

UNLESS THEY BE SENT. By Augustine Rock, O.P. (Blackfriars Publications; 11s.)

This is a simple and in some ways instructive analysis of the theology of preaching. Fr Rock bases his treatment on the writings of St Thomas and of St Albert the Great and by so doing makes it quite clear what are the fundamental duties laid on a preacher. The task of a preacher is to witness in the present moment to the eternal word of God. This implies that he must have a commission from the Church, for his preaching is an official work, not an exercise in self-expression. Through the preacher the Church carries out its prophetic task of being the mouth-piece of God; since the pastoral rule of the Bishop covers the prophetic function all preachers must be sent by a Bishop. Fr Rock's book is easy to read and study of it will serve to prevent preachers from regarding the instruction of the faithful as a trivial matter. The *raison d'être* of the sermon is the glory of God and the salvation of souls, so that any departure from the great dogmatic and moral themes involves a lapse into worldly or merely rhetorical language. The book could have been improved by a greater use of patristic teaching and enhanced if the text were not so liberally interlaced with quotations, not always of very great value.

IAN HISLOP, O.P.

THE ARCHBISHOP AND THE LADY. By Michael de la Bedoyere. (Collins; 16s.)

The last time Bossuet was discussed in my presence was about twenty-eight years ago and since that time I had desired to hear nothing more about him. That I read this book, in which he plays so prominent a part, was due, at first, more to my interest in its author than in its characters. I was curious to discover how a busy journalist would treat this passionate, tragic, religious controversy that convulsed the Court of France and the Church of France and even the Court of Rome itself at the end of the seventeenth century.

That I have always considered Bossuet a bore is perhaps the fault of my teachers or is possibly due to my own ignorant prejudice. But, after all, when Bossuet preached he went on for hours; his interminable panegyrics on queens and dukes and princesses were full of erudition, full of unctious and flattery, full of everything, as someone remarked, except religion; when he discoursed on history it had to be universal history. They called him the Eagle of Meaux. It should have been the Elephant. But though I have never liked Bénigne Bossuet, it is only after reading *The Archbishop and the Lady* that I find it difficult not to loathe him.

This is not the fault of Mr de la Bedoyere, who does his admirable