and soul, the effervescent mirth and multifarious accomplishments of the incomparable G.K.C. All the days and years of his life are characterized by much that is unusual, yet his childhood, his training, and his mature literary, social, and religious works bespeak not so much the startling and heroic but the distinctive manner of genius and Grace. Always abreast of the future, vibrant with an appreciation of man's gabulous existence at the bounty of God, he fought continually the rapid and imperious trend toward the levelling of human life under the sledge and shovel of secularism. The full measure of his success may not be taken for many generations, but even now a biography such as this will contribute to the demarcation of the battle lines.

The stories of Chesterton's conflicts with himself, with other men, and with a universe peopled with demons are given forthright treatment in these pages. Both sides of the struggle are represented either by vocal evidence or by documentary citations and letters. If these last often mutilate the easy flow of the author's style, they never impede the narrative. Since all sorts of men entered into the lists of doctrinal and literary controversy with him, it seems quite appropriate that their letters should contribute to keeping his memory fresh. The fabric of these and other testimonies so painstakingly gathered and the dye of a simple style combine to present in clear and lasting colors both the brightness and the somberness in the life of Chesterton.

Treating tenderly his weaknesses, the biographer seems to leave to others the joy of proclaiming Chesterton's extraordinary gifts. Nothing betrays the intensity of her feeling for her subject but a tone now or then or a stress which suffuses with meaning even the simplest of statements. Her description, for example, of his long engagement, when an essay was the harbinger of a saucepan, is quite as well done as are the "ashy moments" which sometimes occur in the almost continual glow of the domestic hearth. In public or in private, in sadness or in brilliance of his wit, in literary or in spiritual matters, Chesterton is given a sympathy and understanding it would be impossible to find elsewhere.

While it is difficult—especially for those of us whose acquaintance with him went beyond the printed page—to imagine as hearsed in death so vital a personality and so dynamic an institution as Gilbert Chesterton, it is consoling to recall that this Defender of the Faith and suppliant of Our Lady died while listening to Father McNabb sing the *Salve Regina*.

To what a headmaster once said to Mrs. Chesterton: "Six feet of genius Mrs. Chesterton; cherish him," may be added by way of tribute to the man and his biography: "he is herein shown as realizing in his life 'the stature of the full man in Christ Jesus'; cherish him."

W.D.H.

---

**The True Life.** Sociology of the Supernatural. By Luigi Sturzo. pp. 312. Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D. C. \$3.00.

The sub-title of Don Sturzo's latest work, *Sociology of the Supernatural*, sets it off from the ordinary run of spiritual books. *The True Life* does not attempt to bring the supernatural into the life of the individual, but, supposing this to have already been done, it tackles



the tremendous task of bringing society as a whole to the true life. Hence its sociological aspect.

True sociology, the present work explains, is the science of society in its concrete existence and in its historical development. The supernatural must be reckoned with as an historical fact, therefore its inclusion in sociological investigation is of prime necessity. This thesis, while it has suffered more than its share of neglect, is hardly new. Yet the author's presentation of it is novel.

Social Philosophy today is a mongrel: it is of no particular breed, yet, at the same time, of every breed. The situation presents a challenge to Christian sociologists. Don Sturzo complains that these have failed their science. While they have believed in the divine revelation themselves, they have not given their belief its proper place in sociology but have been content to leave their science on a natural plane. This is hard saying! The sociologist cannot be indifferent when he looks at man in society; he must adopt some attitude towards his subject. For the sociologist, either man has a soul or he hasn't, and it is not sociology that will determine this but the philosophy of the sociologist. A Catholic sociologist must look at man in the light of his supernatural destiny, or ignore that destiny and sink into the abyss of rank materialism. He cannot dodge the issue by adopting a middle course, a so-called objective attitude. If his science is maintained on a purely natural plane, as Dr. Sturzo seems to think, then the Catholic sociologist has thrown his philosophy overboard and has adopted another which does not take the soul into account. We can sympathize with the author's complaint that the supernatural destiny of man has not received its due emphasis, yet we are impatient with his suspicions of a break *toto coelo* between the Catholic's sociology and his belief in the supernatural.

