

threats of punishment and promises of blessings. And although there were a greater number of righteous men than under the law of nature, yet the people transgressed so shamefully by their vices and idolatry that the ten tribes as well as the remaining two were punished by severe captivity, showing how little these two remedies afforded by Providence availed to reform the human race, corrupted as it was by the evil root of original sin.

But many volumes would not suffice to describe how profound was the corruption and evil wrought by this sin, not only in our bodies but much more in our souls. Yet it is enough to look at the whole world, not only at pagan and faithless lands, where men follow their carnal desires like animals, but at Christian countries too, which have the Faith, Sacraments, doctrine and knowledge of the other life and adore a God who died to slay sin and drive it from the world. Yet there will be found such multitudes of wicked men that in each place the number of those who fear God can be counted on the fingers. The rest of them care only for the present day, for the things of this life, and bodily pleasures, regardless of God, the salvation of their souls and the future life. As Solomon said, "The number of fools is infinite" (Eccles. 1, 15).

This shows how keen and mortal was this evil of mankind, and how strong a medicine was needed to cure so universal a malady, so long established, so habitual, so deeply rooted in the powers of our soul, and so confirmed by the example of the human race. He who considers this will not be astonished at the mystery of the Incarnation and Passion of the Son of God, and the medicine of the Sacraments. For so great and strange an evil, extraordinary remedies were needed, since God in His tender mercy wished to cure them; and even with this, have all these crimes ceased?

Neither the law of nature nor the written law was sufficient, for they only taught the knowledge of right and wrong, which was not enough as the chief ill consisted in the disorder and rebellion of our desires, rather than in our ignorance. Therefore medicine for the mind could not cure the wound of our rebellious will. To remedy this mortal wound, nothing could be more efficacious than the Mystery and Passion of our Saviour, as we shall explain.

(To be continued)

REVIEWS

THE BEGINNING OF GOODNESS. By Columba Cary-Elwes, Monk of Ampleforth. (Burns Oates: 3s. 6d.)

An excellent book this; buy it (you couldn't spend 3/6 better), put it in an envelope (it has no hard corners) and literally for

Heaven's sake send it to any young Catholic you know anywhere in the world. Or put it in among your Books for the Forces. Please do. It won't fail to help somebody, somewhere; it has that quality, because there is no pretence to it and it is beautifully concrete. It explains things, the sort of things that puzzle people about why they should be Catholic at all, and—by 'he sheer direct way the author sees things—it clears away the silly bamboozlements in the way of living and doing.

The title is misleading; it is not as prim as all that. Why not have called it "Letters to all and sundry"?—for really these might be the best snippets out of letters we keep; they are not decorated and do not get in to a lofty plane to stay there in lengthy disquisitions; spades are spades; about Our Lady "the angel came and asked her consent," about ourselves "we are not perfect and it will take until we get beyond the grave before we are," about inspirations they "have a way of being wild—remember Hitler"; in a few lines we pass from mystery to practice, for instance from Our Lady Queen of Virgins to the "old Rosary in your trouser pocket." There seems to be nothing not touched on, and in the most practical way; but it is all grounded on hard thinking, nothing merely devotional about it. It is a new kind of Catholic book; the kind that is just needed. And it is laid out to be read in odd moments. The more odd moments the better. C.R.

BE YE PERFECT. By William Butterfield, D.D., Ph.D. (Burns Oates; 3s. 6d.)

It may be the war, it may be other things which are causing men to investigate the meaning and purpose of life. Whatever the cause people nowadays do desire more than usual to know how to live: here is a useful guide book suitable for all classes, both the guides and the guided. It is simple, clear and practical and claims to follow no particular "school" of ascetical or mystical thought, but outlines all the important ones with perhaps a slight stress on the Ignatian method. It is surprising that the names of Father Vincent McNabb and Father Bede Jarrett do not appear among the list of Dominican books of reference in the appendix. Two important points are worthy of note and commendation: emphasis on the need for a vocational ideal for all, and "It is a false spirituality which teaches that heaven is to be merited by a life of misery on earth." A thoroughly sound book which will prove a welcome introduction to those who wish to organise their life on earth with a view to heaven.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

RUSSIAN LETTERS OF DIRECTION. By Macarius of Optino. Translated by Iulia de Beausobre. (The Dacre Press; 5s.)

We have here a number of short extracts from the letters of