

Hence I do not think that mere 'lucidity' is 'the heart of his style'; rather it is Wit, whose soul is brevity, delighting in the strangeness of things. Then there is a good and brief discussion of that 'verbalism,' that hardening of the great journalist's style as his mind grew tired. Much might be said of that tiring of Chesterton, the effects and echoes of which are still with us. But enough.

And yet, after all, where is the passionate young giant of the earlier works? This question has something to do with the 'two clear defects' of Mr. Belloc's book that I have dared to assert without justifying my assertion. 'But if they are so clear let others find them out for themselves.

KENELM FOSTER, O.P.

## NOTICES

CONVERSATION WITH GOD. By Anthony Thorold. (Sheed and Ward; 3s. 6d.)

Fr. Thorold's first book, *The Mass and the Life of Prayer*, was criticized for leaving the 'and' in the title disjunctive instead of making it conjunctive. He gave the reader profound thoughts both on the Mass and on the life of prayer, but failed to show how the two were vitally joined in the unity of the Christian life. In the present volume, the value of which far outstrips its small dimensions, he remedies that defect, and, perhaps almost unintentionally, produces the synthesis towards which the first book was leading. In eighteen short chapters or meditations, full of sound doctrine expressed in simple and readable terms, the author shows how conversation with God begins with the Crucifix and one's first waking thoughts; the Crucifix is realized in the Sacrifice of the Mass; and there all one's personal self-giving or self-sacrifice is gathered together and placed at the foot of the Cross. He shows, too, that this should be identified with the 'Little Way' of the Saint of Lisieux, the way of hidden daily sacrifice. To see that saint's way to great sanctity in terms of the Sacrifice of the Mass and the Christian life in the Mystical Body is to reveal it in all its greatness, and to avoid the possible abuse of canonizing mediocrity. Genuine and constant conversation with God, then, depends on one's personal attitude to God, and this must be the attitude of a fellow-sufferer with His Son, of a 'Co-victim' with Christ on the Cross. It is in this way that Fr. Thorold teaches

his reader how to pray without being tied down to any 'method' of prayer. Or rather he sets forth the Church's unique method of prayer which all should follow, the method of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is to be hoped that the book will be widely read. And we confidently assert that everyone who considers the doctrines there set forth will begin to fulfil the intention of its author. For Fr. Thorold's desire is 'to provide simple nourishment for the countless numbers who in these times of acute anxiety *genuinely* wish to place their whole trust in their heavenly Father, and yet who experience a sense of unreality in His Paternal Providence when faced with the chaotic pattern of events which have robbed the most humdrum life of all normality.'

C.P.

**YOU'D BETTER COME QUIETLY.** By Leonard Feeney, S.J. (Sheed and Ward; 6s.)

This is an amazing book—except perhaps to those who have read *Fish on Friday*. It shows an entirely new technique of spiritual writing. The clever sketch on the dust-cover gives an exact clue to the nature of the contents; it represents a somewhat scared mortal hiding his face in his hat and trying to escape from a serenely determined angel who is in process of drawing him back and upwards in the direction of a firmly pointing finger. You can almost hear this celestial policeman saying patiently: 'You'd better come quietly.' The three Sketches, five Outlines, and six Notes, which make up the volume, are all gems, but each of a very different kind; indeed, there is no particular reason why they should have been collected in one book; but there is strong reason why they should have been printed somewhere and why they should be read everywhere. There is humour of a precious and whimsical kind liberally sprinkled; there is a profound sanity throughout. But amongst the Outlines are two essays which call for unstinted admiration as expositions of the profoundest truths in the simplest of attractive terminology. The first, which gives its title to the book, is a brief but most compelling outline of the hierarchy of created being from inanimate matter to her who is above the very seraphim. The second, in which the author is 'Explaining the Trinity to Thomas Butler,' is a splendid and satisfying example of the author's unusual technique at its best. Altogether it is not only an amazing but a delightful and valuable volume, a perfect bedside book.

