

surrender, abandonment, moment-by-moment holiness, is another triumph by Longmans in their recent endeavour to popularize worthwhile books of spirituality. The book first appeared in English in 1934. The present translation, done by a Religious of Carmel Bettendorf, Iowa, wisely retains the French atmosphere, sometimes even the idiom, of the original. No one could really anglicize this piece of sanctity *à la française*.

The simple universal principle, 'Doing God's will, here and now, is sanctity', is systematically reiterated throughout the book, and applied to many factors, situations, attitudes, of ordinary people's ordinary search for holiness. The effect is rather over-stimulating. There are passages that suggest a sort of unreasoning reliance on one's own immediate inspiration. A few paragraphs, out of the context at least, could be quoted as over-simplification or exaggerations. But this is true, I think, of nearly all French books of spirituality. It is a pity. I suppose the French man-in-the-street is as immune to these things as we are to our prized illogicalities. The remedy is, as in this book, to keep the translation as French as possible, and perhaps to insist on some sort of explanatory preface in which obviously disconcerting phrases could be put in perspective. This treasurable book of Fr Schryvers, almost entirely free of such phrases, deserved the modicum of annotation which would have made it a perfect book for English readers as well as French ones.

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MAN OF FIRE. By Malachy Gerard Carroll. (Mercier Press; 12s. 6d.)

This is rather a collection of essays than a straight life. The subject is Father d'Alzon, who was born at Le Vigan in the Midi on August 30th, 1810.

Emmanuel d'Alzon came of an aristocratic family, cultured and holy, and when we read these character studies of a remarkable son of the Church we cannot help reflecting on the saying that the first school bench for a child is in the arms of its mother. He was nurtured in an atmosphere where vulgarity and mean empty sentiments were unknown; his ancestry had in it the sword always drawn to defend the right and the Church; we are not taken altogether by surprise to find the courage, the strength, the purity and the charity revealed in this account of his life.

The early part of the book is devoted to his upbringing, his studies, his decision to become a priest. At the end of 1828 we meet the first tentative formulation of his master purpose: 'I have discovered my aim. I wish to consecrate myself entirely to the defence of the Church and of religion'—and a few years later: 'As a religious I shall saturate

myself with the ideas of M. de Rancé and I shall remind myself that a religious must be an angel, a martyr, an apostle.'

In Nîmes in 1830 Dr d'Alzon served his apprenticeship. Religion was at its lowest ebb; nuns were a thing of the past; cholera and corruption had become the masters of the people and had done their worst. How strange it must have been for this young priest to have been made an honorary Vicar General straightaway, and to find himself the apostle who had come to revive and to save! How soon the mark of sanctity became obvious in that city; this young zealous priest ready to give away his clothes, to run to the confessional and go to the sick, to love the poor and to preach with a brilliant intellect which touched the hearts and minds of the rich. Through him God, the Sower, gave life to the country. In Chapter VI we see another d'Alzon—the Founder. The foundation of the Fathers of the Assumption comes first, and then, perhaps his life's greatest work, the foundation of the Oblates of the Assumption.

Perhaps through him the challenge of perfection may sound in the ears of many, in England as elsewhere, who sit and muse too long, wondering what God requires of them. 'What is a Founder?' he asks; and he gives the reply: 'When God wills to mould and shape a Founder he takes a man and he fashions him after the manner of the patriarchs . . . the special and extraordinary missions confided to the Founders of Orders are continued by their disciples, always within the Church, always under the authority of the Supreme Pastor. . . .' So through him came the life which flowed into the Congregation he founded, and this life continues today.

Especially interesting to women is the second part of the book devoted to the Oblates. It is fascinating reading, watching d'Alzon fail and fail again, tasting deeply of disappointment, until he found the right woman into whose soul he could inculcate his own desires for the service of God, a woman whom he admired and to whom he gave unstinting loving training and friendship. Who amongst women who waver would not be drawn to dedicate herself to God and cast in her lot with him, reading of the heroic labours of these first Oblates in the Near East and the Balkan States and even in Russia?

A well-written, workmanlike presentation, though occasionally tedious, the book at 12s. 6d. is very successfully produced and is further evidence of the way in which the Mercier Press establishes itself as an 'apostolic press' bringing within the reach of all good material at a reasonable cost.

K. J. BARTLETT

THE EXTERNALS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. A Handbook of Catholic