

or at length here, though probably not difficult of access. The point is just inferred and almost slurred over, which is a pity and perhaps a lost opportunity.

ROBERT BRACEY, O.P.

TE DEUM LAUDAMUS. (Herder, Vienna; n.p.)

Meditations by Leopold Nowak on Anton Bruckner's music, which is given throughout. The *Te Deum* is printed at the beginning of the book, Latin phrases in black alternating with German ones in red. Type faces and initials have been chosen most carefully and the production is a great joy.

Nowak takes us through the *Te Deum* step by step, not only commenting on Bruckner's work but singing his own *Te Deum*—in words not music. Perhaps one must, like Nowak, have lived through horrors such as Hitler's rule and the bombing, before one can sing 'Te Deum Laudamus' so completely, having found God's gay peace within the terror of almost superhuman pain.

The book is a triumph of faith and love over chaos. U.M.S.

A LA CROISEE DES CHEMINS. By Jean le Presbytre. (Casterman: 48fr.)

After his success with *Toi qui deviens homme* and *Au large*, the author now addresses youth on the question of vocation. The first half of the book deals with the lay state wherein is set forth in dialogue form the rôle of Catholic laymen in university, social, religious and family spheres. The second half outlines the significance and implications of priestly and religious life, and is full of good sense, advice and instruction. Considering the scope of this book, it is surprising how the author has managed to condense his subject without giving the impression of omitting anything of value and importance or at the same time of treating superficially the many problems and points involved.

T.N.

MENTAL PRAYER. By Cyril Bernard, T.O.C.D. (Little Flower Press, Manjummel; n.p.)

This is an excellent treatise—simple and practical—which should be extremely helpful to souls of good will.

THE CALL COMES TO YOU. By W. Salmon, S.M., M.A. (*Filii Matris Boni Consilii*; 1s.0d.)

Here is a short account of the real meaning of a religious vocation together with answers to all the standard objections. One is left however with the impression that a vocation may be had for the asking by anyone who desires it, whereas is it not above all a *grace*, i.e. the free gift of God given to whom he chooses?

S.M.C.

CHRISTLICHES GEBETSLEBEN. By Franz Moschner. (Herder, Freiburg-im-Breisgau.)

One phrase at the very beginning of this book typifies the intense concern with *practice* which runs through the whole of it. Fr Moschner points out what those of us given to reading 'spiritual' literature can never call too frequently to mind, that 'reading' is not the same as doing, and that no one will become a saint through just

reading. After which much-needed warning he proceeds to write a most helpful and penetrating account of how all of us may become saints. The author insists that the way which he outlines, in effect the traditional three ways, is meant for everybody—indeed he dedicates his book to ‘friends on the way’. He does well to stress the universal application of the traditional teaching, for the more one observes the sheer misery in the lives of our contemporaries the more obvious it becomes that only this radical conversion can prevent them from getting fed up with the whole business and committing suicide. And there are many ways of committing suicide other than by taking one’s own life.

“The conviction that ‘mystical life’ is meant for every one of God’s children is becoming more and more general. This life, which reaches its peak in contemplative prayer, is the destiny of everyone who has been born again in Christ, for it is nothing else but the complete unfolding of the three theological virtues within the soul of a person who is living the life of the Blessed Trinity through union with Christ.’ Beginning with the Trinity and ending with the Trinity, this book can be described as a commentary on the sentences just quoted.

With all its merits this book is hardly likely to be translated into English, since this country cannot be said to lack ‘spiritual’ writers, therefore it may be profitable to quote some of its most striking observations. Fr Moschner says, for instance, that to seek spiritual direction does not necessarily mean seeking it from a priest. In view of the fact that the formation of European man owes so much to one who was probably not a priest, St Benedict; in view also of the fact that there are simply not enough priests to do this direction nowadays, Moschner’s remark is worth pondering upon. But who on earth is to do it if not the priests? Moving into even remoter spheres, pp. 263-266, the author adheres to St John of the Cross’s teaching that transformation takes place in the ‘substance’ of the soul. What did St John mean by ‘substance’? The question for most of us seems highly academic; yet precisely because it is academic it can even be an immediate issue. Is it certain, in other words, that what St John has to say on ‘substance’ needs to be corrected by what the philosophers and theologians say about it? In any case the reconciliation which needs to be made should not be engaged upon with the prejudice that the Mystical Doctor has nothing to say which is of interest to the philosopher as such. A similar reconciliation seems to be demanded in another sphere, when we find Fr Moschner writing (p. 307) that contemplative heights seem unattainable without some sort of bodily illness. One wonders what St Thomas would have thought about that one.

Finally, might we say how refreshing it is to discover someone, and especially a German, who is prepared to believe that by praying the Rosary one may at the same time be praying the Mass?

DONALD NICHOLL.