

held up to a certain degree of contempt, had the author compared his conception of 'personality' with the deeper reality of Person which is of its nature incommunicable, which is in fact known only to God and shared with no one but Him. What we need is a balanced discussion of the relation between the soul and God and with its fellow human beings. We have had too much of the liturgical reaction to Protestant individualism. A man cannot quietly say his prayers with the feeling that the whole Church is hanging round his neck. His faith tells him he is a member of the One Body, but he is not a disgraceful individualist if he happens not to refer consciously to that fact when on his knees before God. There is a balance between the one and the many in the life of the spirit and that balance is to be found in the depth of the Blessed Trinity. The personality of the saint is achieved by an unembarrassed share in their society through the Church's unique prayer, not by a human effort to feel at one with all men, or with all worshippers. The introductory chapter of this book implies a common sense, objective attitude in these matters, but the author is soon carried away in the liturgical omnibus now twenty or thirty years old. Since its first appearance we have learnt that there is also room on the Royal Highway for the private car of personal prayer. Many simple Catholics still find their personalities most at ease in that conveyance; and when the big 'bus of the liturgists rumbles up and the conductor announces that "it leads us through Christ to the 'I-and-thou' communion with our brother and to the ultimate 'we-communion' of humanity in the Mystical Body of Christ." (p. 56), the simple man is surely excused for remaining in his own conveyance. The true liturgical spirit tells me that I must be nailed to the Cross with Christ so that eventually no longer I but Christ liveth in me. Von Hildebrand will say that he is precisely explaining what that means; yet many of us will still find S. Paul more intelligible. Why do the liturgists make this utterly simple prayer so complex?

It is an injustice to give this book, with its many wise and penetrating thoughts and explanations, such an adverse review. But a stand must be made somewhere, or the Liturgy will be finally discredited among the greater Personalities, the simple folk whose rosaries and ejaculations take them directly into the very bosom of God.

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

THE ONE THING NECESSARY. By Bruno S. James. (Burns Oates: 9d.).

The only criticism of this small book is that the author, in the Foreword, desires to restrict its use to the chosen few. It is difficult to believe that any one could be harmed by its virile and robust teaching. There will be many for whom its deep spiritual

doctrine will have no meaning; but there will be many more for whom it will release a spiritual light far more effective than any appeasement of the black-out regulations. The doctrine of love, prayer and the spiritual life is set out in the sturdy objectivity of the pre-Reformation times and with a modern spontaneity which gives it a universal appeal. There is no carping or fussy note; self is to be forgotten and even the faults of other selves are to be tolerated. Even the Pharisees—the perennial, narrow-minded, ‘pious’ folk—are accepted: “Such people fulfil an important function in purifying by their persecutions those who are really following Christ, and no doubt Divine Providence has them under His care for most of their mistakes are well meaning.” Without burking the difficulties the author in this tranquil spirit shows how simple is the call and the way to sanctity. C.P.

**EZECHIEL.** By Dom Hubert van Zeller, O.S.B. (Sands, 7s. 6d.).

In a recent editorial, Blackfriars welcomed the call of Pope Pius XII. to return for inspiration in prayer and the spiritual life to the books of Sacred Scripture. For the same reason, it should welcome Dom van Zeller’s book on Ezechiel, written with the intention of making perhaps the most obscure of the major prophets intelligible and interesting to the general reader. Dom van Zeller obviously has sympathy with his subject, and feels at home with Ezechiel, so that he can treat the prophecy in a gay and cavalier manner, emphasizing what he feels to be important, and boldly dismissing other passages as “not very interesting.” He brings in a lot of practical comments and advice on the spiritual life, and indulges in convincing intuitions concerning Ezechiel’s possible reactions to his wife’s death, and the manner of his own death, which are good reading even though the historical facts may be to some extent hidden from our eyes. Personal touches such as the footnote on page 103 would be of particular interest to Dom van Zeller’s friends. A.V.W.

**BELIEF AND REASON.** By M.C. D’Arcy, S.J. (Burns Oates: 5s.).

Fr. D’Arcy’s broadcast talks in the autumn of 1942 covered the reasonableness of belief in general, the validity of reason, and the place in reason in religion generally and in christianity in particular. They are printed here with additional chapters on special, and specially common, reasons for agnosticism, and on an ‘argument for unbelief’ presented by the editor of the *New Statesman*. One could wish that this last had been published separately as a pamphlet, for it is as valuable as it is engaging; whereas it must be confessed that the rest of the book, as a whole, does not fulfil one’s expectations: in spite of the valuable matter it contains, it does not seem to represent the author at his brilliant best, and its multiplication of introductions and appendices gives it an untidy patch-work atmosphere, the change-over in style from talk-form to book-form is incomplete, and there are occasional obscurities.