

cycle of sermons which he preached in Notre Dame and all over France, form the content of this picture. The last impression is that of the Headmaster; Lacordaire's work for the school of Sorèze, his influence on the boys and his work for the Third Order are all described. Miss Woodgate deserves credit for showing how these three stages in Lacordaire's life were not independent, but three periods of one great life; the Dominican life following easily from his priestly life, and his work as a headmaster being enriched by his knowledge of men which his experience as priest and Dominican had given him.

The sub-title of the book is 'leader of youth,' and the appeal which Lacordaire made on the young is brought out quite clearly by Miss Woodgate; his love for the young, his devotion for the new order of things which the Revolution had brought with it, his appeal to all classes in his sermons all over France, and his influence over boys in his later years at Sorèze, all are described in an interesting and sympathetic way with well-chosen extracts from some of his letters to young men which tempt one to read more.

The style is in keeping with the subject. A ponderous and laboured life of a man who was so alive and refreshing would be unwelcome; but this book is not only in keeping with the spirit of Lacordaire, but even succeeds in catching something of the drama of his life; the scene in the convent where the Archbishop offers him the pulpit of Notre Dame, his return to Notre Dame later in his Dominican habit, the effect of Lacordaire on the boys at Sorèze, these and similar events are told in a simple and direct way which succeeds in being dramatic by its very simplicity. Material unessential to the picture is left out and often many years are telescoped into a short space when occasion demands, and the general effect is in consequence of a refreshing and satisfying life of Lacordaire.

DANIEL WOOLGAR, O.P.

## NOTICES

**MARY OF NAZARETH.** By Vincent McNabb, O.P. (Burns Oates; 5s.)

Anyone who knows Father McNabb's sermons or writings will expect to find treasures of thought and spirituality in a book by him on Our Lady, and there will be no disappointment in that respect. The present volume represents the collected thought of a lifetime on her for whom he has always felt a profound

filial devotion. There are epigrams and anecdotes, reflections of a line and meditations of a page, poetic appreciation and provocative paradox, striking quotations and fresh exegesis. The page of Dedication to St. Joseph is beautiful and moving. The general contents are grouped suitably under the months of the year. Not everyone will like everything; but everyone will find much that is helpful, indeed inspiring, to a fuller appreciation of and devotion to the Mother of God and of Men.

O.P.

CONSTRUCTION DE LA PAIX. Paroles d'un Théologien. Par le Père Th. Deman, O.P. (Editions du Cerf; pp. 75; n.p.)

That peace—true peace and not merely a superficial concord, or negative absence of war—is the 'privilege of Christian societies,' being in fact impossible in the full sense without sanctifying grace and without the charity which grace alone gives; and that all the 'technics' of peace, the political activity and the diplomacy, are of value only as serving the wider and deeper purposes of Christianity: this is the argument of Père Deman's pamphlet. The sober clarity of his treatment is just what is needed at a time when there is much talk of reconstruction, but all too little hard thinking about the concrete implications of the ideals invoked.

G.V.

MEDITATIONS ON THE LOVE OF GOD. By Diego de Estella. (Sheed and Ward; 2s. 6d.)

This is a pleasant little book in true Franciscan tradition with the worlds of grace and nature constantly running side by side and intermingling. The meditations are not too formal, nor too like an exercise in logic. The language is sometimes a distraction by reason of its floweriness, but I am not able to say whether this is the fault of the author or translator.

F.M.

L'IDÉE DE LA VIE RELIGIEUSE. Par Benoit Lavaud, O.P. (Desclée, de Brouwer; 12 frs.)

Multum in parvo. This, too, is an excellent little book, being an outline of the purpose of the religious life as the perfection of charity, a handbook both for enquirers and proficient, concluding with explanations and charts of the branches and tendencies of the religious life.

F.M.

LA MESSE ROMAINE. Par L. Caron. (Bruxelles : Éditions de la Cité Chrétienne; pp. 99, n.p.)