Dr. Sturzo's work is interesting from every angle. It has a message for the theologian, philosopher and sociologist. We must admit that society is in need of direction; it has strayed from the path that leads to its true destiny. Don Sturzo goes a long way towards pointing the way back.

J.L.R.

---

**Morals and Marriage: The Catholic Background to Sex.** By T. G. Wayne. pp. 81. Longmans, Green and Co., New York. \$1.50.

If a rough division of literature dealing with marriage were made, we could easily discern two types, the good and the bad. Among the best in the former category would be listed *Morals and Marriage* by the English Doctor of Theology who writes under the pseudonym of T. G. Wayne. This small book is excellent, its worth

being extrinsically manifested by the decision of Longmans Green and Co. to keep it in circulation. Seven years since the first printing and still influential is a strong and appealing recommendation.

The author strives, and with singular success, to present concisely the theological principles regulating marital relations. The greater part of the book is concerned with the morality of intercourse and its antecedent and subsequent acts. But considerable emphasis is given also to the spiritual relationships of conjugal life. The ideal Catholic marriage is clearly delineated in the chapters on the Sacramental Contract and Grace: in the Sacrament of Matrimony man and woman become channels of grace one to the other so that their mutual love is preserved, strengthened, and made holy.

Because this book is tactfully written, sufficiently covers the subject, and is completely sound from the theological point of view, it is to be heartily recommended both to those about to be married and to those already "two in one flesh."

L.N.

---

**Saint John Capistran.** By Rev. John Hofer. Translated by Rev. Patrick Cummins, O.S.B. pp. 397, with index. B. Herder Book Company, St. Louis. \$4.00.

At the twilight of his missionary activity, St. John Capistran laid bare to his audience in these simple words the soul of his fruitful apostolate: "I would rather just now rest than preach. But I belong not to myself, but to you." His avid love for souls, enkindled by his consuming love of the triune God, was the secret of his success in the vineyard of the Master. He was a success in preaching to others, because he first preached to himself; and with God's help he first put into practice that which he subsequently preached to others. The same may be said of his spirit of reform; he began with himself. Not infrequently the reformers are the last to be reformed—but not so with this knighted hero of the Church. That is how a saint does things.

Noble in lineage, ambitious in acquiring knowledge, masterly in his grasp of jurisprudence, inflexible in his sense of justice, proficient in theology and Scripture, uncanny in his genius for administration, inimical to all heretical sects, kind in the rôle of superior, prudent in his office of Papal envoy, practical in his sermons and books, courageous in the crusade against the Turks—these are the integrating characteristics of this Franciscan reformer whom Holy Mother Church canonized on October 16, 1690. What this dynamic friar accomplished in the seventy years of his earthly sojourn is almost

incredible. Indeed, his full life was the flowering of the aim of the Seraphic Father: to sanctify activity by evangelical ideals.

After a vision in the jail of Brufa, John Capistran decided to become a member of the Observants. He was garbed in the gray habit in 1415, at the age of twenty-nine. His purpose in joining was to love God through strict adherence to the spirit of evangelical poverty. For a guide on this subject of poverty he had recourse principally to the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas. John Capistran had seen that the dissensions and decadence then gnawing at the very roots of Franciscanism were mostly caused by a deficiency in the observance of all that poverty entailed. He met failures and opposition, but this fact only made his success more laudable. The controversy about the true nature of poverty is objectively treated by the author, who shows clearly the need for reform at the time of Capistran.

Besides being the driving power behind the reform, this great preacher possessed magnetic powers which attracted over four thousand young men to join the Observants. His policy as regards young candidates for the ministry mirrors his complete dependence on the divine omnipotence: "We do not ask how many we can feed, but how many God has called." To his subjects, this "forgotten saint" taught a lesson that members of religious Orders must learn today: they must be great Observants prior to their being great preachers. His itinerant life finally came to a close while he was on a crusade against the Turks—in truth, he died in action.

This book is well worth reading, especially in these days when our Allied forces in Italy are marching over the same roads that this eloquent preacher trod five centuries ago. This book presents not only the life of a great preacher, but the life of a saint. All those engaged in Catholic Action in any way can profit much from even a cursory reading of this work. The task of a biographer is by no means an easy one, and to both author and translator much praise is due for their efforts in making Saint John Capistran better known and loved. Indeed, after reading this heroic tale, March 28 will henceforth be not just another feastday for us, but a day of joy springing from the knowledge that Capistran attained his true goal, sainthood.

