

After all, perhaps this is just as well. If the scope of these essays is limited their conclusions stand out so much the more firmly and clearly. Mr. Abercrombie has confined himself to little more than the letter of the texts; but he has compared them very thoroughly (considering the book's brevity); he has come rapidly to precise conclusions. All who distrust text-book groupings and vague generalization should be grateful.

KENELM FOSTER, O.P.

## NOTICES

THE LESSONS AND GOSPELS FOR THE SEASON OF LENT TAKEN FROM THE ROMAN MISSAL. With an Introduction by Conrad Pepler, O.P. (Dent, for Hague & Gill; 5s.)

'In a Lenten sermon, attributed to St. Augustine, the preacher admonished his flock to "listen carefully as is your wont to the Scripture lessons read to you in church and re-read them in your homes."' The idea has prompted Messrs. Hague and Gill to offer us this most excellent of all books for daily Lenten reading and meditation—the Church's own selection of readings from the Word of God. Father Pepler contributes an admirable and stimulating introduction, packed with theological, historical, liturgical and exegetical learning, as well as much practical good sense. 'An intelligent use of these lessons and gospels will help us to partake ever more fully of the spirit of Lent, and of the ever living tradition which links us to those zealous exercises of the early Christians, in ever closer union with the Church who stretches timeless across the centuries.' It goes without saying that the printing and binding are beautiful.

V.W.

APPROACH TO PHILOSOPHY. By D. J. B. Hawkins. (Sands; 5s.)

The particular sciences turn in their tracks when they come up against the final meaning of the concepts they use. They are still active, still successful, but in one way they have worked themselves to a standstill. Hence the increasingly felt need for philosophy, not only to co-ordinate a mass of detail, but also to give a view of reality as a whole.

Yet philosophy cannot be taken from a teacher like a suit of ready-mades off a peg, though some of the manuals claim to do for you like a mental Montague Burton. To express the matter more technically, philosophy must be approached epistemologically before it is treated systematically. We must stub-

bornly work at the dialectic of experience, and though, as Professor Gilson has observed, there may be no excuse for being a Cartesian, the *Metaphysical Meditations* of Descartes point the way to be taken.

Dr. Hawkins's essay sets out to show the necessary place of philosophical thinking in our knowledge and to indicate some of the essential structures in perennial philosophy. His is a sober study in neutral tones, and his argument is not splashed with salesmanship.

T.G.

THE POOR AND OURSELVES. By Daniel-Rops. Translated by Barbara Wall. (Burns, Oates; 2s. 6d.)

This little book is remarkable not for any problems it solves, for it does not attempt to solve the very large number of problems it raises, but for the disarming charity with which it is written. It does not bludgeon consciences to the acceptance of a theory, but with perfect frankness and truth examines the conscience of our generation, especially the generation of those now young, in face of the present fact of destitution. The keynote of the book is in this sentence, '*To open one's eyes on the spectacle of social destitution is not so easy: it requires a great deal of love.*' And for this reason it is difficult to think of any book more apposite as a preliminary to sociological study and Christian social action.

One criticism: where, on p. 58, the author regrets as 'an unfortunate necessity' that there should be 'a sort of hierarchy in social justice' by which 'the worker and peasant of our own country is more directly dear to us than his distant brothers in Australia or the Argentine' he seems to have overlooked for a moment that the order in question is in fact the order of Divine Providence and is in keeping with the concrete nature of Our Lord's Incarnation.

The book of 83 pages is well produced and is fortunate in a translator who might almost have written it herself.

B.K.

THE MYSTERY OF SACRIFICE. A Meditation on the Liturgy. By Evelyn Underhill. (Longmans; 2s. 6d.)

