

subject; each chapter concludes with 'Topics for Further Discussion' and 'Readings'. So the grass is not allowed to grow under the reader's feet either. It is only a pity that the price of the volume is so difficult in English currency and that the lay-out is so reminiscent of unattractive school text-books. Miss de Bethune has striven nobly to decorate the text with her plain black-and-white drawings, but we miss some of the photographic plates of the first edition.

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.



EXTRACTS

NOTES ON PRAYER, by Père G. Dirks in *Revue d'Ascetique et de Mystique* (June 1951), contains some very pertinent remarks, though the article as a whole seems to be attempting to set the usual Ignatian methods and interpretations of prayer into a more contemplative frame. It is useful, for example, to have contemplation treated in a general sense: the original ideal of the monk, for example, was 'contemplation':

This more or less continual contemplation is formal at certain periods and 'diffuse' the rest of the time. For nourishment the monks have constant recourse to spiritual reading. According to the seasons, i.e. according to the demands of their work on the land, great in summer, less in winter, they have two to four hours, sometimes more, for spiritual reading. For preference they read Holy Scripture. Père Dirks insists on the centrality of God in prayer, which in spite of appearing a platitude often needs to be repeated:

But what are the fundamental attitudes or dispositions which man must have in regard to God? . . . Everything turns on Tertullian's answer: '*Veneratio Dei; petitio hominis*'—adoration and petition. . . . God is at once our beginning and our end. Since God is the 'Being-spring', each of us at every moment depends in being upon him. We must accept God as God and ourselves as creatures. The man who does that adores God. He adopts voluntarily that attitude of a servant which he has by nature. The first and the most essential object of prayer is to adore. . . .

God is also our End: we are made for him . . . That is to say, our restless soul can find its quiet in God alone: *Fecisti nos ad te, Domine, et irrequietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te*. God alone can satisfy us. . . . To wish for God, to desire God, to love God—this is prayer's object. The prayer of petition expresses our need, declares our desires and our love. . . .

THE PRAYER OF THE EUCHARIST of course expresses both aspects together most completely. It is unfortunate that so much recent work on the Eucharistic prayer has made what is the simplest part of the Christian's life into a complex and cumbersome expression of theories. Dom Sebastian Moore in the *Downside Review* (Winter 1950, and Autumn 1951) seems to add to our perplexities, speaking of it as being a 'reversal of the grammar of sacrifice'; and he justifies himself by pointing to the divine art of combining subtlety with simplicity in this prayer. But the June number of *Tijdschrift voor Geestelijk Leven* (Antwerp) is devoted entirely to a simple exposition of the Eucharistic prayer. The editor sums up the theme at the beginning:

We offer you, simply, a spiritual insight into the Eucharistic sacrifice and our personal participation in the mystery.

The first article considers the Scriptural background in the Gospel account of the Last Supper and St Paul's and St John's comments upon it. It is there with the apostles gathered round our Lord and receiving the bread of his Body from his own hands that we can see how simple and direct a prayer it is. The other articles bear out this theme and show how our Lord's prayer of offering is joined with the faithful's same prayer and how all is fulfilled in the frequent feeding upon the Body of Christ. The editor concludes by apologising for the obvious omissions but with the hope that the issue 'will act as a stimulus to all those who wish to share more perfectly and more interiorly in the Eucharistic offering'.

* * *

THE PRIESTHOOD, which has already received attention in these pages in the double number of March, is served well by *Catholic Documents* (the Pontifical Court Club; 2s. 6d.) in its fourth issue, which is taken up almost entirely by the official translation of *Menti Nostrae*, the present Holy Father's encyclical on the sanctity of the priestly life. His Holiness later, in his address to the Congress on Religious life, went on to show the relation of these principles of priestly life to the secular and regular clergy. Père Genin, O.P., comments at length on this in *Evangeliser* (July, 1951), showing how the two groups of priests may be drawn closer together by co-ordinating the specialised apostolic activities of both, so that both secular and regular clergy, nurtured by the same Spirit, may be able to work in close co-operation in building up the body of Christ. The author goes into some details of organisation which we cannot quote here. But the Congress of Missionaries of the Parish (Liège, June 1951) at which he was speaking has already begun to work for this unity of prayer and action among both types of priest. May their work prosper.

One of the greatest of modern missionaries, St Teresa of Lisieux, is

the subject of the October-November number of *Fêtes et Saisons* (Blackfriars Publications; 1s.), but her work for priests does not receive so much attention here. The issue is designed to bring her alive to the public by pictures and texts concerning her life and the life of her Carmel. It rescues her from the danger of being sentimentalised which she so often runs.

* * *

CHRIST-CONSCIOUSNESS, the translation of Père Gardeil's book on the doctrine of incorporation into Christ (Blackfriars Publications; 2s.) has appeared in its second edition, and Father Barden, O.P., devotes an article in *Doctrine and Life* (August-September) to its consideration.

It is well to study and know all about the whole band of virtues which govern our moral life; that can help us a great deal. But to cling to Christ is a simpler and more effective formula for holiness . . .

Christ's holiness became in his human life something familiar to us and tangible. Here is something beyond all moral theology. Sanctity consists simply in looking at Christ and making his words and example vivify our life. Sanctity is the love of Jesus.

On this subject Bruno Hagspiel, S.V.D., is contributing a series of articles in *Sponsa Regis* (Collegeville, Minnesota). It is a refreshing sign that the simple aspects of Christianity are coming increasingly to the fore in the written and spoken word.

* * *

A LAY RETREAT HOUSE was established about five years ago at Tonford Manor, Canterbury. It provides not only retreats, but also study week-ends, small conferences and quiet stays, and has many times over proved its value. Married couples, sometimes whole families together, have been able to come and make a retreat. The spirit of the house is informal and homely, run on family lines, with Prime, Vespers and Compline in common, and mental prayer as a basis, with the Mass as the central point. It was here that a number of interested and some experienced people met in September to discuss Secular Institutes and their possibilities in English-speaking countries. The papers read at this Conference, and other essays on the same subject, will appear in permanent form either as a double number of LIFE OF SPIRIT, or as a separate volume.

LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

Contributions are encouraged to submit original MSS. or translations from the Fathers. *Literary Communications* should be addressed to The Editor, Life of the Spirit, Blackfriars, Oxford (Tel. 47221). The Editor cannot be responsible for the loss of MSS. submitted; and no MS. will be returned unless accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. *Subscriptions, Orders and Communications regarding Advertisements* should be addressed to The Manager, Blackfriars Publications, 34 Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1 (Museum 5728). Annual Subscription 17s. 6d. post free (U.S.A. \$2.50). *Binding: Orders and Enquiries for binding volumes of the review may be sent to the Kemp Hall Bindery, 33 St Aldate's, Oxford.*