

the unbeliever. But for the 'born' Catholic and the convert from other forms of Christianity, the book is especially valuable for its communication the other way. It should, for instance, help to demolish a kind of complacency which assumes that a lack of belief in exterior commandment implies a total lack of moral values: an attitude which must often have made good pagans wonder whether the Christians they encountered had ever had any genuine ethical experience. But while there is much helpful light shed on the difficulties arising from avoidable Catholic failure to manifest either the freedom of the children of God or any other desirable thing, it is even more helpful to have a discerning statement of the fundamental difficulty which can never be escaped or explained away. 'At some point, in some way, we must abandon the limited success of humanist achievement for the infinite failure of the Christian'.

CECILY HASTINGS

MORALS AND MARRIAGE. By Thomas Gilby, O.P. (Longmans; 7s. 6d.)
THE CATHOLIC BOOK OF MARRIAGE. By P. C. M. Kelly, C.S.C. (Longmans; 6s.)

It is with some relief that one turns to a book on marriage which offers in the first place a very lucid exposition of the theology which moulds the sacramental contract. Too many books written on marriage, by confining themselves to happy solutions of practical issues involved in day-to-day living, read very much like exalted versions of the advice often tendered in the end pages of women's magazines. Dealing with the theological issues involved in 'The Catholic Background to Sex', which is the subtitle of this book, Fr Gilby discusses with frankness and reverence the circumstances in which and by which the physical bond of love acquires the integrity which the holy vocation to marriage postulates. One may say that his treatment is a great essay on the humanising of relations within the marriage bond. Nothing of recent discoveries concerning the laws of fertility is disregarded, and while he stipulates that the procreation of children should be, just as any other human activity, a rational activity, he makes full allowance for the increased complexity of obligations in this regard which follows our greater knowledge of the laws which modify human fruitfulness. It is obvious from this book that the greater our knowledge of these matters, the greater is our responsibility before God. The more conscious we are of this response to God, the more does the physical bond of marriage become the external and sensible symbol of a true union of souls.

The Catholic Book of Marriage is more of a handbook, in which is gathered a great store of wisdom concerning the practical aspects of marriage and also much spiritual reading relevant to the peculiar difficulties of marriage and the living of family life. In many respects this is an

ideal present for young people entering marriage, but perhaps it is just to point out that it is obviously written for a less sophisticated inquirer than the former book. Whereas Fr Gilby makes clear what are the limits set to legitimate co-operation with the physical laws governing human fertility, Fr Kelly deplors the fact that any cognisance should be taken of them at all on the plea that such action makes love self-conscious and destroys its essential spontaneity and generosity. This divergence of views is an important one and corresponds broadly to the legitimate variety of interpretation which exists among theologians.

CATHERINE DANIEL

WE SAW HER. By B. G. Sandhurst. (Longmans, Green; 12s. 6d.)

The author anticipates the feeling that there is no place for another book about Lourdes. In fact, this book is amply justified by what it is: a collation of the accounts of the apparitions given by Bernadette herself and those who actually saw her at the grotto. This material, as a whole, has not before been available in English. We have had the account of J. B. Estrade, who was indeed *one* of these valuable witnesses, but not as Mr Sandhurst points out, always entirely reliable. *We Saw Her*, by giving a background introduction, sorting the witnesses and linking them with a commentary, gives an extraordinarily vivid and fascinating account of the events.

The commentary is sometimes a little over-obtrusive; and the author occasionally seems too ready to decide what was meant by some particular detail. It is hard to draw the line between helpfully suggesting an explanation of some puzzle and officiously imposing a meaning of one's own.

The besetting temptation of writers on Lourdes, Fatima, and preternatural events in general, seems to be to try to use them as a means of driving unbelievers into a corner where they can be mercilessly forced to admit that they have no explanations left. Just what has then been achieved it is difficult to see; it seems to have nothing to do with the gift of faith. A careful reading of this book should, if anything, bring out the fact that a point is never quite reached when natural explanations become wholly untenable. It would be pleasant to be able to clear the author of ever yielding to this temptation; in fact, however, he falls for it occasionally, but not heavily. One of the chief objects of his book—and one in which it should succeed—is to increase our love for St Bernadette. He records a saying of hers which should be the watchword not only of writers on such events but also of all who ever act as mouthpieces for the witnessing Church in apologetic: 'I have been told to tell you what I saw. It is not my business to make you believe it.'

C.H.