

where I wrote inadvertently his twenty-first instead of his nineteenth year, and when I gave June 2nd as the date of the second day of the Collatio with the Donatists instead of June 3rd. But was it necessary to remark apropos of this that "for some odd reason this work (my volume), which is otherwise quite valuable, is utterly unreliable in matters of chronology"? (p. 171), or to say that my dating *Epp. clxvi-vii* "early in 418" is "ridiculous" (p. 184), or that I am "hopelessly confused" about the date of Augustine's consecration, and rather scornfully to repudiate the date 1, with Father Zarb, suggested, after much careful work, for the *De Trinitate*? These are, of course, but trifles and in no way detract from the value of Dr. Bourke's excellent work. But it may be questioned whether such criticisms make for that harmony and mutual consideration which should subsist between scholars engaged on the same absorbing task. Moreover, readers of Dr. Bourke's fascinating study might well be excused if they felt that my *St. Augustine of Hippo*, now unhappily 'blitzed' and unobtainable, was an unreliable piece of work.

There is an excellent Index and a chronological Table. The absence of a bibliography seems regrettable and the map opposite p. 20 does not seem very useful. Perhaps, too, ch. xi. might profitably have preceded ch. x. HUGH POPE, O.P.

FLAME IN THE SNOW. By Julia de Beausobre. (Constable; 10s.).

Serafim of Sarov, a hermit, was canonised by the Russian Church in 1903, seventy years after his death. *Flame in the Snow* is his story, based more on the vivid oral tradition of the vast forest where he lived than on the conventional legend of official biographers. The forest is a lumber-camp now, and it was while nursing in the camp hospital there that Madame de Beausobre got to know Serafim, whose spirit still broods over the unhappy country of his earthly life—with its churches destroyed, its monasteries closed and the world he knew gone for ever, as it seems.

This moving and radiant book, coming as it does from a dissident source, should do more for a sympathetic understanding of the Eastern tradition of holiness than any amount of speculative discussion of the differences that so tragically divide West and East. Serafim is one with the Fathers of the Desert: he has the same power of taming the rebellious beasts about him; he practises the same spectacular austerities, but cheerfully, without advertisement; he remains united to God in that simplest, yet deepest, embrace of contemplation that was theirs. He emerges from the book as real and loveable, set against a coloured background of Russian country life; one is reminded of Turgeniev all the time. It is hard to recall any recent book that has succeeded so well in making sanctity credible—and attractive, and that through a graciousness of writing and a discernment of judgment that are rare gifts in a hagiographer, and deserve therefore a grateful acknowledgment. Five contemporary illustrations and a charming dust-jacket complete a most welcome book.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

SOCRATES ET JESUS. Par Thomas Deman, O.P. (Paris: L'Artisan du Livre, 1944; n.p.).

Socrates and Jesus. Their respective lives, deaths, teaching, methods, parables, disciples. Human wisdom at its most sublime and divine: divine wisdom at its most lowly and human . . .

The theme is an almost inexhaustible one, capable of countless variations, and it could not fail to have engaged the attention of Christian, non-Christian and anti-Christian from the earliest days of our era. Père Deman passes in review many of his predecessors in this attractive field of comparative research and speculation, from the most scholarly and factual to the most imaginative and tendentious. But there are unaccountable omissions. Kierkegaard's *Philosophical Fragments* is surely the most profound and penetrating of all, and P. Deman could have employed them with advantage to add depth and substance to his own more pedestrian chapter on "Entretiens socratiques, enseignement de Jésus." Still more surprisingly he makes no allusion to Père Lagrange's wonderful comparison of Plato's account of the Socratic Banquet with St. John's account of the Last Supper discourses.

Père Deman's own contribution belongs to the scholarly and academic rather

than to the imaginative category, though sometimes he lets us feel that his classical learning is but sugar to coat his apologetic pill. Neither sugar nor pill depart notably from the tried recipes. It is all very sound, informative and edifying. English eyes, tired with War Economy print and margins on flimsy grey and yellow surfaces, will be relieved and delighted by the large type, the crisp white paper and the spacious layout of this book, and they will blink enviously at the discovery that it was produced in Paris in the last months of the German occupation. And English eyebrows may well be lifted with admiring astonishment that P. Deman could engage in these tranquil but profitable studies in those trying and turbulent times.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

AFRICAN NIGHT. By Desmond Murray, O.P. (Douglas Organ; 5s.).

Fr. Murray prefaces his profoundly interesting book with a quotation from Field-Marshal Smuts: "Race relationships are most probably the most contentious field in the whole range of human culture." Although he writes with the authority that comes from long experience of the problems of South Africa, Fr. Murray provides no easy solution to the tragedy of Black and White. Humanly speaking there is none, and *African Night*, avoiding the temptation of mere anger, gives to the English public the setting of the tragedy—that is to say he writes of men and places, and instead of generalisations he provides facts.

An intense sympathy with the native population does not lead the author to that woolly sentimentality which by-passes the real difficulties of understanding. "The mind of the Native has so far proved an insoluble problem to the White man", and Fr. Murray gives numerous proofs that this is so. The first need in considering South Africa (or anywhere else for that matter) is first-hand information—birds and flowers, climate and social institutions, as well as theoretical solutions. *African Night* is to be warmly commended as a courageous and interestingly-written contribution to a vital question. It will be of value to all those who are concerned for the Church's missionary work, and in particular for the work of the English Dominican Province in South Africa.

J.H.

THE WAR AND THE VATICAN. By Camille M. Cianfarra. (Burns, Oates and Washbourne; 10s. 6d.).

Mr. Cianfarra, *New York Times* Correspondent in Rome, gives us a very readable account of Vatican diplomacy during the war. His book is one that will do much (if it reaches an extensive non-Catholic opinion) to dispel the colossal ignorance and superstition still prevalent in Britain about the Roman Pontiff and the Holy See. Many of the scenes and events graphically described by the author (e.g. Balbo's last adventure) are already well known to war-time readers. We are not regaled by "sensational revelations." (Why should we be? We have been nauseated by these sickly substitutes for the truth for over six years). We are given straight history—made straight by way of the Vatican's clear view of the world and affairs, (such a view as you will get from no other hill-top).

The book, if it had no other value, would serve a purpose as a good all-round outline of the events of the past decade. As it is, it possesses the greater merit of showing forth the Holy Father as a man after the heart of all men of good will, and of demonstrating beyond dispute that the Vatican has been first in the fight "for moral and spiritual values, whether defined by Catholics, Protestants or Jews, with all the vigour and wisdom at its command."

I have one complaint only. Whereas the author is at pains to prove (as he does, conclusively) the strict impartiality of the Pope towards his children in war-time, while being "in favour of an Anglo-Saxon victory", he does not seem to stress equally the Papal deprecation of resort to arms, the Holy Father's constant condemnation of the increasingly horrible and inhuman methods employed in modern war-waging.

J. F. T. PRINCE.

IN THE BEGINNING GOD. By H. S. Bellamy. (Faber and Faber, Ltd.; 8s. 6d.).

Mr. H. S. Bellamy is a firm believer in the re-iteration of the thesis dear to his heart: but though this new work may fascinate—as indeed it does—it will hardly win conviction. The most valuable aspect is the examination and comparison of myths from far-flung corners of the world: but "myth" loses all meaning if we