C.D.K.

---

**Brebeuf and His Brethren.** By E. J. Pratt. pp. 66. The Basilian Press, Detroit, Michigan. \$1.25.

North Americans naturally cherish a peculiar pride in and deep affection for the Jesuit Martyrs, Brebeuf, Lalemant, Jogues, and their

associates. Theirs were lives of heroic toil, of earthly failure and celestial triumph, crowned at the end with the bittersweet of martyrdom. No threads more golden than their deeds are woven into the fabric of our history. Here rich soil for epic has long lain fallow; now at last a gifted Candian poet has plowed it and planted and nurtured to maturity the splendid saga of their lives.

Here is no lush rhapsodizing; the restraint the poet has wisely exercised in letting the tale tell itself in its own simple and straightforward manner makes it doubly effective. For the tale itself is one of absorbing interest, and one feels that interference with it would be tantamount to sacrilege. The poet has avoided this error; his unobtrusive lines let the story glide along in all its stark and vital simplicity, retaining its full interest and flavor. Here are recorded in verse that should not perish the story of the call, the lowly beginnings, the struggles crowned with a little success destined soon to disappear, the incessant trials of the missionaries, the handicaps of language, near starvation, rude frontier life and Indian dirt, dogs and customs which Brebeuf was wont to emphasize to neophytes who viewed only the rosy side of missionary activity:

*"What of the winter? Half the year is winter.  
Inside your cabins will be smoke so thick  
You may not read your Breviary for days.  
Around your fireplace at mealtime arrive  
The uninvited guests with whom you share  
Your stint of food. And in the fall and winter,  
You tramp unbeaten trails to reach the missions,  
Carrying your luggage on your back. Your life  
Hangs by a thread. Of all calamities  
You are the cause—the scarcity of game,  
A fire, famine, or an epidemic.  
There are no natural reasons for a drought  
And for the earth's sterility. You are  
The reasons, and at any time a savage  
May burn your cabin down or split your head.  
I tell you of the enemies that live  
Among our Huron friends. I have not told  
You of the Iroquois our constant foes."*

In spite of such difficulties, the missionaries slowly succeeded in converting the Hurons and establishing them in permanent homes in centrally located and fortified towns. Then came the invasions of the Iroquois, and the success was thwarted. Town after town was



pillaged, each awaiting its doom with the indescribable dread of helpless inevitability. The cruel persecutions and martyrdoms are vividly portrayed, along with the indomitable faith that lifted the missionaries' failure to ultimate triumph, sustained them to bear their tortures without a sign of pain or fear, and caused the Indians to eat the heart of Brebeuf thinking it would impart to them some of his tremendous courage.

The accolades of reviewers that have greeted this poem are well deserved. Although the work of a Protestant, it has achieved a Catholic tone truly great. You cannot read it without being deeply moved, thankful you took it up, and resolved to return again to delve within its glorious depths.

R.P.S.

---

**The White Canons of St. Norbert.** By Cornelius J. Kirkfleet, O. Praem. pp. 307. St. Anthony Guild Press, Paterson, New Jersey. \$2.50.

As the Premonstratensian Canons are about to celebrate the one-hundredth anniversary of their American foundation and the eight-hundredth of their establishment, the Reverend Cornelius Kirkfleet, O.Praem., could not have chosen a better way to begin this dual celebration, than to publish this, his history of the Norbertines in Great Britain and the United States. To most of his readers, it will be more or less of an introduction to the Canons Regular of Prémontré.