The purpose of this book, part meditation, part anthology, is devotional. Such qualification is not meant to damn with faint praise, but to give this finely wrought work its due, for the devotion it inspires is in complete harmony with St. Thomas's definition: with such a stimulus the will readily gives

itself up to the service of God, finding here its point of focus in the Eucharist. The Preparation, Oblation, Intercession, Consecration and Communion are taken as the five 'moments' in the single Act. Upon each there is a meditation followed by illuminating passages from the historic Liturgies of East and West. Liturgical Prayer must enlighten the understanding and kindle the heart if it is to avoid danger of formalism and bare legal observance; and for that reason personal meditation on the Liturgy is an indispensable factor for those who are bound to its performance. Although the book is primarily written for those who follow the Anglican rite, this need in no way limit its use to Anglicans. Its spirit and its content are Christian. Many of the sources it draws from are the living springs of the Church's ancient Liturgies, still used by our fellow-Christians in the East, which to many of us in the West remain closed books.

A.T.-A.

**THE CHANT.** A simple and complete method for teachers and students. By V.G.L. (Herder Book Co.; 5s.)

A thorough and systematic course of training in Gregorian chant, following the Solesmes method. The author's own practice in teaching is produced here in an accessible form; and its lessons are the fruit of long experience and expert knowledge. Hence they are easy to follow and bear no trace of superficiality. The representation of the notes of the diatonic scale by numerals is systematically used, and is to be specially recommended for its facility in blackboard work. While the training in technique is thorough, there is a proper insistence on the true purpose of the chant and its subordination to the text. The medieval writer quoted gives the author's terms of reference:

'The bounden duty of praise that is our vocation has not only to be performed with exactitude and completeness, but also beautifully and attractively. We must accordingly become craftsmen in our art so as to be able, with skill and charm, to render to God our Sacrifice of Praise.' This is a most able and practical manual, and its tenor and method are perfectly English. A fitting companion to the well-known *Grammar of Plainsong*.

A.T.-A.

**TALIESSIN THROUGH LOGRES.** By Charles Williams. (Oxford University Press; 6s.)

The best poetry of this book has a quality immensely rare in modern literature. It has something genuinely heroic, a sense of glory rather like that of the great epics.

' Numbers crashed ; Taliessin saw Gawaine  
 fail, recover, and fail again ;  
 he saw the Dragon sway ; far away  
 the household of Lancelot was wholly lost in the fray ;  
 he saw Bors fling  
 company after company to the aid of the king,  
 till the last waited the word alone.'

Unfortunately, passages as clear as this are very rare. Most of the glory is hidden in a darkness more impenetrable than that which obscures Blake's Prophetic Books. Those who take up this book must be prepared to read patiently until the lucid interval comes. But for some it will be well worth the waiting.

G.S.S.

ORTHODOXY. By G. K. Chesterton. (Sheed and Ward : Unicorn Books ; 1s.)

Canon Charles Smyth has written recently, ' It was given to Chesterton, more than to any other single individual, to change the intellectual climate of his age . . . He was able to demonstrate with a wealth of paradox and with an enormous sense of fun that if anything was stuffy and pedantic and intellectually obsolete and obscurantist and dreary and second-rate, it was not the Christian religion, but the procession of religions and philosophies that claimed to be intellectually and morally superior to Christianity. His bowling was so unconventional according to the decorous conventions of the devout agnostic, that conventional agnosticism, the ethical rationalism of that age of refined but muddled thinking, was quite unable to stand up to it. The result is that at the present time the Christian side is in, and has in fact been bowling for a considerable period.' We are so accustomed to blush for his bowling, and to take his achievement for granted, as to overlook the debt we owe him. This cheap reprint of *Orthodoxy* comes at a fitting moment to remind us how he did it ; but much of it is none the less relevant to-day. A pity, however, that there is no indication of the date of original publication, or enlightenment for a new generation regarding those names and allusions which are no longer relevant, or even intelligible except to the historian. The volume is one of a set of four new ' Unicorns,' of which the other titles are Belloc's *Survivals and New Arrivals*, Fanfani's *Catholicism, Protestantism and Capitalism*, and, most ambitious of all, Allers' *Psychology of Character*.

V.W.

