

So much sound thinking has gone to the writing of Mr. Gleeson's book that the mere reading of it begets thinking. Perhaps no class of readers will be stimulated as Catholics will be stimulated, by the dramatic situations so artistically recovered for us by the writer. We Catholics can hardly help remarking how the party of the Established Church under Elizabeth betrayed and executed the Stuart Mary, Queen of Scots. Again, the Puritan party under Cromwell bought (from the Calvinist Scots) and executed the Stuart, King Charles I. But the fugitive Stuart King Charles II was neither sold nor deserted, but was sheltered and saved by the persecuted Catholics. In a century of disgraceful betrayals the small, despised, suspected Catholic body were the defenders of English honour.

Again, there is almost a blatant exercise of *lex talionis* in the fate of James I and his grandson, James II. The grandfather, son of a Catholic Queen, bought the English Crown with something like apostasy. But no doubt England was worth the Book of Common Prayer. It would be difficult to find anything worthy of Scottish chivalry in the son of Mary Queen of Scots succeeding Elizabeth as Supreme Governor of the Church of England. But Scottish honour might well be proud of the great-grandchild of Mary, who gave up his throne rather than give up his faith. A James II who would have accepted the Book of Common Prayer might have died at Windsor and been buried in Westminster Abbey.

Another striking doom may perhaps be seen in the fact that it was a James that disgraced his mother Mary in order to gain the English throne; and it was a Mary who gained the throne of England and disgraced her father James.

From all this it will be seen that Mr. Gleeson, in making his book, has shown the rare art not only of making his hearers hear, but of making his hearers think.

V.McN.

**THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE SOUL.** By Father John Evangelist of Bois-le-duc (Balduke). Edited from the first English Edition by the Benedictine Nuns of Stanbrook. With an Introduction by Father Cuthbert, O.S.F.C. Capuchin Classics I. (London: Sheed & Ward; 5/- net.)

Obviously, the knowledge of how to attain the end for which he was made is the most important a man can have. Therefore books which treat competently of the soul's union with God are the most important of all books; and when the writer speaks from his own experience, the value of the book is doubled. This first of the series of Capuchin Classics is, then, one of the greater

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books in a category of great books. As recording the mystical experience of a holy man, it has a value which the reviewer is quite incapable of estimating.

Perhaps it was the quietist scare—not uncalled for if sometimes exaggerated—which first gave rise to the theory of certain post-Reformation writers that infused or passive contemplation is, properly speaking, an extraordinary grace to be classed with miracles, visions and the *gratiæ gratis datæ* which it is not permissible to desire. However that may be, the statement of this theory has led many of the best modern spiritual writers to assert the older and traditional view that such contemplation, though the pure gift of God, is given by Him as the normal and desirable development of the Christian life of prayer. Father John Evangelist, writing about 1620, is an interesting witness to this doctrine which, like earlier writers, he simply takes for granted.

His book, written in Flemish, and here published in a slightly modernised version of the seventeenth century English translation, is almost unique in that it treats exclusively of the practice of contemplation in its simplest form, that is, apart from particular states, graces and phenomena described by other spiritual writers. Although he gives the first half of his book to laying down the preliminary dispositions necessary for union with God, he explicitly refers his readers to other authors for instructions as to how this preparation is to be achieved. Much of the book's merit lies in the limits the author has set himself. There are innumerable books on meditation, a form of prayer from which most people break away, more or less, after a short time. There are also many works on the spiritual life, which treat at length of its various degrees as ticketed by mystical theology, and the extraordinary manifestations sometimes accompanying it, ecstasies, visions, and the rest. But these books mostly pass over in few words that form of prayer variously named the 'prayer of simplicity,' 'prayer of faith,' *oraison de simple regard*, in which perhaps the majority of those who aim seriously at a life of prayer, whether in religion or not, spend the greater number of their years, and which, by the teaching of Father John Evangelist, should lead to the heights of divine union.

Like all mystics, the holy Capuchin is inclined to generalise from his own experience, and his readers must adapt the teaching of that experience to their own needs. For instance, are we not authorised by chapter the twenty-fifth, the prayer by which the book closes and other passages, to think that Father John Evangelist would admit a contemplation of Our Lord and the

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Passion free from that forming of images which is a hindrance to this kind of prayer? The writer of the interesting foreword says of the book that 'our Lord is explicitly mentioned not half a dozen times,' but this is very roughly speaking. As a matter of fact Our Lord is actually mentioned between twenty and thirty times.

There are several slips for which either printer or reader is to blame. Lines 23 and 24, p. 191, should be transposed.

It is to be hoped that Father John Evangelist's other works will be translated in what promises to be a valuable series of spiritual books.

M.B.

VERNON JOHNSON: ONE LORD: ONE FAITH. Cheap Edition; 28th thousand. Pp. 208. (Sheed & Ward; 1/- net.)

FATHER VERNON AND HIS CRITICS. By G. J. MacGillivray, M.A., Fisher House, Cambridge. Pp. 158. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne; 2/6 paper edition, 3/6 cloth.)

These two volumes have reached us together. No need to speak of the first-named save to welcome the cheap edition. Father MacGillivray deals faithfully with Messrs. Knox and Milner-White, who in their *One God and Father of all* attempted a reply to Father Vernon which unfortunately was no 'reply'—for it never touched the real problems raised but was content to beg the question at issue. The point which Father MacGillivray makes is one which every Catholic who read the 'Reply' felt, though perhaps he could not express it so clearly and forcibly as Father MacGillivray has done: that Messrs. Knox and Milner-White have been, all unwittingly, compelled to betray the ultra-Modernism which is the inevitable feature of Anglo-Catholicism. For they make reason their god. They never seem to realise that because our reason is and must be the starting-point of all faith—since grace does not destroy but perfects nature—it does not follow that reason is the final arbiter. Reason that investigates is one thing; reason illumined by faith is another. Nor do they realise that the secret of St. Paul is St. Peter. A cryptic saying yet the only valid explanation of Gal. i-ii. Let them ask themselves what would have been the fate of St. Paul had he not gone 'to Jerusalem to see Peter.' By thus 'bringing his intellect into subjection,' St. Paul became the Apostle of the Gentiles in fact. Had he not done so, he would have become—what? A 'Tarsian-Catholic.' Something out of its orbit, an aberration; merely a meteor, destructive of all that came in his path.

H.P.