

Compassion has moved him to wrestle with many aspects of our approach to the suffering Christ, and each attitude we take under the weight of the cross. The book is cast in the form of the fourteen Stations of the Via Crucis, each chapter dealing with a particular suffering of that Way as it is mirrored in us.

Which of us can rise to the supernatural love with which our Lady met her Son carrying his cross? Having studied in her the depths of true compassion the author explores the role of the Simons, the Veronicas, the mourning women, and above all, those whose testing, denudation and dereliction reflect the agony of the Son of Man.

But has Dom Hubert allowed his own sympathy for those who are capable of tasting discouragement and spiritual exhaustion to the dregs, to veil the great reality of our faith—Christ's victory? and the restorative power that his uplifting has given to the cross? Each chapter has penetrating and often original reflections on our part in the Passion, but too often the author dwells on an immersion in suffering that a Christian may not allow himself. As with the individual so with the Church; she bears in her body Christ's wounds only for her at-one-ing with him risen in glory. If 'Calvary is the peak of the Christian landscape' it is also true that the horizon is bright with the Resurrection. Its impact here and now might have been more in evidence if Dom Hubert had made use of his own observation in the Preface . . . 'When the Via Crucis was first introduced, the faithful began with the Resurrection and worked backwards towards the Condemnation . . . the whole business of suffering was seen to take its cue from the mystery that frees from suffering'.

SR ANNE, O.D.C.

THE STATES OF PERFECTION, by Abbé Gaston Courtois; Gill, 42s.

In the introduction to his book the author explains that in affixing the title he is accommodating himself to current usage. The "state of perfection" is so called because, through the medium of the three evangelical counsels, it removes the principal obstacles to the effort to achieve personal sanctity and facilitates the progress of souls towards charity in the unreserved and complete giving of themselves to God and others. While the term "religious state" seems reserved to the Orders and Congregations, "state of perfection" embraces likewise societies of the common life without public vows, and above all the Secular Institutes whose development is one of the characteristic features of recent times'.

The chief merit of this work is that it brings together in a single volume the pontifical documents that have appeared up to 1 January 1958 dealing with states of perfection, from Leo XIII to Pius XII. Here is displayed the official teaching of the Church on the subject, which the reader will not easily find elsewhere, and not so assembled. In a preface the work is commended by Cardinal Valerio Valeri, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Religious. The

subject-matter may be seen at a glance in the table of contents, supplemented by a chronological index of pontifical documents, pointing to principal and other documents in the body of the text, and to others quoted in footnotes or in the text, or merely referred to. The volume is also provided with very satisfactory canonical, scriptural, and analytical indexes.

We are presented here with all the most important Apostolic Constitutions, Encyclical Letters, Discourses, and Radio Messages, during the assigned period. The work will be no less useful to the laity than to those who have joined a religious body or a secular institute. The development of the teaching is indicated by sub-titles and short summaries, leading back to the sources.

The *Conditae a Christo* by Pope Leo XIII has had far-reaching effects, in giving status to religious congregations of simple vows, and controlling the foundation of new ones. The sub-title is not correct in limiting the legislation to diocesan congregations. There are two letters of St Pius X which are enlightening, on the primacy of religious life, and on Congregations of simple vows. The now celebrated *Provida Mater* of Pius XII on Secular Institutes adapts religious endeavour and the apostolic ministry to the needs of present-day society outside the cloister. The same pontiff in a *motu proprio* took an important step in inaugurating the Pontifical Institute *Regina Mundi* for the higher studies of religious women from all parts of the world. The collection appropriately ends with a Radio Message of Pope Pius XII to enclosed nuns, and a prayer of his Holiness for religious vocations.

The English version of the original texts is presented in readable style, which is a tribute to the translator.

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

HERDER'S COMMENTARY ON THE PSALMS, ed. by Edmund Kalt; Newman Press, \$6.75 (about 51s.).

This commentary, which includes Cardinal Innitzer's preface of 1935, formed part of Herder's commentary on the whole Bible, published in German at that time. It presents the Douay text with devout, meditative paraphrase and comment. The fact that it was written over 25 years ago precludes reference to the new Latin Psalter, or to any more recent work on the Psalms, and it is a direct commentary on the old Latin Vulgate text. Slight reference is occasionally made to the original, but any discussion of its textual difficulties is expressly avoided: the commentary is not concerned with such questions: it sets out to be 'homiletical, ascetical and pastoral in approach'. It is a little difficult to see why it was chosen for translation and publication now, though it is an edifying book and handsomely produced in American style.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.