The religious orders of the Church are generally regarded as falling into one of four groups: monks, canons, friars, and clerks. It is with the second group that Father Kirkfleet deals. He traces the canonical life back to the time of St. Augustine, when the first attempts to institute community life for secular priests were begun. During the development of those communities, called Canons Regular, there was an inevitable decline of fervor and the need for reform was evident. In 1080, in the Duchy of Cleves in Germany, Divine Providence raised up St. Norbert, son of the Count of Gennepe and cousin of Emperor Henry IV. After the vicissitudes that are common to the saints had been overcome, St. Norbert founded his Order on Christmas Day, 1120, when the Bishop of Laon invested forty-one Norbertines in the white habit of the canons. This investiture occurred at the monastery at Prémontré, from which place the name "Premonstratensian" is derived. The new Order spread rapidly and it is said that in 1150 almost one hundred abbots of the Order assembled in General Chapter at the motherhouse. Papal approval had been secured in 1124.

All this is but preliminary to the main purpose of a book which is chiefly concerned with British, Irish, and American Norbertines. The

first foundation was made in Scotland in 1125 and spread from there to England, Wales, and Ireland. Here, the author gives lengthy descriptions of the ruins of Premonstratensian abbeys now found in the British Isles, descriptions which slightly, if at all, interest the general reader. There follow chapters on Premonstratensian Canonesses, the disappearances of the Order from England during the persecutions of Cromwell, and the return of the Norbertines to England in 1872. Much the same is said of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

The Norbertine Canons took permanent root in the United States and assured their permanency at their solemn installation in West De Pere, Wisconsin, in 1898. This was, however, no mushroom growth, but a slow and painstaking process which had begun in 1843. The interim was one of apostolic zeal and dauntless courage in the Northwest. The final chapter of the book tells of the work of these Fathers in the educational fields of this country.

Of special interest to DOMINICANA are the mentions made of St. Dominic and the Order of Preachers. Father Kirkfleet states the Premonstratensian tradition which makes St. Dominic a Norbertine Canon. We take exception to this (following, of course, the Dominican tradition), not to belittle in any way that of the Premonstratensians, but with regard to what the author claims to be "based on historical evidence." This evidence is in the form of documents written several hundred years after the death of St. Dominic. They cannot, it is true, be completely ignored, but the fact bears more weight that his contemporary biographers, Blessed Jordan of Saxony, Blessed Cecilia, and Sister Angelica, make no mention whatsoever of St. Dominic ever being a canon of St. Norbert. On evidence much like that of the Premonstratensians, do the Cistercians and Carthusians likewise lay a similar claim.

*The White Canons of St. Norbert* is highly recommended as a valuable contribution to the history of the Church in America. And in recommending this, their American history, DOMINICANA takes this opportunity to extend its sincere congratulations to the Premonstratensian Fathers and Brothers on the occasion of their American centenary. Ad multos annos!

F.X.F.

---

**Flower of Evil.** By Edwin Morgan. pp. 179. Sheed and Ward, New York. \$3.00.

This splendid and moving biography of Charles Baudelaire takes its name from the title of the most famous, or infamous, collection of poems of this curious figure in the history of French literature.

Baudelaire was obsessed with an ideal of personal and literary perfection. Of undeniable talent, he took a perverse joy in using it for evil ends. He possessed qualities of hard work, hatred of sham, and patient endurance of poverty and sickness that would have been truly ascetic, had they been employed in the service of God. Instead, with a cool, deliberate malevolence, Baudelaire devoted them to the service of his own Satanic pride.

Because Baudelaire aimed at personal perfection and earthly fame, it is fitting that this biography should open at a moment when he had them almost within his grasp. In 1842, when Baudelaire was twenty-one, the world was his oyster. He had emancipated himself from his family when his widowed mother married again, and had moved to the Paris of his dreams. He had perfected his poetic talent and had assured opportunities of publication in several journals and papers. He had delighted in shocking family and friends and attracting the attention of Paris by taking a beautiful Negress as mistress. He had inherited a comfortable fortune. The future seemed assured, his goal nearly attained.

