

on that special aspect of the cult, as developed by St Margaret Mary, unifies rather than restricts his treatment. The section of the work dealing with the object of the devotion is the most fundamental and the most precisely expressed. In dealing with the practice of the devotion he embraces much that will be of interest and help to one's spiritual life generally. He is particularly helpful when treating of the practice of affective love; of the true nature of consecration; of reparation, and confidence in Christ.

Fr Verheylezoon does not himself consider this a 'devotional book'. He tells us, 'It is a book of study. It is intended for all those—priests, religious and laymen—who wish to acquire a reasoned and exhaustive knowledge of the great devotion of modern times.' But it may well be that many will find the precision of thought and language a greater help to devotion than the extravagant expressions to be found in many 'devotional books' on this subject.

There is a foreword by C. C. Martindale, s.j., which adds to the value of an already excellent book on the devotion of which St Margaret wrote, 'I know of no other devotion better calculated to lead a soul, in so short a time, to the pinnacle of perfection'.

SIDNEY F. BREEN

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS. By Caryll Houselander. (Sheed and Ward; 8s. 6d.)

A feeling that compassion is the only thing that counts invades the reader of this powerful series of thoughts on the sufferings of our Blessed Lord. Caryll Houselander's one theme was that in the suffering of man the suffering of Christ continues. In this section of her inexhaustible exposition of it she stresses that our Lord suffered in us all, for us all, with us all, by anticipation, everything that we suffer, and that because he suffers it (for Calvary is timeless) *we* are Christ suffering. It is one of the richest veins of real spirituality that can be tapped. The authoress surely lived these thoughts and gave them their convincing, penetrating quality from her own experience and her own soul. Like every deep truth about our Lord, this theme is prolific. The ideas that come unasked to the mind, as one follows and ponders, are many and helpful. The meditations on Simon of Cyrene and Veronica are outstanding.

To each meditation is added a prayer in rhythmic prose, worthy of the subject, rounding off the meditation, putting into words for us the thoughts and feeling born of our meditation. In the meditations we have pictures, partial but effective, of what happened. In the prayers Caryll Houselander seems to say to us: 'Now this is what you must

say.' That she is so often right, even in the detail of the phrases, is a measure of the spiritual sympathy of this book.

The illustrations, fourteen, black-and-white from wood-cuts also made by Caryll Houselander, seal the unity of the theme. Stark and dark at first glance, they grow on you as the meditation sinks in. Even the Fourth Station, where our Lady is made taller than our Lord, is a perfect vehicle of the thought and feeling of the text.

GERARD M. CORR, O.S.M.

NEW LIGHT ON THE PASSION OF OUR DIVINE LORD. By Rev. Patrick O'Connell, B.D. (Gill; 7s. 6d.)

Father O'Connell gives us the story of the Holy Shroud of Turin and collates its evidence of our Lord's sufferings with the details given in the visions of St Bridget of Sweden, the Venerable Maria d'Agreda, Anne Catherine Emmerich and Teresa Neumann. There are ten illustrations, of which one is of the Crucifixion in accordance with these five sources of evidence. A stirring of devotion by means of a mental and visual representation of what happened—such is the purpose of the book. It will surely be attained for most readers. Imagination shrinks from the details of the Passion. This book dwells on them.

Two things attract a serious reader of such a book: Is the Shroud genuine? Is it reliable as a source of points for meditation on the Passion? Father O'Connell takes it as a sort of fifth Gospel and argues strongly for its absolute certainty. Here he is persuasive, but a clearer presentation and arrangement of the evidence and the illustrations would be required to bring conviction to the critical reader. His strongest argument is, after all, the fact that over twenty years of intensive study by impartial scientific workers have shown the supernatural character of the Shroud. In the words of Pope Pius XI: 'The Holy Shroud of Turin is still mysterious, but it is certainly not the work of any human hand. This, one can now say, is demonstrated. We said mysterious because the sacred object still involves many problems, but certainly it is more sacred than perhaps any other; and, as is now established in the most positive way, even apart from any idea of faith or Christian piety, it is certainly not a human work.' It follows that we may safely use it in our reconstruction of the scene on Calvary. The resultant impression of what our Lord suffered is shocking beyond words. The additional details from the mystics can be ignored. They do help, but they also distract. The Shroud itself is a book of the sufferings of Christ, evidence pathetic and eternal of his immeasurable love for us.

GERARD M. CORR, O.S.M.