

interests lie rather in style than in content. We should at least be aware that five hundred and six hundred years ago there was in England, despite the absence of linotypes, a vigorous interest in the spiritual life because it was *the* life: and what is more, these spiritual guides knew as much as we do, but with less systematisation, about human psychology. That is our heritage, and if we are aware of it we shall make our own achievement in the twentieth century more concrete.

Dom Aelred Graham gives us of the best of modern spirituality in his articles reprinted from the Tablet. To make spirituality live—and, after all, we are supposed to be talking about the spiritual *life* (and how many books on the spiritual life are dead?)—our words must touch our readers where they live: liveliness as well as accuracy is needed. Therefore, the Gnostics are “those who know” (a damning phrase!)—*recta ratio* is “the right idea”—*fortitudo* is “courage” or “bravery”, *not* fortitude. With such deft touches Dom Aelred brings theology to life and shows us how the “combined operations” of the virtues are the strength of a Christian man.

Broadcasting, on the other hand, calls for a different technique: precision—ten minutes is very short—and the vivid impressive phrase. These are the qualities of Fr. Thorold’s talks: “Christ had to earn his living”—I, for one, had never thought of that; one sort of prayer is “making our actions speak to God”—an improvement on the old translation of *laborare est orare*. Such a technique together with a “mike style” combining intimacy and dignity distinguishes these talks.

If all the words that had been written about the vernacular liturgy were put end to end where would they reach? Far too often they reach nowhere through their intolerance and lack of realism. Which only goes to show how admirable Mr. Attwater’s work is: the balance and tolerance of his essay, for all the vigour of its style, is only equalled by his firm objective sense of reality. He faces the facts—all the facts: he writes for the whole church, not a clique, and this rare quality compels one reader to agree emphatically with everything he says.

By contrast a committee report reads dully after Mr. Attwater’s sparkle. The Sword of the Spirit Report on Education, however, lays out the Catholic viewpoint with a fair balance, and, despite occasional obscurities, puts up a strong and valid defence of Catholic claims. Two points in particular are to be commended: the “other side” is not expected to understand our claims completely and easily (it needs the light of faith); and, rights are coupled with duties, and parents cannot claim the one and neglect the other.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

**BECOMING ONE.** By Herbert Keldany. (Paternoster Publications, 4d.).

In spite of the great volume of prayer that is being offered sys-

tematically by Catholics and others for Christian unity, there is an appalling mass of indifference, often due to ignorance: and the ignorance must be largely blamed on the devotees of words like 'oecumenicism'. Father Keldany does much to remedy this when he states the fundamental facts in plain unpretentious language. While he shows clearly the duty that every Catholic has to his fellow Christian, he warns against superficial mateyness and good-fellowship unsupported by prayer. 'It is not the spirit of unity which is required, but the Unity of the Spirit'. And that is the spirit of this wholesome pamphlet: prayer, first, last and all the time.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

SAINT UNDER SAIL. By George Burns, S.J. (Burns Oates; 5s.).

A life of St. Francis Xavier for boys, vigorously written and happily free from the archness still too often thought necessary in religious writing for the young, *Saint Under Sail* is in the Martindale tradition. Which is to say that it is very good indeed.

SPLENDOUR OF SORROW. By Eddie Doherty. (Sheed & Ward; 4s. 6d.).

ALL YE THAT PASS BY. By W. Bernard Dyer, O.S.C. (Burns Oates; 2s. 6d.).

It is not surprising that the war years should give us an increasing number of books dealing with the aspect of Our Lady's universal mediation represented in the Liturgy by the two feasts of the Seven Dolours. Mr. Doherty—described on the wrapper as 'a lively, alert newspaperman'—is assisted by several of the saints in his contemplation of these Mysteries. Fr. Dyer is concerned to indicate something of the light the Sorrows throw upon the doctrine of the Mediatrix.

D.M.

THE HOLY FAMILY. Rev. Denis O'Shea, C.C. (Gill & Son: 7s. 6d.).

This unpretentious looking little book is a mine of historical and devotional interest. In his desire to supplement or illustrate the too scanty details given by the Evangelists, the author has searched practically every possible source of information and the result has been to give the English public the first book treating at any length of the religious, social, economic and political background of Jewish life at the time when the Holy Family lived at Nazareth. The narrative abounds in apt quotations from such varied writers as Josephus and Père Lagrange, Suetonius and H. V. Morton, Eusebius and Chesterton, and a dozen others whose works have touched in different ways upon the subject. The footnotes at the end of the volume giving the list of works consulted, show to what a truly surprising extent, considering the difficulties of war-time conditions, Father O'Shea has pursued his investigations. With His Lordship the Bishop of Meath, who contributes the introduction, we heartily congratulate him on his achievement and wish God-speed to his book.

S.M.D.

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