

At the beginning of the book is placed for consultation a very full list of authors with mention of their works. And several clear schemes are set forth in the text to illustrate the teaching therein contained.

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

OF HIS FULLNESS: A CHRISTIAN REVIEW. By Gerald Vann, O.P. (Burns Oates; 5s.)

Twenty-four chapters, re-modelled from retreat conferences, on the principles and practice of the Christian life, written with much grace of language and charm of style. We found the whole book interesting and attractive, but liked best such chapters as that on prayer, where the author has allowed himself some space in which to develop his theme. Many other chapters are so brief as to seem abrupt and unfinished, and give the impression that they have been edited to the point of emasculation. The sub-title, and the book itself, show that the author wishes to make his appeal to more than the Catholic public. He is, in fact, extremely chary of the word 'Catholic,' dislikes Catholic exclusiveness, and denounces Catholic sectarianism. Indeed, when he is not thinking of Christianity in general but of the Church in particular, he is often in a critical mood, finding the members of the Church guilty of much un-Christianity. They are too much concerned with their individual salvation, too preoccupied with the conquest of sin, too neglectful of the beauty and glory of man and of the world. There is little humanism about them and little social sense; they tend to be other-worldly individualists.

Well, no doubt there is some truth in these criticisms, and the author does his castigation quite nicely. We seem to remember that Baron von Hügel also, in that grave, ponderous way of his, had much to say on these points. And he, too, had much to say about humanism, and acceptance, and positive values, and the rest. And this is attractive doctrine, and has behind it, moreover, all the compulsion of social habit. The modern man would, I imagine, as soon confess to a lack of humanism as to the lack of a sense of humour. And yet there are heights in Christianity which make humanism and it not always the best of bed-fellows. There is the folly of the Cross, there are divine extravagances, there are what St. Teresa calls 'those grand impetuosities of the saints.' Well, we do not suggest that Fr. Vann is unaware of these things, or does not accord them some recognition in his pages. But we did feel, after

we had read these sweetly reasonable pages and enjoyed their charm, that there was something lacking. We were left wondering whether the author had not, with his humanism, taken the sting and fire out of his Christianity. We would venture to hope, therefore, that if he must castigate our imperfections, he will at the same time make sure that he is giving us the strong meat of the Gospel.

JUSTIN McCANN, O.S.B.

NOTICES

SAINT VINCENT FERRER. By Henry Ghéon. (Sheed and Ward; 6s.)

Vincent Ferrer could never be made, as Francis of Assisi has been, into a saint of the faubourgs. The Angel of the Judgement is a terrifying figure and one from whom we may even, at first, recoil. To read his life may prove a startling revelation of the extent to which we have unconsciously allowed our outlook to become 'modernised.' The endless miracles may strain our weary and reluctant credulity, the terrible penances of the flagellants shock our sensibilities, and the emphasis on sin and death and judgement be distasteful. But we will ask ourselves whether our times, too like St. Vincent's own in their violence and disorder, do not also call for a violent and dramatic apostolate, a recall to penance and the evangelisation of the poor. And we will come to love as well as fear and admire the shrewd, humorous, patient old friar whose great learning could never obscure his love of concrete everyday things and the common people, whose tenderness would claim even the salvation of Judas assured. For Henri Ghéon writes well of saints and has known in this book, though at first it may seem a little inconsequent and sketchy, how best to bring out the truly Dominican balance of gifts and virtues which characterises Vincent Ferrer.

M.M.

O, CALL BACK YESTERDAY. By Margaret Fletcher. (Blackwell; 5s.)

It is generally assumed that those who in the evening of life sit down to write the story of their lives will be *laudatores temporis acti*, and the title of Miss Fletcher's book would seem to belong to this nostalgic tradition. Yet the reader will be pleasantly relieved to find that this is not so, rather in fact