

reference to the Jew and Gentile question: for instance, in the Treasure and the Pearl (Matthew 13, 44) he sees the faith of the Gentiles, and he approaches the Prodigal Son (Luke 15, 11) and the Unjust Steward (Luke 16, 1) with the same theme in mind. This undoubtedly throws new light on many parables.

The problem of the census in Luke 2, 2, is studied at some length, and Monsignore suggests that Luke was trying to say something like this: 'We all know that there was a census under Quirinius in A.D. 6; I am not talking of that, I am talking of an earlier census'—whether or not Quirinius had two terms of office.

And so we could go on. But Monsignore is like the rich man in Matthew 13, 52 (Knox), 'who knows how to bring both new and old things out of his treasure house'.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

PERFECTION DU CHEF. By Dom Claude Martin; edited by Dom R. J. Hesbert. (Editions Alsatia, Paris.)

While many know something of the life and character of Marie de l'Incarnation (called by Bossuet the St Theresa of France), her son, who became the Maurist Dom Claude Martin, is a much less familiar figure. Yet it is largely to him that we owe the Maurist edition of St Augustine, and few who make use of it know that Dom Martin was twice elected assistant to the Superior-General, and that during his second term of office the very highest responsibilities of his Congregation fell to his charge.

The publication of these conferences by Dom Hesbert from a MS. of the Bibliothèque Nationale is welcome as revealing the spirit of the Maurists during the second half of the seventeenth century. Although one might expect from the title a treatise on the Mystical Body, the subject is the Being and Attributes of God, described in conferences written specially for 'Prelates, Pastors and Superiors, and all who have charge of souls', for use when they make their own private retreats.

Each of the thirty Meditations has three points, and then it is resumed in an *abrégé* likewise of three points. God's Attributes are considered as the models for Superiors, and are treated in a way that is correct, sound—and entirely uninspiring. One seeks in vain the influence of St Augustine's doctrine and personality, and one wonders why the author is so lacking in the humour and vivacity which were such attractive characteristics of his mother.

The long introduction describes the Maurists' way of life, and emphasizes the fact that they were, above all, monks and men of prayer, who led fervent and mortified lives, while their works of erudition were a by-product of a tiny and highly organized minority, in the artificially created

community of St Germain-des-Prés. This centralized organization was not for the glory of the Congregation, but for the good of souls, both of the reader's and the writers'. Even the most erudite monks were not excused from the common tasks of sweeping and laundry work, which were an integral part of their monastic life. Like the primitive Carthusians, the Maurists did not exclude a silent apostolate from their lives—'being unable to do so by our mouths, we preach the word of God with our hands' (*Consuetudines* of Guigo, ch. 28).

But it seems regrettable to us that the spirituality of the Counter-Reformation was allowed to invade their cloisters and apparently carry all before it. There can be no reasonable doubt of the holiness of Dom Martin, but it seems of a very different kind from that of the great monastic saints of the 'Benedictine centuries'.

HUGH FARMER, O.S.B.

SAINTS AND OURSELVES. Edited by Philip Caraman, S.J. (Hollis and Carter; 10s. 6d.)

This book is a very good example of the present rather popular practice of getting distinguished men and women to write about distinguished men and women: the latter 'distinguished' rather than 'famous' because, while St Thérèse of Lisieux, as Mr J. B. Morton styles her, is pretty well known, the Venerable Mary of the Incarnation is not. There are obvious disadvantages in this method; some may feel that the author needs to be scraped acquaintance with as well as the saint, and that by the time we are getting to know something about the saint and the writer's particular attitude the story comes to a close and we have to start all over again. All the same, it is undoubtedly a common human reaction to wonder, now what has Robert Speaight got to say about St Augustine? or Antonia White about St Thomas Aquinas? We like to know other people's views. And of course these views are interesting, as we would expect when we consider the twelve Catholics, noted personalities in their own widely differing fields, who have contributed these studies. A happy result of this variety of authors is that we are presented also with a various company of saints. Praise or preference of one study above another depends largely on the individual reader: I myself was interested especially in what E. B. Strauss had to say about that most un-English saint, Maria Goretti, and grateful to Harman Grisewood in making for me a real person out of 'Greg. Turon'. And that perhaps is the outstanding virtue of this book: not so much that it sets out to make the saints real people, as that the writers never imagine they were anything else. It is a style of hagiography we are becoming more accustomed to, but it is not yet so common as to be a commonplace. It is certainly a pleasure.

RACHEL ATTWATER