At once things began to happen—things inexplicable to Baudelaire, things bitterly resented and futilely fought against by him. His mistress utterly lacked the intellect to appreciate his work. She grew sick, he tired of her, they quarrelled and separated. He ran through his money recklessly, and thereafter was constantly harrassed by debts and family bickerings at his prodigality. Literary critics began to grow stonily oblivious to his presence on the scene. He grew chronically ill. He translated Poe's works, and the translator was either ignored in the admiration for Poe, or else basely accused of trying to raise himself by Poe's bootstraps. When he gained a little success by his penetrating criticisms of art, it was destined to be followed only by a greater oblivion. He disagreed often with his mother, whom he loved; he wished to be with her but was forced to endure separation. His opposition to democracy and plebeian tastes lost him the sympathy of the people. He spent years polishing his poems word by word and phrase by phrase. When, after great difficulty, he got them published under the title of *Fleurs du Mal*, the government stepped in and declared them obscene—which they were, but no more so than the works of dozens of other authors. He was fined, and the edition on which he had banked fame and fortune was suppressed. To the sensitive Baudelaire, it seemed that he had been singularly marked out for the plaything of a cruel and capricious Fate. All around him he saw men of mediocre ability win wealth and honor while he, keenly conscious of his superior artistry, grew

increasingly enmired in poverty, ill-health, and hostility as the years flew by with his goal constantly receding from his grasp.

All these mysterious happenings were the working of Divine Providence humbling this proud and lustful soul to receive redemption. Certain natural qualities he had—a love for his mother, for beauty, for honesty, for work; a sense of justice that prompted him even in the depth of his poverty to provide for his former mistress; and above all a desire for perfection. These would dispose him for the reception of God's grace, once the Divine Mercy had removed the obstacles of pride and other sins. This occurred in Belgium, whither he had fled only to meet with treatment worse, if possible, than that he had suffered in France. The faith that seems always to have lurked deep in his mind, though never practiced, arose to the surface during his last year, when he lay bed-ridden and voiceless. At the end, he died with the ministrations of the Church, gazing devoutly on the crucifix. The prodigal son had returned at last to his Father. Out of evil, God had truly made a flower blossom forth.

R.P.S.

---

**Life Together.** By Wingfield Hope. pp. 224. Sheed and Ward, New York. \$2.50.

The love-triangle such as attracts the attention of tabloids and provides meat for so much malicious gossip is something that must be considered morally evil, for a relationship of this kind runs contrary to divine law. But there is a love-triangle that is good, that is in fact essentially necessary to the success of Christian marriage. The ideal Catholic union isn't just the relationship of two persons, man and wife. It is that, yes. But further, and for the completion of the pattern of life together, a third and most important Party must be present, namely, God. With God at the apex of the love-triangle, the diagram is complete. Without him in the pattern, the union is just another business deal which has none but a human guarantee of happiness and permanence.

The tripartite pattern of love in marriage is the theme of *Life Together*. In itself, the idea is not something novel. Old as the sacrament of marriage itself, it has been the constant doctrine of Christ and His Church. Author Hope, however, has presented the triple relationship in a vigorous and very interesting fashion. Giving due space also to ever-present questions, e.g., birth control, divorce, etc., the author succeeds in getting away from the dryness of presentation almost invariably found in manuals on the same topics.



For those interested in marriage, and we all are in some way or other, this book is to be highly recommended as a sane and appealing treatment of what Christian marriage can and should be. P.N.T.

---

**Lest They Assist Passively.** By Rev. Gerald Ellard, S.J. pp. 76. The Queen's Work, St. Louis, Mo. \$0.25.

The aim of this booklet is to foster devotion to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, especially in connection with our war effort, for the Mass, in the words of Pope Pius XII, forms our "greatest means of suffrage and of grace, as well as an infinite treasure of divine riches." The Holy Father is deeply preoccupied with the state of the world at present, and since the beginning of the War has three times within fifteen months urged the offering of Mass for peace. The last of these Papal pronouncements takes the form of an instruction of the Sacred Congregation: *On Frequent and Devout Assistance of the Faithful at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*. Fr. Ellard's pamphlet contains the text of this instruction in Latin and English, and draws its title from one of its phrases. Fr. Ellard proceeds to analyze the message of this document and to suggest practical measures for instructing the faithful in the value of the Mass and for moving them to attend it more often and devoutly. He points out that the Mass is not merely a Sunday duty, but a privilege available daily. He describes it as the greatest weapon in our war arsenal, explains its nature and value as the highest form of prayer, and emphasizes its position as the center around which Catholic life revolves. All this in extremely pointed, lively, and practical language. Much of the latter part of the book is devoted to clever and stimulating quizzes on the Mass, and to samples of three-minutes sermons which many priests have found it advisable to preach at daily Mass in order to enlighten the faithful concerning this great sacrifice. The nobility of its theme, the need for the Mass today, and the burning zeal of the author for his cause lift this work above the rank of the ordinary pamphlet. Laymen and clergy will find it very helpful, and to them we recommend its vital message. F.G.R.

