

spiritual development, as St John of the Cross describes it, the soul is so transformed as to be a kind of living relation to God, imaging the intimate life of the Trinity most perfectly in its being for another. After this ascent to the heights, the author turns in the final section of the book to Christian witness and the role of the Church. He sees the Christian wholly given to God as a living testimony, realizing the presence of God through the grace of confirmation, the sacrament of witness. As a personal act, faith will find its perfection in the union of believers in the mystical body, the believer 'rooted and founded in charity' comprehending the mystery of Christ 'with all the saints'.

This is a very good book, and, although its size prevents its author from entering deeply into all the aspects of belief, sufficient have been treated to show the coherence and penetration of his thought. At times the translation is obscure, and the references given are often inaccurate, or misleading. It would have been useful to refer to works by Dalbiez, Guilton and Marcel in their English editions.

OSMUND LEWRY, O.P.

THE FAITH EXPLAINED. By Leo Trese. (Geoffrey Chapman; 27s. 6d.)

This is such a good book, and will do such an enormous amount of good, that it would be wrong to evade the duty of suggesting a few small improvements.

The purpose of the book is to explain the catechism at great length—564 pages. It is a filling-in of the catechism such as a priest does when instructing a convert or explaining or illustrating in the five-minute sermon on a Sunday morning. For both these purposes in fact it will be most useful.

American in its freshness and its modern-day presentation, it abounds in practical everyday analogies and illustrations which help to link the mind of the man-in-the-street with the age-old formularies of the faith. Sometimes, however, the analogy is unfortunate and one feels that it would have been better to leave the stock examples alone instead of trying to improve on them. In the presentation of the doctrine of the Trinity, for instance, a comparison based on the idea, 'if I were twins', is worse than useless: a half-educated person with vague ideas of split personality (and that means a large number of readers) is sure to take away the wrong idea, in spite of the author's warning that comparisons always limp.

Reference to limbo as most probably an unending state of natural happiness, even perhaps a kind of ecstasy, is comforting, but it should be made a little clearer that this is not the positive teaching of the Church. On the other side the statement that the common teaching on the guardian angels is not *de fide*, while technically defensible is, for practical purposes, untrue. That original sin is not a blot on the soul is

an unfortunate statement which could be corrected by the insertion of 'just' after 'not'. 'Spiritual vacuum' for original sin is also easier for the theologian to interpret than for a catechumen to understand.

Explaining the function of a godparent, the author omits to mention that it is sufficient for validity if the child is received from the font, or from the minister by the godparent.

These and a few other similar inaccuracies could easily be remedied in future editions. It is almost ungracious to mention them, but a book of this sort is bound to influence thousands of people, and to bring it to perfection, or as near as possible, would be worth any amount of trouble.

Perhaps the most effective quality of this book is the deep spirituality of the author which breathes through its pages whenever he speaks of holy things.

GERARD M. CORR, O.S.M.

HUMAN CULTURE AND THE HOLY. By Jaroslav Pelikan. (S.C.M. Press; 15s.)

Perhaps the most interesting theological work now being produced in America is of the radically protestant kind less familiar in this country. Dr Pelikan's fine book is an example. It is a sustained declaration of the transcendence of the God who cannot be enclosed in any system, who is not an object made of truth, goodness or beauty, not something to be circumscribed and understood, but holy. In six successive studies of thinkers and artists Dr Pelikan presents in turn the negative and positive sides of his thesis; religion is not knowing a system of dogma any more than it is obeying a system of moral law, yet truth and goodness are given to man by God in Christ. This is not the place to summarize the close-packed thought, nor to try and show what is false or exaggerated from a Catholic point of view. The book should be read because it makes us consider again how we stand in relation to the gospel; and this is always good.

LAURENCE BRIGHT, O.P.