

BOOK REVIEWS

MORE LAY THOUGHTS OF A DEAN. By William Ralph Inge.
(London : Putnam's. Pp. 320; 7/6.)

'Criticize opinions and institutions, but do not attack individuals. That is right, no doubt, and I shall not change my rule. But it is unwise. Individuals sometimes forgive, institutions never. And in controversy they prefer what Campbell-Bannerman called the methods of barbarism.' The bitterness of a Catholic journalism against Dean Inge is a thing more distressing to some than his own antagonism towards the Church. A campaign of which 'more than one Burnt Child . . . now dreads the Fire' continues to justify his words by insulting him. Every personality has some element in it unworthy of the rest. To concern oneself solely with that element is not catholic.

There are things in these *Lay Thoughts* with which the Catholic will be unable to agree; there are phrases which will seem to him to mar the book. There is a sentence attributed to St. Thomas which neither translates his words nor expresses his thought. But on the whole, these essays reveal clear, often deep, thinking; a fine spirituality; a style born of grace and culture. There is much that is helpful, much that is inspiring. Especially stimulating are the epigrams with which the pages sparkle. 'Personalize your sympathies: depersonalize your antipathies' is one of the great sayings of the book. It is good to read that Dr. Inge has 'a great and growing respect for the Catholic scholastic theology.'

L.S.G.V.

THE THIRD SPIRITUAL ALPHABET. By Fray Francisco de Osuna.
Translated from the Spanish by a Benedictine of Stanbrook.
(Burns, Oates & Washbourne; 10/6.)

Osuna's *Third Alphabet* has one supreme recommendation, that it was a favourite book with St. Teresa. Indeed it would seem to have been the chief influence in her formation to the life of interior prayer. She herself tells us, in her autobiography, how she fell in with the *Tercer Abecedario* in the second year of her religious life and that it gave her the instruction which she had needed. 'Though in the first year I had read good books . . . I did not know how to make my prayer, nor how to recollect myself. I was therefore much pleased with

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the book, and resolved to follow the way of prayer it described with all my might.' The results of this resolution are manifest in the devoted life and inspired writings of that 'undaunted daughter of desires,' and there is little need to say any more in commendation of Osuna's book, now presented to us in a capable English translation.

But the reader may like some further description of the volume, so that he may form an idea of its contents and plan. Let us say then that the contents are very various and the plan of the loosest. Yet there is one dominant topic throughout, namely recollected prayer, and every other topic is subservient to this. The subjects follow one another at haphazard, with the inconsequence and surprise that belong to the alphabetical plan. The first treatise urges single-minded resolution in the quest of God, the third urges detachment from all that is not God; between the two is an excellent treatise on the duty of constant thanksgiving. And so the book proceeds, giving the impression of a happy jumble of religious teaching, spaciouly discursive and discursively spacious, ranging this way and that without the trammels of any rigid system, and yet contriving to teach one main thing, the business of interior prayer. It is a spiritual pantechicon, full of the most interesting furniture, very various and very variously arranged, but all designed to furnish the cell of recollection. Osuna has no illusions about his devout reader; he takes it for granted that he will need instruction on other things beside prayer, and he is not above giving him a lecture on backbiting. On the whole a very sensible and friendly book, suitable for souls of a discursive temper, and might serve as an antidote to rigidity and routine.

The author is often rather happy in his illustrations. We like especially his simile of the dog (p. 381). When you come to the table of prayer, he says, you must be like the dog by his master's table, who stands there, very alert and watchful, wagging his tail and raising his head, seeming to ask by his movements for what he wants. He is very animated and watchful and seems as though he would jump on to the table, and at times a sigh or moan escapes from him. 'So when you draw near to the table of prayer that St. Francis used to call "the round table" of his devout friars, and Holy Scripture names the most pure table prepared in the Lord's sight—when you come to the table where our Lord sups with his own, forget all else like the dog, and approach with great longing like another Daniel, "the man of desires." Like the dog, you must direct all your interior and exterior man with profound attention to

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him who is seated at this table, who is God: you must keep silence, for it is most seemly, and if you are not given what you ask for at once, raise your hopefulness and give a sigh or silent cry from your heart in secret, so that while saying nothing you may ask by your actions, for it is written that the Lord will not afflict the soul of the just with famine.'

That is an average specimen of the author's manner, and illustrates also his main preoccupation. The capable translator—translator also of St. Teresa's works—has added abundant notes to show the close parallels between her teaching and that of Osuna. We noticed, with pleasure, that Osuna must be numbered among the admirers of Abbot William of St. Thierry's *Epistle to the Brethren of Mont-Dieu*, for he cites it several times with great approval (pp. 142, 149, 217, 218, 354). We mention the pages because the citations, being attributed by him to St. Bernard, might not be recognised. The same is true of two citations (pp. 86 and 203) from the *Scala Claustralium* of Guigo the Carthusian.

J.M.

A HISTORY OF PRIOR PARK COLLEGE AND ITS FOUNDER, BISHOP BAINES. By J. S. Roche, B.A. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1931; cloth 15/-; half-leather 22/-.)

This book, written for the centenary of the foundation of the College, is much more than a mere school history. It is practically also a life of Bishop Baines, correcting and supplementing all former ones; and furthermore it is a very full account of a celebrated mansion, the creation of Ralph Allen, friend of Pope and Warburton, and the original of Fielding's Squire Allworthy. The author has done his work well, and has drawn upon a rich store of new material. The book is elaborately produced, and there are some good engravings and excellent portraits of the various prelates connected with the College. The estimate given of Bishop Baines will not be accepted by everybody, and sides will still be taken in the old and bitter controversies which the writer re-opens. There seems a lack of due proportion in the concluding pages, the history of the College in its more recent years under Bishop Burton and the Christian Brothers is too scantily touched upon. And in the account of the visit of Princess Amelia to Prior Park in 1752 (page 25) there must be some mistake, as she is stated to have been accompanied by her brother the Duke of York. She had no such brother, and her nephew who bore the title was then only a small child. Possibly the Duke of Cumberland is meant.

F.R.B.