

clothed by the Saint, has been added. The *Vitae Fratrum* is a compilation made about fifty years after the death of St Dominic by order of a General Chapter. The materials collected from all over the Order were edited by Friar Gerard de Frachet, who himself was clothed only four years after the Saint's death. The work deals with various incidents in the lives of St Dominic and his successor Blessed Jordan of Saxony, and with the foundation and growth of the Order. This is a useful reprint; but when one considers the amount of work that has been done in the last thirty years on the matters treated of, not least by Père Vicaire, it seems a pity that some attempt was not made to bring Fr Bede Jarret's notes up to date. We are puzzled by the letters O.S.B. after the name of Blessed Cecilia (p. vi and p. 69).

A.F.

ST THÉRÈSE AND HER MISSION. By Abbé A. Combes. (Gill; 16s.)

This is a very irritating book. It sets out to convince the reader that St Teresa of Lisieux has discovered an entirely new approach to the spiritual life, and that this achievement places her above practically all the saints that have gone before, since the author asserts that 'she releases all who listen to her, she releases them *for ever* from spiritual error, from foolish fear and faint-heartedness' (p. 56)—which certainly is more than anyone else has ever achieved. His presentation of her doctrine is strange, to say the least. Teresa tells us that God's love reaches out to the greatest sinners (something that is surely a Christian commonplace), which is so, the author continues, 'because of the very nature of God. If God had none but faithful children . . . his love would be hindered, as it were, in its natural dynamism' (p. 54). This, surely, can only mean that sin is necessary for the full flowering of God's love. Since Teresa's doctrine has been fully approved by the Church, we can only conclude that the author in trying to make her original has interpreted her in an unorthodox sense.

This craze for making her say things that have never been said before leads Abbé Combes to the most amazing statements. For example, he breaks out into transports of admiration (the book is written in superlatives that sound simply ridiculous in English) because the young girl of twenty is feeling herself unequal to the task of helping in the formation of novices—a fact which he thinks is 'in the highest degree remarkable'. When she writes, on this occasion, that one must try to guide souls 'by the special way which Jesus has traced out for them . . . not . . . according to one's own way', this, the Abbé tells us, is 'among the most profound of all the discerning intuitions of Thérèse' (p. 59)—but surely this is something that has been known to every guide of souls worthy of the name for the last 1,800 years or so. When Teresa continues: 'I saw that the one thing necessary was that I more and more

unite myself to Jesus' (p. 61) the author comments: '“I saw” establishes her inference as essentially a mystical one.' (p. 62.) How he can draw such a conclusion from a perfectly ordinary expression—'I saw' here surely means no more than 'I realized'—is beyond the understanding of the present reviewer.

We have cited these few passages as samples of the argumentation of the author, who quotes almost on every page the words of Pius X that Teresa was 'the greatest saint of modern times' which he seems to take for an all but infallible pronouncement. There is no doubt that Teresa was a very great saint, but to attribute 'metaphysical propositions' to her and to call her 'one of the most profound and authoritative among the doctors of the Redemption' (p. 46) is really getting things somewhat out of proportion. It seems to me that such uncalled-for exaggerations can only obscure the true importance of this great 'little saint' and defeat their own object.

The translation, by Alastair Guinan, is not up to standard.

HILDA C. GRAEF

SHINING AS STARS. By John Beevers. (Browne and Nolan; 15s.)

This book is a diptych. It tells the story of two 'men of God', both laymen, who lived within the last century, and offers us their example for our encouragement. Neither has been canonized, though one, Matt Talbot, has become widely known since his death in 1925. The other, Leon Dupont, the 'Holy Man of Tours', died in 1876, and is only now beginning to recover some of the fame and influence he had in his lifetime, so we are grateful for this short account of him. The two men offer the most striking contrasts. Leon Dupont was wealthy and leisured, lived on the profits from his estates in Martinique, had many influential contacts among the French hierarchy, and devoted his life to active works of charity and such large projects as the restoration of St Martin's shrine at Tours, and the spread of devotion to the Holy Face. Matt Talbot was a labourer in Dublin, and a consistent drunkard till the age of 28; and then after his conversion continued his ordinary work, in complete obscurity, and against a background of intense prayer and austerity that reminds us of the Desert Fathers. To offset these contrasts the two men were similar only in this, that neither seemed to offer promising material for sanctity, yet both attained to it. Mr Beevers writes of their lives with freshness and interest, and in the last part of the book draws out the lessons which they have to teach us; as he says, 'it seems that every generation is offered the saints from whose way of life can be drawn the lessons essential for meeting and overcoming the particular temptations of the time'.

F.R.