

Blackfriars

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR? By Henry Somerville, M.A. (Pp. 175. Harding & More, Ltd.; 2/6.)

This 'School Manual of Civics' is full of useful information and good common sense. Mr. Somerville defines the civics of his book as 'the more elementary parts of the sciences of politics and social economics' and hopes that he has brought the subject 'within the grasp of the average pupil of twelve years of age and upwards.' Certainly at Catholic elementary schools, and no less at other and more famous Catholic establishments the average pupil of twelve and upwards should be able to master this well-ordered and simple guide to knowledge—if only an overcrowded school time-table can allow yet one more subject. The twenty-seven chapters cover a wide field—Imperial Parliament, local government, administration of justice, League of Nations, capital and labour, co-operation and competition, trade unions, public health; these are but a few of the items of our civics. And each chapter is supplied with 'questions and points for essays.' But why in a handbook so carefully compiled, so generally accurate and well printed, is Mr. Ramsay MacDonald described, on page 133, as 'an ex-Prime Minister'?

J.C.

TRACTATUS DE ECCLESIA CHRISTI: AD USUM STUDENTIIUM THEOLOGIAE FUNDAMENTALIS. By G. M. Paris, O.P. (Turin: Marietti; 8vo, pp. 254; 12 liras.)

As may be gathered from the title, this is not a personal and penetrating enquiry into the nature of the Church but a manual of Catholic apologetics, not a 'Spirit of Catholicism' but a skeleton. As such we can recommend it to ecclesiastical professors and students. The author, a Maltese Dominican, has not forgotten what the purpose of a text-book is, and he has drawn upon his teaching experience to provide a clear and well-balanced outline which should be well within the compass of a year's class-work. There is nothing fresh in plan or matter, indeed it can be regarded as a fourth and condensed edition of De Groot's 'Summa Apologetica' in an easier and neater Latin, with additions from Tanqueray and Schultes. Proof is built up on the customary triad, Scripture, Tradition and what Father Vernon's latest critics seem rather to despise as the 'deicit ergo fecit' argument, but which finds an effective place in a compendium of this sort by the side of scriptural and patristic texts which, lifted out of their context, are not in themselves intellectually very impressive, although

it is useful to have the references. Text-slinging had a place in the polemics of the seventeenth century and may even be useful on the outdoor platform of the Catholic Evidence Guild, but nowadays apologetical arguments directly drawn from Scripture are properly the matter of Biblical criticism and scientific exegesis, and to what an impasse they may lead in a tabloid treatise like the present may be seen from the following quotation, which is its own condemnation: '*Ubi argumentis nostris adversarii restringuntur, ad ridiculam evasionem recurrunt, sc. quod textus nostri authentia carent!!!*' (p. 22). The peculiar value of the book, however, is the concise and economical treatment of its chosen subject and method. Apart from the usual scriptural and patristic texts, there are few references, and of these a disproportionate number for a text-book are to periodical articles which even could they be consulted are often of scarcely more than ephemeral value, the Catholic newspaper press seeming here almost a major source. There is no alphabetical index.

T.G.

AMONG THE FRANCISCAN TERTIARIES. By Nesta de Robeck. (J. M. Dent & Sons; 10/6 net.)

This is a book which every man of desires in the Third Order of St. Francis should ask Providence to put on his book-shelf.

Approaching it without hope (for we have a mental digestion still disordered by the Septcentenary glut of talk about St. Francis) and disliking the pale green insipidity of its jacket and the characterless violet of its binding (for all Franciscan books should be habited in grey or brown or undyed linen or poor canvas, to our mind) we discovered on pages 2 and 3 that the author had sat at the feet of eminent authorities, and so we approached the first chapter with at least considerate respect. Before we had reached the end of it—it is 'Concerning the Third Order'—we had come to realise that this book will do the Order a great service. Here is proportion, sensitive to heavenly values; no mere picture book of incidents, but a scholarly book on the Spirit of the Order written with the simplicity that the Order has too often allowed to become effortless puerility. This simplicity is the fruit, rather than the frothy flower, of thought. Reading on, one sees the definite, distinct, radical power of the Third Order, its appeal to the primal generosities of every child of grace, innocent and penitent, to the almost *natural* as well as *supernatural* belief in