STAIRCASE TO A STAR. By Fr. Paul Bussard. (Kennedy, New York; \$1.50.)

This is a collection of stories, each of which is designed to illustrate some great religious truth. Each of the stories is preceded by an 'argument,' which, in the opinion of the reviewer, puts the truth more clearly and forcibly than does the story. The latter feature Pierrot and Columbine and are purposely unrealistic. But Fr. Bussard has not the gifts necessary for this kind of story-writing. He is not a poet, and has neither a 'fairy' imagination nor the power to make the events of his stories symbolise those of real life. They are written in an 'art-prose' which increases their unreality. Against them the hard clear arguments stand out like steel against cotton-wool.

G.S.S.

THE ENIGMA OF JAMES II. By Malcolm V. Hay. (Sands; 8s. 6d.)

The very able writer of this book has already shown in a previous publication reviewed in these columns, *Winston Churchill and James II*, that he is quite as determined as Dr. Johnson was that 'the Whig dogs shall not have the best of it,' even in that field of history in which they have so long reigned unchallenged. In a fine piece of original research he builds up a strong case for a reversal of the unfair judgment passed by posterity on the last Stuart King. Step by step, he establishes his thesis that the received history of the Revolution of 1688 is founded on deliberate fabrications, uncritically handed on down the centuries, and finally 'given classical form by the genius of Macaulay.' A very different James II emerges from his pages from the cruel, incompetent, intolerant, insincere, contemptible figure of received tradition. Mr. Hay does not mince matters, and writes with honest indignation of those who propagate scandalous and defamatory accusations, and form reckless and ill-considered judgments. He deserves a hearing, but whether long-seated prejudice will concede it to him is perhaps doubtful.

R.B.

SOCIAL IDEALS OF ST. FRANCIS. By Fr. James Meyer, O.F.M. (Herder Book Co.; 7s. 6d.)

For some years the Franciscan tertiaries in the United States have been debating what exactly is the Franciscan message for the world of to-day and what exactly is the Franciscan life which, if lived, could change the world. After much discussion

a Tertiary Congress drew up a three-point programme, which states (1) To commit no sin of heart or hand for the sake of goods of fortune; (2) To observe moderation in acquiring and enjoying all goods of fortune; (3) To share goods of fortune with God and neighbour—not only in point of almsgiving in accordance with means, but chiefly in ordinary dealings with fellow men, in business and social life, in spending and investing. The Congress debated this, and many eminent speakers, including Dominican tertiaries, Benedictine oblates and a Dominican priest helped the deliberations. Now Fr. James, O.F.M., has taken the programme and made it live in what might well be called eight lessons in applied Christianity. Many who are not Franciscan tertiaries might read with profit what Fr. James has to say on the 'Dignity of Man,' 'God and Property Rights,' 'Voluntarism v. Compulsion,' etc. The book gives some idea of the force that the Franciscan tertiary movement (and dare a Dominican tertiary apply this to himself and his brethren?) could be in the world if the tertiaries meant to live their 'life' as St. Francis meant it to be lived. One point of interest at the Congress which adopted the three-point programme; part of the draft of point three was deleted; this read, 'buying and selling less with a view to profit than with a view to bestowing his money and property where and as they will do the most good.'

R.P.W.

APÔTRES DU CHRIST ET DE ROME. By Georges Goyau. (Editions Spes; 15 frs.)

Studies by this well-known writer on the Missions: The first Carmelites in Persia; Marquette; the Beginnings of the White Fathers; the Uganda Martyrs, etc.

Characterised by the careful documentation and terse style we associate with this writer. As becomes a Frenchman, he is duly impressed by the collateral benefits of Latinisation—hence, we suppose, the words 'et de Rome' added to the title.

The study on the Carmelites in Persia is purely historical and documentary. There are no signs in it of any interest in Persian thought or of any criticism of the mixture of politics and missionary ambitions which inspired these sixteenth century expeditions 'in Persidem.'

C.R.