H.J.C.

OUR GUIDING STAR. A Short Life of St. Teresa of Lisieux. By Fr. Vernon Johnson. (Burns, Oates; 3s. 6d.)

It was the late Pope Pius XI who called the Little Flower his guiding star. This short life is almost as simple as her autobiography. It points out her virtues and her way of setting about life, in the hope that it may lead people to imitate her more in practising the Way of Childhood, and not merely to admire her, or rely on her intercession for favours temporal and spiritual. Perhaps this result will be best achieved when someone forgets for a moment that Thérèse was a great Saint and remembers only that she remained a child.

I.T.

THE RELIGIOUS HOUSES OF MEDIAEVAL ENGLAND. By Dom David Knowles. (Sheed and Ward; 8s. 6d.)

This book may serve as a kind of appendix to the same author's *Monastic Order in England*, reviewed in BLACKFRIARS last September. It consists of an introductory historical essay and of a complete catalogue of the religious houses of Mediaeval England, classified according to the orders to which they belonged, together with the date of foundation, the status and other particulars of each. It is the first full and accurate catalogue of the subject yet published and is likely to remain the standard reference-book for several generations of scholars. All the better, therefore, that it is very clear and orderly, well-printed, well-written and well-bound.

The historical essay forms a sixty-page preface to the lists of houses. It will be found useful to those who cannot afford the time to read *The Monastic Order*, though it certainly is no substitute for that great work of which it does little more than summarise the conclusions. Yet it carries the historical survey down to the Dissolution and so includes the period of the Friars. The English Dominicans may as well realise that their mediaeval forefathers are at present under the eye of this highly gifted historian, and that a luminous survey of their lives and times will doubtless appear when the second volume of *The Monastic Order* is completed.

The present work contains no detailed discussion of particular points, but there is ample reference to original sources and to the research of modern scholars.

K.F.

RARE PROLOGUES AND EPILOGUES, 1642-1700. Edited by A. N. Wiley. (George Allen and Unwin; 15s.)

The rarity of these heroic couplets is not for the most part a measure of great worth as literature or even as wit, and from that point of view the world would not have been much poorer had they never survived to fall into that oblivion from which the Professor of English at the Texas State College for Women has unearthed them. She has, however, presented them along with a wealth of information about the actors and the manners of stage and audience at that time, which industrious introductions must be of great interest to the student of seventeenth century society.

I.T.

### BOOKS RECEIVED

- ALLEN AND UNWIN: *Sex-Morality To-morrow*, Kenneth Ingram (6/-).
- BLES: *Scholasticism and Politics*, Jacques Maritain (10s. 6d.). *The Problem of Pain*, C. S. Lewis, M.A. (3s. 6d.).
- BURNS, OATES: *The Rite of Low Mass*, Rev. J. O'Connell (10s. 6d.). *How I came to acknowledge the Pope*, Thomas J. Hardy (1s.). *The Call of Caldey*, Dom. Bede Camm (3s. 6d.). *Our Guiding Star*, Vernon Johnson (3s. 6d.).
- FABER: *East Coker*, T. S. Eliot (1/-).
- CHURCH LITERATURE ASSOCIATION: *Facing the Facts*, F. Barrie Flint (6d.). *Ye are the Body of Christ*, Michael Bruce (4d.).
- LONGMANS (CORK UNIVERSITY PRESS): *The Spirit of the Society of S. Vincent de Paul*, Charles K. Murphy (5s.).
- MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY PRESS: *Nature and Functions of Authority*, Dr. Yves Simon (\$1.50).
- OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS: *The Poems of Alice Meynell*, Complete Edition (4s.).
- PENGUIN BOOKS: *The Physiology of Sex*, Kenneth Walker (6d.).
- SANDS: *The Spark in the Reeds*, S.C.M. (6s.).
- SHEED AND WARD: *On the Place of Gilbert Chesterton in English Letters*, Hilaire Belloc (3s. 6d.).