

essential nature problems of authority, are complicated by the peculiar nature of the relationship between Church and State, a relationship having its origins in the distant past' (p. 154). The sole ultimate foundation they can offer to the perplexed inquirer is that 'right conduct is ultimately the kind of conduct which is approved by the good man' (p. 174). And who is the good man? 'He is one who is ever enlarging his vision and hence it is a circle which is ever enlarging itself and not a vicious circle' (ibid).

On this precarious foundation certain things on moral theology are culled from the theologians 'of the Roman obedience'. But you cannot cut flowers from the Roman garden and stick them in the ground of the Anglican garden and expect them to grow without roots.

P. J. F.

DE ABBREVIATIONIBUS ET SIGNIS SCRIPTURAE GOTHICAE. M.-H. Laurent, O.P. (Rome, 'Angelicum'. 1939; 60 lire.)

The purpose of this small work is to give beginners unable to afford standard works, but eager to read medieval writing, the essential rules and some suggestions. It is the fruit of personal experience as teacher of palaeography at the 'Angelicum'. The author deals only with the Gothic period (13th-15th century), which followed the Carolingian. The decline in the quality of writing in the 14th century is explained by the psychological effect, Père Laurent maintains, of the plague, famine and war which prevailed in that century. The essential rules for reading abbreviations are clearly stated, but it would have been better if each rule had been illustrated by an example. There are three appendices. The first of these will encourage students. In the second some rules are given, for the editing of medieval texts, which might be contested. In the third appendix there are useful suggestions on how to quote medieval sources, both civil and ecclesiastical. As an introduction to palaeography this book will be found useful, though the student will have to consult also the larger standard works, to which Père Laurent refers him in the footnotes.

ANDREW VELLA, O.P.

MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY. By Edgar Schmiedeler, O.S.B., Ph.D. (McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York.)

The director of the United States Catholic Family Life Bureau has written this work as a textbook for a course on Marriage for use in the Catholic schools and clubs of America.

The simple, straightforward style of the author, coupled with his elaboration of points from the Encyclical 'Christian Marriage' by Pope Pius XI should ensure a wide public for the book. At a time when the spiritual aspect of marriage receives such casual attention, a corrective is a vital necessity. Dr Schmiedeler and his colleagues at the National Catholic Welfare Conference of America, aim to administer this corrective by the use of such admirable textbooks as the present volume. Happy and successful marriages, we are

shown, in every case depend on a sound preparation for matrimony; the first chapters of the book discussing problems of courtship and the social relations between adolescents of both sexes. The tale of misery resulting from a partnership between superficial acquaintances, or one based on mere sexual attraction, is unfolded daily in the divorce courts of America. The attempt of some American towns to commercialise 'marriage' ceremonies, as though they were commodities to be purchased for cash at a moment's notice; the facilities provided by some states for divorce; the propagation of contraceptive practices; and the unheeding, almost encouraging, attitude of the secular Press to these evils; all are condemned by Dr Schmiedeler as primary causes of the destruction of the Christian ideal of marriage.

The latter part of the book is concerned with the family; the rights of the family, and the obligations of the state towards this social unit.

The advice given throughout is clear and practical, showing a keen appreciation of the difficulties and problems before and after marriage. The introduction of photographic illustrations is a brilliant idea, and they add greatly to the attractiveness of a textbook which commends itself to those responsible for the education of Catholic youth.

MAURICE MCLOUGHLIN.

THE DEEVIL'S WALTZ. By Sydney Goodsir Smith. Illustrated by Denis Peploe. No. 7, Poetry Scotland Series. (MacLellan; 6s.)

This third volume of Sydney Smith's poems has things in it to confirm the opinion that he is one of the most important of the younger Scots poets. The title poem and a dozen or so others show the lyrical power and turn of satire which have drawn attention to him. But much of the present volume is dreary going. At times the language seems laboured, and is helped out by clichés; though even in the dullest work there comes now and then a line that startles and holds.

A. R.

CITIZENS IN READINESS. (Oxford House, Mape Street, E.2; 2s. 4d. post free.)

This is an account of the evacuation of East End children to Wales during the war. The scheme was a voluntary one, undertaken by Oxford House which for sixty years has played a prominent part in the social life of Bethnal Green. At a time when the voluntary principle is being crowded out of the national life as rapidly as bureaucracy can manage (and that, fortunately, is never likely to be very rapidly or very effectively), any reminder of what can be achieved to fill the gaps of state-provided social services is of interest. The basis of the Oxford House scheme was the evacuation of *family* groups and, despite much improvisation and easy acceptance of educational theories of a dubious usefulness, *Citizens in Readiness* certainly records a valuable experiment. But it is shocking to find a total indifference to the world the schools invaded; remote, rural,