' Ceci n'est pas de la littérature ; ce n'est pas de la spiritualité ; ce n'est pas de la liturgie ; ce n'est pas de la poésie . . . ' (So Abbé Jacques Leclercq in his preface). ' C'est la messe.' Or more exactly, a plain description of the action of a Roman Mass, but one which penetrates its inner significance, and that not in aesthetic or sacristy, but in cosmic, terms. And all with a simplicity and austerity of language which is neither poetry nor prose, but which is, regrettably, untranslatable. For an intelligent understanding of the meaning of Mass, its parts and its gestures, no more helpful introduction could be recommended.

V.W.

BLAVATSKY, BESANT AND CO. By T. M. Francis, with a Preface by Fr. Herbert Thurston, S.J. (Coldwell; 4s.)

The anonymous priest-author of this book has given his readers something to read with profit and pleasure. His many years of sojourn in India, where Madame Blavatsky staged her frauds, have stamped reality on every line of the almost incredible story.

Of course those of us who are in constant contact with the paid adversary of the Catholic Church have taken the word incredible out of our apologetic dictionary. When simple-minded people are to be found thinking that because Mr. Chamberlain is a tool of the Vatican and therefore the present war is the Pope's war, the word incredible becomes superfluous.

If there could be any real honest pleasure to be had by seeing honest prejudice fooled and robbed by rogues, this book would almost be sheer fun. But roguery, and worse than roguery, are so revolting even when skilfully draped by the author's words that there are pages the specialist will read only from a sense of duty.

Fr. Thurston's Preface, written within hail of death, gives no sign of weakening power. It is the old undaunted Defender of the Faith, the Unveiler of Fraud. Indeed, the reviewer recalls few words of Fr. Thurston written with such vigour.

The anonymous priest-author of this Indian history is not forgetful of the years he spent in the Indian mission-field. His story of Blavatsky, Besant and Co. is written largely to help the finances of his brother missionaries, who without realising it are toiling in a mission-field which may soon be the battle-field of the castes and races and classes of the social world.

V.McN,

THE CHURCH BEFORE PILATE. (By Edward Leen, C.S.Sp. (Silver Spring, Maryland; Preservation Press; \$1.00.)

We are indebted to Father Leen for another invaluable spiritual treatise. In *The Church before Pilate*, with that penetration which dispenses with superficialities and sees things from the standpoint of God, the author once more attempts to restore sight, spiritual sight, to a half-blind world. Using Communism as an example, he exposes the futility of the modern Materialisms which would build a heaven upon earth for themselves. Granted the fact of original sin there can be no earthly existence which does not include suffering, for this is the fruit of sin. But suffering and unhappiness are quite distinct; happiness is not incompatible with suffering, though it is incompatible with a sinful life. 'Christ's theory is that the chief obstacle to man's happiness is not without, but within; it lies in a set of evil tendencies—set up in his nature by Original Sin. The conquest of human happiness depends upon the conquest of these.' And the conquest of these implies suffering. As Father Leen expresses it in a chapter heading, 'The Cross is the Crux.'

*The Church before Pilate* is a book worth reading.

J.P.

## REVIEW OF PERIODICALS

'Conversion à l'Absolu,' by Fr. F. Florand, O.P., is, despite its brevity and avoidance of technicality, an extraordinarily valuable and comprehensive synthesis of practical psychology, ascetics and mysticism, and at the same time of speculative philosophy and theology. It lays special stress on the character of grace in the divine psychotherapy for the schizophrenia of modern man, and on its dynamic and vital character as the principle, not of infantilism or of the falsifying simplification of the objective complexity of life, but as the unifying principle of a progressively realistic response to life and of an essentially 'open' morality. But all is expounded in a non-technical language which makes few demands of technical knowledge on the part of the reader.

This is but one of many noteworthy contributions to the February *Vie Spirituelle*. There is also a detailed and highly realistic discussion of the physical sufferings of Our Lord by a surgeon, and a theological exposition of the significance and purpose of the same by Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.; also a fine sermon on the virtue of fortitude as manifested in St. Joan of Arc by Fr. Duployé, O.P., and a thoughtful article on the