

THE SPIRITUAL LETTERS OF FATHER HUGHSON. (A. R. Mowbray; 15s.)

The late Father Hughson, of the American Episcopalian Order of the Holy Cross, was famous as a preacher and retreat-giver. In his own Order he had been both Novice Master and Superior. For nearly forty years he was Chaplain to the Sisters of St Mary, Peekskill, New York. This collection of letters reveals Fr Hughson's profound knowledge of Catholic spirituality, past and present. There are frequent references to Father Augustine Baker, Père Grou, Abbot Marmion, Père Garrigou-Lagrange, etc. Some of the most interesting letters deal with the need to establish a purely contemplative community in the American Episcopal Church. Again and again as one turns over the pages of this book one is reminded that the ethos of the Order of the Holy Cross is 'to glorify God rather by endeavouring to use his creatures aright than by not using them at all', also that its spirit is intensely American.

P.F.A.

THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD. By Gregory Dix. (Dacre Press; 6s. 6d.)

This book is a retreat edited by the Abbot of Nashdom from the post-humous notes of Dom Gregory Dix, who was perhaps best known for his works of scholarship on the early Church. Those who know Dom Gregory's more famous work will not find their expectations unfulfilled in this small book of spiritual guidance. Nothing is more valuable than conferences and sermons based on sound dogmatic theology, and few things are more difficult to do well. The same painstaking industry that fashioned such a massive work as *The Shape of the Liturgy* was devoted to this slight volume. The slightness is deceptive. Here is the whole of Dom Gregory's detached yet dedicated understanding of the Incarnation applied to the humble details of everyday life, prayer, Holy Communion, sin. He writes with scarcely any of the élan or verve of a journalist, but with all the clearheadedness of a scholar he places our lives in the scheme of redemption. In this way he throws light on many other questions such as the nature of freedom and the obligation of the individual to the Church. Because of his detached scholarship Dom Gregory does not uncover in the written word the personality that presumably fired his spoken word. This is therefore a book for meditation because it is closely written. It is a book which brings the study of theology to the assistance of prayer.

G.M.

SELECTED LETTERS OF POPE INNOCENT III CONCERNING ENGLAND (1198-1216). Edited by C. R. Cheney and W. H. Semple. (Nelson; 30s.)

During the reign of Pope Innocent III the 'Clericalist' theory of the relationship between Church and State reached its apogee. 'Kingdom and priesthood, like body and soul, for the great good and profit of each, are

united in the single person of Christ's Vicar', he wrote to King John (Letter 67). The pope was the head of the Church—but he also claimed to be the head and foundation of Christendom. Until recently it has been the practice for Catholic apologists to give an almost unqualified approval to this 'sacral' society of the middle ages and to consider the pontiff who more than any other was its personification as one of the greatest who ever lived. Perhaps philosophers of ecclesiastical history are less sure of this now than they were—and it is possible that the undoubted greatness of Pope Innocent III lies elsewhere than in his formulation of the theory of 'Clericalism'. (It will be remembered, for instance, that he was the pope who encouraged the founders of the two new orders of friars which were to change the face of religious life in the west, and profoundly influence the development of Christian spirituality.)

What is remarkable, however—and no reader of his letters could fail to be struck by it—is that despite his anxiety to defend at all times the fullness of his power in the political sphere, his chief preoccupation is a highly spiritual one. He is really and truly concerned with the souls of those to whom and about whom he writes: rulers and subjects, clergy and laity. His aim in writing was always to secure justice and so to promote that atmosphere of peace, sadly lacking in this early thirteenth century, but without which any normal religious life becomes almost impossible. The very terms of his instructions on the observance of the interdict (No. 36 of the present edition; Wilkins, whence Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*, prints an interpolated version) are not without encouragement and an exhortation to perseverance.

Readers of *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* will be particularly interested in Letter 10, declaring the sanctity of Gilbert of Sempringham. It details the process which ultimately became the long and complicated 'cause of canonization' which we know today. It is pleasing also to be able to turn from the ponderous letters which deal with the Canterbury election or Magna Carta to the charming note Innocent sent to Brother Augustine who was worried as to whether he would be known in the next world under his baptismal name or the one he received at his profession. For, so he must have reasoned, if under the former then the prayers offered for him under the latter by his brethren would go astray. The pope comforts him by reminding him that he himself must run a similar risk, since the pope has two names also, but that nevertheless he should hold on confidently to his profession name—and, presumably, hope for the best.

The editing of this anthology of Pope Innocent's Letters, containing some material hitherto not printed, seems faultless, and the translation flows easily and well. How much more interesting it is to read history from the sources—particularly when these are selected and presented as attractively as Nelson's Medieval Texts.

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