

Blackfriars

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA. By Alice Curtayne. (Sheed & Ward; 7/6 net.)

This vivid and original book will be useful chiefly to readers who know such classic works on St. Catherine as the *Legend* (of which we badly need a good English version), and the very full biography by Mother Drane. In such books the wealth of material tends to obscure the main outlines; and Miss Curtayne has done good service by linking up the different works and happenings of the Saint's life, and showing it as a constructive whole. There is a skilful touch, too, here and there, in the recording of a circumstance, slight in itself, which yet gives new colour and unforgettable significance to some scene in the story. And there is real literature, as, for instance, the descriptions in the second chapter, especially the quite wonderful page 23, which seems to fill our ears with the bells of medieval Siena.

But as a first introduction to St. Catherine the book would give an incomplete impression of her. We hardly find her soul. Could any adequate idea of her inner life be given without, for instance, some account of her marvellous Eucharistic relations with Our Lord? And where we are told that she thought an embassy to Joanna of Naples on behalf of the Urbanist allegiance would be 'profoundly interesting,' is not the adjective singularly mischosen, when we know how for every soul Catherine shared the very thirst of Christ?

The portraits of the 'Fellowship' are excellently drawn, and the bibliography and references in the appendix show the author's exhaustive study of her subject. Here nearly thirty pages are given to Dr. Fawtier, and two counter-criticisms by Father I. Taurisano, O.P., are both left in their original Italian, unfortunately for many English readers.

M.B.

WHAT IS SACRIFICIAL IMMOLATION? By the Rev. J. Brodie Brosnan, M.A. (Sands & Co; pp. 171; 3/6 net.)

It is somewhat to the credit of the little Catholic body in these islands that the publishers have dared to publish a book intended to give the average reader some insight into one of the deepest problems of faith. The writer of the book has given this average reader, and even the expert, much food for thought. If we venture to make our criticism rest on some ambiguities of the book it is because these ambiguities are now almost the common heritage even for the expert.

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Three words are especially used in an ambiguous sense : (1) Sign (as contrasted with reality); (2) Mystic (as contrasted with literal); (3) Redemption.

Let us offer some hints about all three.

(1) Sign.—Every sign is itself a reality that makes known another reality. A red signal makes known that a train is on the line. The sacrifices of the Old Law were *real*, true sacrifices. But over and beyond this, they were also *signs* of the Sacrifice of Calvary. Again, and here we must ask our readers to think carefully, the double consecration is a sign of the sacrificial death of Our Lord; but the sacrifice of the Mass is not a sign—it is the reality of the sacrifice of Calvary. In other words, there is one aspect of sign in the Sacrifice of the Mass; but through the true, real, substantial presence of Jesus the Mass is substantially the sacrifice of Calvary—and not substantially, but only modally distinct from the Sacrifice of Calvary.

(2) Mystic (or hidden).—One thing can be hidden—(a) as the reality is hidden behind the sign—*e.g.*, the Sacrifice of Calvary hidden behind the Old Testament sacrifices. (b) As by Transubstantiation the substance of Body and Blood is hidden behind the species of Bread and Wine.

If the second mode of hiddenness is confused with the first, ambiguity results. We may even call the Mass a relative sacrifice, when in truth it is THE ABSOLUTE SACRIFICE in its relative mode.

(3) Redemption (Sacrifice).—We must distinguish *Motus-actio* from *Motus-passio*. In other words, when we say 'John moves the chair,' we must distinguish the motion in John the mover from the motion in the chair moved.

So, too, when we say, 'Jesus redeemed mankind,' we must distinguish this (sacrificial) redemption in the Redeemer from the same (sacrificial) redemption in A, B, C, etc., the redeemed. In other words, we distinguish, on the one hand, between the redeeming by Jesus on Calvary, and, on the other hand, the application of this redeeming to the individuals redeemed.

All this is clear enough when we think of the application of Christ's Passion by way of Sacrament. There is only one redemptive death, and only one Baptism applying this redemption by way of cleansing—and only one Eucharist applying this redemption by way of perfection—to the human soul.

But it should be equally clear that there is but one mode of applying Christ's redemption by way of sacrifice.

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Thus if ten persons were baptised it would be inaccurate to say 'There were ten baptisms' and accurate to say 'There is one Baptism; ten persons received this one Baptism.' Or, again, if ten persons received the sacrament of Holy Eucharist it would be inaccurate to say 'There were ten Holy Eucharists' and accurate to say 'There is one Holy Eucharist; ten persons received this one Holy Eucharist.'

So, too, there is but one Sacrifice. And if ten priests offer up Holy Mass it would be inaccurate to say 'There were ten sacrifices of the Body and Blood of Christ' and accurate to say 'There is but one Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ; ten priests offered it up'—*i.e.*, not in its motus-actio mode, but in its motus-passio or applicatory mode.

V.McN.

LIFE OF ST. ALPHONSUS MARIA DI LIGUORI. By a Sister of Notre Dame. (Burns, Oates and Washbourne, Ltd.; 4/6 net.)

Few among the saints have had a more tender and ardent love for God and souls than St. Alphonsus, and few certainly have suffered more poignantly for that twofold love. Yet to the general public little is known of the life of this great saint. How many who continually use and love—for instance—his *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament* know anything more than the name of the writer?

This short life of him will doubtless introduce him to those to whom the fuller lives are inaccessible, though it were preferable that these should be read later. The present book is carefully but—especially in the first half—somewhat drily written. One has the impression of being carefully shown round St. Alphonsus by a very conscientious guide. It is a history, but not a living portrait, and while admiring the former one would prefer the latter.

M.M.

LIFE IN THE MIDDLE AGES. By G. G. Coulton. Vols. 1, 2, and 3. (Cambridge University Press; 7/6 net each.)

There are many ways of approaching a past civilisation, and each specialist is tempted to identify his part with the whole. The historian of the art of the middle ages, for example, would lead us to believe that nothing existed but cathedrals: the liturgist confines reality to choir schools and the Sarum Rite: the lawyer confounds the life of a nation with the development of