

WHY DOES GOD PERMIT EVIL? By Dom Bruno Webb, O.S.B.  
(Burns Oates; paper 2s., cloth 3s. 6d.)

At a time when the meaning of evil is questioned even more than usual, this book presents a sincerely thought-out statement of the Christian answer. It is indeed so far from being content with the bare minimum of such a statement that a considerable part of it attempts what is to us a new effort to justify the suffering of the brute creation. This attempt is most certainly ingenious, but we think unnecessary. The author agrees with St. Thomas that the brutes were carnivorous before the fall of man, but unlike St. Thomas he thinks there was something wrong in that, and so has to find a cause for it in the fallen angels. There seems to be an idea latent in all this long argument that suffering of every kind is somehow 'wrong' and a kind of moral evil in itself. The rest of the book should be a great help to all its readers. The observation, however, that unbaptised children *can* suffer meritoriously—witness the Holy Innocents—does appear to indicate in the context that they normally do, which is not the traditional view.

I.T.

FOLLOW ME. A Vindication of the Ideal of Religious Life. By Bernard Fennelly, C.S.Sp. Introduction by Edward Leen, C.S.Sp.  
(Burns Oates; 6s.)

This is a splendid book in which Fr. Fennelly offers a most useful contribution to religious writing in English. It seems that the subtitle which is suggestive of a defensive controversy does not give a true impression of the real contents. The matter is only incidentally apologetic, but primarily expositive and doctrinal. The splendour of the religious ideal is unfolded in a scholarly and attractive manner, which is appealing for its own sake. In his valuable introduction Dr. Leen calls attention to the fundamental truths and principles underlying the religious state, which are woven into the main theme of the whole book. The vows are comprehensively studied in order from both the spiritual and canonical point of view. Our Lord and his Blessed Mother are set before the reader as the ideals of what the religious by profession must strive to become. The matter falls into three parts, under which in distinct sections the respective vow is considered and then its corresponding virtue. Many points which sometimes raise difficulties are clearly explained, particularly regarding obedience. A better account could hardly be found of what is meant by blind obedience, which is shown to be blind only in a qualified sense. Similarly, the sin of contempt is stated to be a holding as worthless either the Person of the Superior in his official capacity, or his precept in exercising his authority. The author also shows that interior murmuring against obedience is at least venially sinful. In speaking of chastity he makes the shrewd remark for the benefit of modern educationalists and others, that knowledge does not impart moral power.