

BLACKFRIARS

A tradition has been referred to above which is thoroughly bad. The life of Mother Mechtilde exemplifies the faults of that tradition. Unnecessarily, for the life of Catherine de Bar might have made good reading.

Some of the Practical Hints are useful. But it is dangerous, surely, to say the least, to advise that no books be used in preparing sermons. The specimen sermons given were presumably composed on this method.

To write out the entire sermon is helpful only to some. Is a 'devotional sermon' which is neither dogmatic nor moral worth preaching?

G.V.

BIOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

LE CARDINAL DE BÉRULLE : MAÎTRE DE LA VIE SPIRITUELLE. By Claude Taveau. (Desclée de Brouwer ; pp. 382 ; 15 frcs.)

The papal confirmation of the Paris Oratory in 1613 marks the opening of a new phase in the development of French religious thought. For the growth of St. Sulpice was its corollary and as the sharp antithesis in theory between the lives of the religious and the secular clergy slowly faded, the teaching of an Oratorian school of spiritual writers met with wide acceptance in very different sections of the priesthood. It is still customary to describe this school as *Bérulliste*. The term in its narrower sense would seem misleading. Yet if Pierre de Bérulle was not the founder of a new tradition he was at least one of its earliest representatives. A sense of *La Civilité de la maison de Dieu*, a rigid coherence of concepts and a distaste for violent imagery mark each treatise; traits due in part to the influence of the great Capuchins and symbolizing the final acceptance of a Catholic culture by the close-knit social life of Northern France.

Dom Huizben and M. Dagens have shown the influence of neo-Augustinianism and of the Tridentine formularies on the slow growth of this movement. Père Taveau is the first to estimate that of Thomist metaphysics. To him the primacy of Being as being and the real distinction between essence and existence are fundamental to De Bérulle's theory of contemplation. Yet it might seem that he has proved an implicit rather than an explicit Thomism and provided *Bérullisme* with its legitimate development rather than a commentary. For while as an analysis his work is admirable, as a synthesis it is too successfully symmetrical to reflect the changing facets of Bérulle's thought. In Claude Taveau another great Oratorian has his Pryzwara,

G.M.