

difficult to believe that he means anything real. But the love of God may be as real and as compelling as the love of husband or wife; the love of God was intensely real to Hopkins, as the now famous letter to Bridges testifies: 'the only person I am in love with seldom, especially now, stirs my heart sensibly, and when he does I cannot always "make capital" of it'. Of course he was afraid of disloyalty, not to a formula or an institution, but to a person. And when all the terrible heart-searching and torment was over there remained the final sonnets. If, as Mr Reeves says, 'nothing in English poetry is so powerful outside *Macbeth*', it is difficult to believe that the 'renunciations and privations he endured maimed his genius'. If that is a maiming, all credit to the Society of Jesus for such a fruitful maiming. No, Hopkins, like any artist, needed pruning (it is not pleasant to think of the super-aesthetical young man he might have been) and the Society of Jesus pruned well. If the pruning was severe the fruit was rich, and it is time we gave due credit not only to Hopkins' luxuriant muse but to the refining Jesuit discipline.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

SOME PRINCIPLES OF FICTION. By Robert Liddell. (Jonathan Cape; 12s. 6d.)

Mr Liddell's new book on the novel suffers by comparison with his earlier work, *A Treatise on the Novel*. If (according to the dust-jacket) the problems treated in the new book are 'more fundamental' than those in the *Treatise*, their effect on the reader is much less profound. The later book gives the impression of having been composed too near the author's notebooks, so that much of the interesting material of the earlier chapters is either too insufficiently or too superficially argued, and the *obiter dicta* of the final chapter have not the underlying unity to justify this grouping.

That there is a definite, if limited, place for this kind of abstract discussion about fiction, Mr Liddell's own *Treatise* and Mr Percy Lubbock's *The Craft of Fiction* have sufficiently demonstrated, but in spite of these successes, this is a difficult field to cultivate, because abstract generalisation remains, invariably, alien to effective discussion of literature. The blue-print is inimical to literary criticism. Mr Liddell, of course, avoids the blue-print, and generally resists the temptations of turning legislator, but his obvious predilection for the kind of novel written by Henry James, Jane Austen and Miss Compton-Burnett, tends to make him insensitive to the value of novel patterns existing outside that scheme. Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, for instance, are rebuked for their lack of composition, and Hardy's prose style is examined and corrected. It is through ultra-Jamesian spectacles, then, that Mr Liddell sees 'the form' of the novel, but if the clarity of the vision blinds him to the form of *War and Peace*, it does not—apparently—conceal that of *The Heir of Redclyffe*. Such wayward judgments are a severe handicap to the kind of general discussion Mr Liddell proposes for himself.

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The externality of Mr Liddell's conception of 'form' (one feels, at times, it could be expressed in graph terms) is present in his interesting first chapter, when he suggests the contemporary 'standardisation of life' has made more difficult the novelist's task of choosing a suitable subject. Surely, in spite of changing economic and social circumstances, the human personality as such—the subject of the artist—neither increases nor diminishes as potential artistic material; the days of Mr Leopold Bloom were shaped by the modern 'standardisation of life', but Joyce found in them justification for a contemporary statement of the Ulysses theme. Mr Liddell's observation that 'we are not responsible for the effects of our writing on other people, further than our intention goes . . . and purity of intention is to be deduced by the methods of literary criticism, and no others, from style not biography—for a vicious man can sometimes remain a virtuous writer', might well be pondered by those whose minds are exercised by the moral effect of the novels of M. Mauriac and Mr Graham Greene. It seems odd, however, that when Mr Liddell should make so explicit a moral distinction between the man and his writing, he should, in the next paragraph, offer Fowler's *Modern English Usage* as suitable reading for spiritual advancement.

The appendix is chiefly interesting for its remarks on Alain Fournier, in whom there has been a recent revival of interest. The more general concern of the appendix casts an interesting sidelight on the question of 'the Catholic novel'. Here, Mr Liddell suggests, 'Christian' is a term which might sometimes be fittingly applied to writers, such as Fournier and Forrest Reid, who while indifferent to dogma, were extraordinarily sensitive to the supernatural. The argument, as Mr Liddell develops it, certainly causes reflection, but it is too vaguely formulated, too susceptible to unwarrantable extension, to carry conviction, and in this it is characteristic of the book as a whole, where the force of the discussion is continually lessened by being too casually organised and insufficiently developed.

IAN GREGOR

THE NAMES OF JESUS. By Vincent Taylor. (Macmillan; 12s. 6d.)

Dr Taylor is a scholar who owes much to Bultmann and the 'Form Criticism' school, but in this study of the names and titles of our Lord there is little that a Catholic must necessarily disagree with, disagreements mainly concerned with the dating of the Pastoral and Catholic Epistles presupposed, and the use of the word 'creative' with regard to the development of theology. His endeavour is to penetrate the mind of the primitive Church by studying the frequency and shifting popularity of the names and titles given to Christ by himself, his apostles and his earliest followers: each generation, almost each decade, shows how those that were inadequate to express their vision or their devotion were discarded and others found