

children a wonderful *joie d'esprit* with which the book is permeated.

The illustrations are worthy of this lovely book and Caryl House-lander earns our gratitude for giving us pictures which need no apology when showing them to children.

The 'Shining One' in the Snowdrop Legend is exceptionally fine and satisfying, which is seldom the case with 'holy picture' angels. It is a pity several less-known flowers are not illustrated.

The following comments of the children will do more than any words of mine to show their appreciation:

- (1) . . . These stories make you love our Lord more.
- (2) . . . Although legends they seem almost genuine (true).
- (3) . . . They make our Lady more real.

(4) The lad of ten who 'hated' such stories wrote, 'If I tried for a hundred years I could never do what the editor has contrived in a day'.

SISTER M. WALBURGA, O.P.

SPIRITUAL PROBLEMS OF OUR TIMES. By Luigi Sturzo. (Longmans; 12s. 6d.)

Few men could have combined the active and intellectual lives to the same degree and with the same success as Don Sturzo. This book is a product of that combination and gives the reader much of the best of both worlds. It is not as if the author had been merely active as a politician and then spent the long period of retirement occupied exclusively with the things of the spirit. It is clear from this book alone, if we did not know it already, that his political activity was one expression of a deeply pondered and carefully constructed philosophy—a philosophy which is genuinely Catholic, stimulated and widened by contact with the best minds of our time of different faiths. Hardened by contact with life, mainly the turbulent life of politics, it has been further deepened and refined during the years of exile.

But even so versatile a personality has to be fitted into a groove by the reader, and it seems probable that the second half of this book will be preferred to the first: not only because it is easier, but because it more truly corresponds to the aims and talents of the author. He claims to have written a book of experiences, but while *The Quest of the Truth* is based on the writings and conversations of other men—critically examined indeed and reviewed in the light of the author's own philosophy, even to some extent re-lived—*The Quest of the Good* is more directly the fruit of personal contacts: with God in prayer, with men who have tried to live heroically according to God's will in the upheavals of modern times. Among the best of these essays is *The Spiritual Life of the Average Man*; the points he makes are familiar enough—the supreme importance of sanctifying grace as the beginning and end of perfection, with the consequent impossibility of *final* states in this world or *separate ways*—but they need to be repeated in this succinct and clear fashion.

Indicative of his own outlook on the active life and a useful reminder to those energetic people who attend lectures on 'The Urgent Need of Catholic Action' (a title announced in the Catholic Press only a few weeks ago) is his reminder that the Conferences of the St Vincent de Paul Society were really meant to be conferences, to educate the members in faith and charity, with good works as a means of preserving them from temptation and to provide opportunities for exercising their love.

EDWARD QUINN

CHRIST CONSCIOUSNESS. By A. Gardeil, O.P. (Blackfriars Publications; 2s.)

This is a translation by a Dominican of Carisbrooke of the author's *Le Sens du Christ*. It presents a series of six meditations on the Pauline theme, 'For me, to live is Christ'. Besides being the sole medium of redemption, Christ is our justice, sanctification and wisdom; above all, he is our 'life'. 'But what is the meaning of this expression, "For me, to live is Christ"? It is used in the same sense when a mother says of her child, "He is my life": that is to say, "All my thoughts and my love and my hope are centred on him". When one being plays a preponderant part in the direction of the life of another, we can say that it is its life.'

This brief extract illustrates the simplicity, the homeliness almost, of the late Fr Gardeil's treatment; which is what we should expect in notes for retreat conferences. And yet there is a depth and accuracy of statement which reveal the true theologian: 'You may ask, "What about God? Is not God in his essence, in his Trinity—is not he our life?" Of course God is our life. He is our Father, in that he has adopted us in his Son. But so long as we remain on earth, as members of Christ who saves us, under whose direct action we are, Christ first of all is our life.' And again: 'In the sixth chapter of his gospel, St John presents communion as first of all a participation in Christ by faith and love, and then as the real eating of his body and blood'. How acceptable it is, yet how comparatively rare, to find the point made that our Lord's insistence on the need for men to eat his body and blood is the climax of his teaching on the necessity of faith and charity! This little book will be welcomed by all who seek to build their spiritual life on the principles of sound theology.

ÆLRED GRAHAM, O.S.B.