

we select from among them those which seem to throw the most light upon the saint's own mentality and the general trend of his direction of souls. Let us ponder seriously the radical significance of the following seven of them.

My Jesus, I would fain love thee.

My Jesus, do not trust me.

I have told thee that I do not know thee.

I seek thee and I do not find thee; come to me, my Jesus.

I have never loved thee, and I wish to love thee, my Jesus.

I would fain serve thee, my Jesus, and I do not know how.

I would fain find thee, my Jesus, and I do not know the way.

Is it possible, we are inclined to say, that a glorious saint of God should utter such words out of his own heart and as expressive of himself? Were they not intended merely for use by beginners or stumblers in the spiritual life? Yet the testimony of the saint's disciples seems to indicate conclusively that these ejaculations were first constantly in the saint's own mouth before he passed them on as good current coin to his penitents. Certainly they raise deep questions; they plunge us into mystery and fill us with awe. But also, do they not infinitely console?

Further comment on them, it seems to us, would border upon the profane, and their mere citation seems to form a fitting close to this our effort towards saying something not entirely inept upon a subject too big for adequate treatment by common man.

REVIEWS

Sous LES YEUX DE L'INCROYANT. By Jean Levie, S.J. (Desclée de Brouwer. Edition Universelle; 90 Belgian francs.)

During a recent course in apologetics for university students one student rather intelligently asked the following question. 'Why is it that these arguments and proofs seem so clear and convincing to us, and yet fail to make much impression on non-believers? Is it because we already believe and our faith causes us to look at these rational arguments in an entirely different way from non-Catholics?' Fr Levie's book is concerned with exactly the same problem. He says that thousands of unbelievers have opened our manuals only to close them even more unsatisfied and uneasy, while thousands of others have come into the Church, led by God, 'le long des chemins inconcus des manuels', and have only admitted the classical proofs after having been won over in other ways. Why should the same object, the classical argument of apologetics, have such a different effect on Catholics and unbelievers?

For Fr Levie the answer lies in *le Christ total dans son Eglise*; the traditional arguments are only convincing when seen in relation to the whole doctrine of Christ, which must be accepted at least as an hypothesis. Thus miracles must not be considered individually in isolation, but in relation to 'the miracle of Christ in the miracle of his Church'. The first step the unbeliever must take is the consideration of the documents, the Scriptures, and even the purely technical and objective problem of the authenticity of these documents cannot escape the subjective factor, the general conception of Christ held by the enquirer. Just as the Catholic, the Marxist and the Nazi all interpret the same historical facts in an entirely different way, so the interpretation of the facts contained in the Gospels will depend on what the interpreter thinks of Christ. Hence the whole domain of Biblical criticism is affected by the answer to the question, 'Quid putas de Christo?' The whole of Fr Levie's first chapter is a plea for this *total* point of view in judging the faith. No one argument is convincing when separated from the whole Christian synthesis, and each particular argument is cogent precisely in the degree in which it reveals the centre of intelligibility, which is *the whole Christ in his Church*. Just as the apologist must not rely on any one argument, so the enquirer must not allow any one difficulty to turn him aside from the total view of the Christian faith.

Fr Levie's second chapter on 'The intellect in search of faith' deals with the relation between reason and faith. Christianity, he says, is fundamentally intellectual: right belief necessarily implies right thought. The author implores us not to let our minds be stifled by the atmosphere of the *sacristie mal aérée*, and pours scorn on those Catholics who are positivists, materialists or agnostics in their professional lives and Christians only on Sundays in their parish church, or at family prayers in the evening. The reader is here reminded of Fr Vincent McNabb's insistence on the disuse of reason being the besetting sin of Catholics. As Fr Levie so rightly says, the Catholic has not to use his mind less but rather to think more and to think better than anyone else; he is not simply an automaton, carrying out the directions of his superiors who do the thinking for him, but an active and conscious member of Christ's Mystical Body, with his own personal share to fulfil in the advancement of even purely secular knowledge, since he bears within himself the help, and therefore also the responsibility of the divine light of Faith. In this connection it is worth remembering that of the seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost four are given to the human intellect.

The second part of the book compares the mind of the Christian with that of the unbeliever, with special reference to their different approaches to Scriptural problems. Again the insistence is on *the whole Christ living in his Church*. This part of the book was written in 1926, so there is some inevitable repetition.

In the third part, based largely on the Epistles of St Paul, Fr Levie

insists on the fact that the privileges we enjoy as Catholics carry with them certain obligations to society and to our fellow men. Here there is much criticism, but never of the ill-natured destructive sort, every word being written with profound sincerity and loyalty. In conclusion Fr Levie sums up the whole situation in an Epilogue, 'I believe in Jesus Christ', a magnificent confession of faith.

No teacher or student of apologetics can afford to miss this valuable book. It is by no means easy to read, especially the chapter on 'Belief in order to think rightly', which is very condensed and difficult to follow; also, the fact that the various chapters were written at different times has caused a certain amount of discontinuity and repetition. But anyone who is prepared to make the necessary effort and possesses the intellectual stamina to persevere to the end will find his time well rewarded.

DROSTAN MACLAREN, O.P.

THE DRY WOOD. A Novel by Caryl Houselander. (Sheed and Ward; 8s. 6d.)

Naturally enough we open Miss Houselander's first novel with more than customary expectation and perhaps with some presuppositions. That she is a poet with a strong sense of the communion of saints we already know. Perhaps we shall be disposed to look for 'influences' and we shall not be disappointed if we consider that a profitable search. There is the Bruce Marshall strain; for that matter there is also the Churchillian strain: we hear of blood, sweat and tears more than once. In this fashion we might find whatever we care to look for in any novel and remain blind to the unique thing that it is. The unique thing that this novel is gradually grows in our minds as we read on, and in this respect the work resembles, to use Miss Houselander's own image, those Japanese imitation flowers which we used to buy and watch unfolding in a glass of water. By the time we reach the twenty-second out of twenty-four chapters we are quite certain and the two remaining chapters have a Delius-like quality inasmuch as they fade us back into the whole world of which this story took and examined one part. That is Miss Houselander's first achievement.

She chooses to take a cross-section of the life of the Church as the subject of her novel and therefore, her first difficulty will be to keep the reader's feet firmly planted on the ground while his head is among the stars. Because she is a poet she surmounts this difficulty for the poet sees the eternal in the temporary and insignificant: the death-bed of a child of five is truly an altar of immolation and his parents are truly sacrificing ministers. But because she is a meditative poet she does not always succeed. She stops to browse too often. Browsing is good and necessary but it can make the novel uneven, not because it holds up the narrative but because it means that our eyes are held too long on one object in the landscape and we are in danger of losing our sense of proportion. This is a serious defect, but it is one that can