---

**Her Glimmering Tapers.** By Louis J. Stancourt. pp. 160. The Macmillan Company, New York. \$2.00.

"It seems that, with her (Mary's) tranquil face ever so sensitively living before me, I had wanted to write her a book that should present her to men, something that should be a platform for her to stand on in the street, while this wretch should harangue a throng and

present her to them. She has the dispatch from Sion and it is in her slim arms. . . . But in the crucible of rewrites nothing shapes up but pain, nothing of a word platform for her." (p. 149).

It is only this paragraph that gives an indication to the meaning of the title of this book. For Mary's tapers are the insights and the participation in divine life which she procures for us: "And so, Mary's presentation is concluded; in her hands she has held high the Christ-child. And who follows this sandal-shod maiden, or dares walk at her pleasant side and claim the clasp of her hand, has found the way, the living Christ, the way home." (p. 180). These words are similar to those of the Blessed Louis de Montfort in his *True Devotion*: "If . . . the knowledge and the kingdom of Jesus Christ are to come into the world, they will be but a necessary consequence of the knowledge and the kingdom of the most holy Virgin Mary, who brought Him into the world for the first time, and will make His second advent full of splendor."

This consideration leads to the fact that one must be patient in reading Mr. Stancourt's book of reflections during a Retreat, whether the necessity of the patience arises from the obscure symbolisms and strained expressions, or from heavy passages in the sermons of the Franciscan Friar. Not that the book is all faulty! For there are unusual gems to be gained from the author's musings on his own spiritual life, from the Friar's modern adaptation of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, and from most of the other sermons. But the possible reading public is not so large as the advertisement on the cover implies.

C.M.L.

---

**The Priesthood in a Changing World.** By Rev. John A. O'Brien, Ph.D. pp. 344. (Revised Edition). St. Anthony Guild Press, Paterson, N. J. \$2.00.

Seldom does a book appear on the literary market which is intended chiefly for the priest who is actively engaged in his pastoral ministry. *The Priesthood in a Changing World* is one of those rare books. It was first printed about ten years ago, and it received such immediate sales that the author has revised it and made it even more acceptable.

Nothing could better describe this book than the words of the author himself in his preface to the first edition: "It seeks to present the ideals of the priesthood as portrayed by Christ and His disciples and by the great spiritual writers of the Church in all the centuries of the Christian era. It sketches these great ideals, timeless in their un-

changing validity, not merely in an abstract manner but in the light of contemporary needs and against the background of a changing age. . . . This volume comes to grips with the major problems affecting the pastoral ministry in the age in which we live, and seeks to bring the ripe thought and rich experience of able prelates and zealous priests in effecting proper solutions for the enrichment of the work of the spiritual physician."

To priests and seminarians *The Priesthood in a Changing World* is heartily recommended, so that they may obtain "... a deeper insight into the highest office to which man can aspire on this earth: the ambassadorship of Jesus Christ to the hearts and souls of men."

F.C.M.

---

**From the Morning Watch.** By Lucille Papin Borden. pp. 213. The Macmillan Company, N. Y. \$2.50.

It is difficult to determine just what was the aim of the author in writing this book; it is just as difficult to know whether she has accomplished that aim. Books which travel in the realm of fancy rather than in reality compel the reader to put himself under a two-fold burden, firstly that of reading literally what has been said, and secondly trying to interpret just what the author might have been trying to say. *From the Morning Watch* is that kind of book; and while the author should be complimented for her dream, nevertheless the value of the book is lessened because of this voyage through the ethereal plains of dreamland. Her rapid transits from the past to the present and then back again, offer an almost insurmountable obstacle to most modern readers. They cannot cope with phantasy; they demand something much more substantial.

To these very few who can read books of this kind, and are capable of understanding them, *From the Morning Watch* should offer instruction and spiritual pleasure.

