

is the only book which contains within the same covers the philosophic defence of miracles; the evidence for modern miracles; a thorough statement of the internal and external evidence for the genuineness of the Gospels; a summary of the recent discoveries which have so powerfully reinforced the argument for the traditional authorship and dates of the Gospels', etc. No small claim. The specialist might cavil at a simplification of critical problems, might not agree with the invocation of one authority rather than another. Far more serious is a suspicion which, try as we may, cannot be thrust from our minds: is the author in his battling (and praiseworthy) zeal, quite clear about what we do set out to prove? At most, the *preambles* to faith in the resurrection. Our Lord's reiterated message to one and all was—*have faith*. . . . Daily we say, *I believe* . . . in Jesus Christ . . . who . . . the third day rose again'. Our Lord stood before Herod, the Herod who ' . . . was desirous of a long time to see him' . . . , who was indeed ripe for apologetics, but Jesus 'answered him nothing'. The reader is not granted an impression of a capital distinction between the preliminaries to faith, and the act of faith itself. Yet, without it, apologetics are more than worthless and invite the scorn of the unbelieving.

Moreover it is difficult to imagine the public that the author has in mind, since the book teems with personal reminiscences and references to an evanescent state of society. To give the book a wider appeal, let us remember: *autres temps, autres mœurs*. For better or for worse, gone are the days when a British Prime Minister having, say, five Harrovians in his Cabinet, would seek a sixth to complete the team.

ROLAND POTTER, O. P.

USURY IN CATHOLIC THEOLOGY. By Lewis Watt, S.J. (Catholic Social Guild, Oxford, 1s.)

Within the compass of a pamphlet of fifty pages Fr Watt gives us a remarkably clear and complete summary of the official teaching of the Church and of the opinions of theologians upon the subject of usury. As regards the latter, no attempt is made to adjudicate between them, the author being content to show the extent of their agreement as to practice despite their theoretical differences. We wish this little work a wide circulation, as we believe it will prove useful alike to students of moral theology and of ethics and to all interested in social and economic problems. There is only one passage where we failed to follow the author's reasoning. This is on page 50, where reference is made to the opinion of those 'who believe that profits in general are unduly reduced by excessive interest-charges for money lent to industry'. Fr Watt suggests that the determination of the rate of interest by reference to the rate of net profits would 'be all the more efficacious in bringing down the interest rates in

proportion as profits had previously been reduced by such dead-weight burdens; *the smaller the rate of profit, the lower would be the standard of interest* (italics ours). But surely a lender would be entitled to base his rate of interest on the profits to be made by industry using its *own* rather than *borrowed* capital.

A. L'ESTRANGE, O.P.

A WOMAN OF THE PHARISEES. By François Mauriac, translated by Gerard Hopkins. (Eyre and Spottiswoode; 9s.)

ANNA COLLETT. By Barbara Lucas. (Eyre and Spottiswoode; 9s.)

*La Pharisiennne*, the most recently published of M. Mauriac's novels, is the first title in a new collected edition of his novels in English. It is the story of Brigitte Pian; a hard woman, pious, scrupulous, but 'her neighbours always had to pay for her scruples, it was always at somebody else's expense that she displayed her spiritual delicacy and the rigours of her conscience'. As with all of M. Mauriac's work, *A Woman of the Pharisees* is an extended *casus conscientiae*: its theme is the evil of 'interference', that itching righteousness which is wiser than God himself and has none of his divine patience.

So it is that lives are ruined with the highest of motives, for Madame Pian, with a suggestion here, a delicate touch there, destroys the love of her step-daughter for the 'incorrigible' Mirbel and by her attitude hardens his waywardness into evil; the Abbé Calou is brought to disgrace; the schoolmaster and his wife, her protégés, come to disaster. The portrait is a ruthless one, and is wholly authentic, for M. Mauriac has a genius for unravelling those hidden threads of motive which, far more than spectacular deeds, can corrupt the mind and are the stuff of tragedy.

The setting of the novel is the countryside in France before the 1914 war, and gives a curious timelessness to the story. The powerful moral issue stands out as universal, and this despite a serious defect in the construction of the book. *A Woman of the Pharisees* might well do without the clumsy convention of undisclosed letters and documents which are constantly invoked to give authority to an analysis of human motives which is never in need of such devices. This *deus ex machina* creates an exasperating duality in a story already encumbered in its narration in the person of Madame Pian's step-son, himself scarcely affected by the tragedy.

But the book remains a masterly commentary on the mystery of evil, and one can think of no other novelist with Mauriac's range, penetrating as it does into the very depths of a man's conscious stirrings towards—or more often away from—God. The translation is generally excellent, but would be improved by a greater familiarity with the detailed vocabulary of Catholic devotion. Thus the Abbé Calou 'went off to the church to make his devotions', where the meaning is: 'said his prayers'. Again, while recognising the difficulty