

SAINTS GO WESTWARD. By Donald Attwater. (P. J. Kenedy and Sons; \$2.50.)

St Peter Claver said: 'A hungry man must be fed, not instructed'—and one of the most unforgettable of these sketches of American saints by Mr Attwater is of that 'slave of the Negroes' setting about the job. But times change. And now we are in danger of being fed by American dollars when we want more than anything instruction by American holiness. American saints! how important they are going to be for the whole world. Who are they in our own times, and what is the pattern of sanctity in their shiny mechanical world? Will they be found only in the new Trappist cloisters? on Rosary Crusade platforms? down in Harlem? Or shall we find them everywhere, Catholicly, up North and down South, round New York and far West, and in South America too? God knows, no man can say. Meantime, here are the pioneers, caught by Mr Attwater in a kind of gossip-column which makes us long to know all about them, and so much more than he tells us. They are all sorts, some twenty of them, revered, venerable, beatified or canonised, from North or South of the great continent, lay and clerical, married and nuns, Spanish, French, Italian, Indian, Negro, English—in a word, as American a collection as possible. And they are a very human lot, for though none of them, with the possible exception of Mother Cabrini, would be anything but amazed in America today; even in those days (for very different reasons) none of them could afford to be made of plaster or stained glass or dream material. Neither can saints in the American continent now. These are the saints of yesterday. But things have happened so fast over there that yesterday seems to have very little to do with today. Only, they challenge their successors. And that is a very good reason for Mr Attwater's having written this book for Americans, and for us to look over their shoulders as they read it, unless we may hope (as hope we do) for an English edition of our own.

COLUMBA RYAN, O.P.

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF ABBOT VONIER. Vol. III. (Burns Oates; 25s.)

In this final volume three books are brought together under the single title, *The Soul and the Spiritual Life*. The three books are, 'The Human Soul', 'Christianus', and 'The Life of the World to Come'. Broadly speaking they deal with the personality of the Christian. As Abbot Vonier remarks in Chapter 47 in his book on the Soul, many men 'are bound to the language and understanding of their childhood days, with the result that faith has become insipid to their mature minds'. And of an English agnostic it was said that 'the only Christianity he ever knew was the one he learned at the age of five'. This is so widely true at the present time that many would profit by reading these collected works.

A contrast is made between the power of holiness in the sanctified Christian and the inability of Satan and his angels to dwell in holiness. For the unclean spirit rest has become impossible—'the earth's surface burns the sole of his foot'. His only chance of repose is a sinful conscience. And so in 'Christianus' we read: 'The periodical desecration or profanation of vast Christian lands becomes as simple in this explanation as the advance of a Napoleonic army. Satan wants to find rest, so he must destroy, if he can, every stronghold of holiness, be it a church spire, be it a crucifix by the wayside, a convent, a school of Christian truth, or a conscience that is in the grace of God. With such things confronting him on all sides Satan cannot rest.'

In the third book, those points of Christian doctrine are emphasised which strengthen hope of eternal happiness in the world to come.

The editor relates a delightful incident illustrating the Abbot's reverence for the dignity of a human soul. One day whilst out walking he met a Catholic mother with her recently-born baby. Before and after speaking to her, quite naturally, he uncovered his head and bowed to the sleeping child.

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

OBEDIENCE. (Blackfriars Publications; 16s. 6d.)

This is yet another book in the series on Religious Life for which Blackfriars Publications has made itself responsible. The subject is treated in a logical order, starting with its history and following this with the theology of obedience. The article contributed by P. Motte is particularly clear and places before us the sound thomist principles of obedience. Unless obedience is understood in its right relation to the other virtues, it is impossible to give it its true value and importance. In the psychological and experimental section there is a very great deal of most useful matter. If all those responsible for the training of young religious would only take in these pages, much unhappiness would be avoided and fewer square pegs would be found in round holes. After all, here we have the findings of experts not only in the practical sphere but in the speculative as well.

P. Marie Adrian Corselis, O.F.M., does seem to 'push' the Franciscan ideal a little and make it appear the only really authentic form of religious life. He says (p. 44): 'Solicitude for one's personal perfection is nothing compared with the practical exercise of charity'. But surely 'solicitude for one's personal perfection' is one of the chief exercises of charity? See S. Thomas, II-II, 26, on the order of charity. Again, speaking of the structure of the earlier orders, he says, in the original French, 'Un fait nouveau et extrêmement significatif . . . sera que les ordres naissants du XIIe siècle rejeteront précisément ces structures au moment même où elles vieillissaient et s'effritaient partout, n'ayant plus leur raison d'être'.