C.O.P.

---

**The Abiding Presence of the Holy Ghost.** By Bede Jerrett, O.P. pp. 118. The Newman Bookshop, Westminster, Md. \$1.25.

Originally published in New York in 1918, again in London in 1934, *The Abiding Presence of the Holy Ghost* makes its third appearance at the hand of the Newman Bookshop of Westminster, Maryland. The present edition has the added value of containing the Encyclical letter of Pope Leo XIII (June 5, 1897) on the Holy Ghost. That alone would make the book commendable to all.

Divided into twenty-six meditations, each with three points of

equal, or almost equal, length, the doctrine set forth is solid and deep. But this in no way whatever should intimidate anyone, however little his or her learning may be. The doctrine on the presence of God in the soul is clearly, though briefly, proposed. The intricacies of philosophy and theology have been so ironed out by Father Jarrett that his book is within the grasp of all.

The chief characteristic of this work is the consoling effect it has on souls. Not only is the Presence Itself considered, but also all the graces and consolations accompanying it and the gifts and fruits resulting from It.

The format of the present volume is compact and neat. It should go far in its circulation. It is highly commendable to the laity, more highly so to the religious, and, at slight risk of exaggeration, it almost approaches the indispensable for the priest. J.J.

---

**Our Lady of the Birds.** By Louis J. A. Mercier. pp. 68. St. Anthony Guild Press, Paterson. \$1.50.

In this day of digests and popular presentation of philosophies, Doctor Mercier has earned a place for himself among those who have depicted some phase of the Catholic philosophy of life in a simple manner for the benefit of the man who finds his time too limited to permit consultation of class-room manuals.

*Our Lady of the Birds* is the story of Brother Stephen, whose days in the Order of St. Benedict were few when he began to doubt the wisdom of God's dealings with His creatures. From his vantage point in the garden, he heard himself saying: "There is evil in the world. The grubs eat the plants and cause them to die, and the birds eat the grubs and the flies." His problems are solved in the same setting from which they evolved—the order of Nature.

To the uninitiated who would like a succinct but ample explanation of God's providence over His creatures, given in terms of Catholic doctrine, the book can be cordially recommended. J.L.R.

---

**Maryknoll Mission Letters, Volume I, 1943.** Field Afar Press, N. Y. pp. 55. \$0.50.

This small booklet is packed with the gripping tales of heroism told by and about Maryknollers working in the *field afar*. In the midst of war and destruction, that work for which Maryknoll was founded, which she has never neglected, and for which she may be justly proud, goes on uninterrupted. *Maryknoll Mission Letters* is a collection of facts, told by the Priests *who were there*. It is a fitting



tribute to the Maryknollers abroad and at home, for it shows that even in these days when ideals have been shattered, Maryknoll never loses sight of its ideal.  
C.O.P.

---

## BOOKS RECEIVED

Reviews may appear later

- CHATS WITH PROSPECTIVE CONVERTS. *By Rev. M. D. Forrest, M.S.C.* Radio Replies Press, St. Paul. \$1.00.  
THE APOSTLE OF ALASKA. *By Maurice De Baets.* St. Anthony Guild Press, Paterson. \$2.50.

---

## PAMPHLETS RECEIVED

- ST. ANTHONY GUILD PRESS, Paterson, N. J.:  
SUPERMAN AND THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION. *By Rev. Sebastian Weber, O.F.M. Conv.* \$0.05.  
LIFE BEGINS AT BAPTISM. *By Richard Ginder.* \$0.05.  
THE CHRISTIAN NOBILITY. *By Richard Ginder.* \$0.05.  
GOD'S TROUBADOUR AND HIS LADY. *By Rev. Augustine Hennessy, C.P.* \$0.05.  
THE MUSIC OF CHRISTMAS TIME. *By Rev. Daniel Lord, S.J.* The Queen's Work, St. Louis. \$0.12.  
SPIRIT AND LIFE. *By Rev. Thomas Plassman, O.F.M.* The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington. \$0.05.  
THE HOLY HOUR. *By Dominican Fathers.* Dominican Province of the Holy Name, San Francisco.