

nor priest for bishop, nor bishop for pope. The timid move in crowds, the brave in single file. When combined efforts are called for, be ready to act and prompt to obey the orders which are given; but never forget that vast room remains for individual action.

It is partly because this truth has too often been forgotten that we have the problem of leakage from the Church, not to mention delinquency and broken marriages. Too many leave the Church not because of a lack of Faith, in the technical sense, or even because of bad will, but because they cannot breathe; like the claustrophobic, they feel compelled to break out of the bounds of what to them is a ready-made, repressive system of religion. No doubt, like the claustrophobic, much of the trouble arises from their own immaturity. But is the educator (parent, teacher, priest) free from all responsibility merely because he can say with truth that he never taught them anything that was not right?

MURDOCH SCOTT, O.P.

CHRISTIAN ETHICS. By Dietrich von Hildebrand. (Thames and Hudson, London, 1953; 35s.)

The reading of this book is an extremely laborious task. The style is diffuse and often obscure. There can be no doubt about the author's moral earnestness nor about the amount of thought and reflection that have gone to the making of the book; unfortunately, he parts company with St Thomas almost from the first page and, as a result, is led into interminable discussions which could have been avoided by an acquaintance, not with isolated texts of Aristotle and St Thomas, but with their teaching as an organic whole. The work centres round the elusive notion of value, which, however, is never clearly explained. Through an univocal conception of the word 'desire', the statement that the good is what all things desire, for St Thomas the first principle of the practical intellect, is rejected, and value, here the good in itself, is set up as an absolute. It is an immediately intuited fundamental datum without any reference explicit or implicit to the will. We think that the author has failed to distinguish between the perfect, which is an absolute notion, and the good, which is the perfect as an object of appetite. Many long pages of discussion of the different types of value could have been simplified by noticing the difference between the realm of being and that of activity. The explanation of moral value makes no reference, so far as we can see, to the all-important conformity with right reason, and in this connection it is noteworthy, though strange, to find a full-length study of Ethics, and Christian Ethics at that, without any reference to the virtue of prudence. The author is also at odds with St Thomas on the question of freedom and on certain important points concerning the moral virtues. Perhaps

were one acquainted with the general philosophic outlook of the author a certain amount of obscurity would be dispelled. For those who are already sufficiently acquainted with the study of Ethics, the book will present some useful features, and, in many cases, the analysis, if laborious, is interesting and could prove stimulating.

ANTONINUS FINILI, O.P.

LE STIMATE DELLA PASSIONE. By Ignazio Bonetti. (Rovigo, 1952; n.p.)

FR Bonetti, a member of the 'Stimatini Fathers', has written a short history of the origins of that devotion to the Five Wounds to which his order is dedicated which contains much valuable information; and although his exceptionally wide reading in medieval sources and modern critical studies seems not to have included much of the devotional literature of England, his book none the less has much to teach students of English spirituality in the Middle Ages. Early in his work he pays tribute to Gougaud's *Celtic Christianity* in his assertion that in such ancient Anglo-Saxon manuals of prayers as the Book of Cerne, the Book of Nunnaminster and MS. British Museum Royal 2A xx we have almost the first memorials of the deep and wide influence which Irish monastic spirituality was to exercise upon Latin Christendom, particularly in the evolution of extra-liturgical prayer: and presently he quotes one prayer from the Book of Cerne, 'My lord Jesus Christ, I adore thee stretched upon the Cross and crowned with thorns. I pray thee that thy wounds may be a medicine to my soul', and another from the Royal manuscript: 'Most merciful Jesu, who didst extend thy hands upon the wood of the Cross, stretch out to me the hand of thy mercy. With the spear of fear and love transfix my heart of stone, thou who didst suffer thy holy and venerable hands upon the Cross to be transfixed with nails. Take from my hands and from my heart each wound of wickedness, O lord Jesus Christ who didst suffer thine innocent hands to be nailed upon the Cross—'. Such quotations serve as a striking corrective of the old-fashioned view (and the author acknowledges his debt to Thurston in this respect) that devotion as we now know it to the Passion only begins with St Bernard and St Francis, and that we should look for its origins to the East. Bonetti also pays a much-needed tribute to the immense influence of Bede's writings upon later medieval spiritual writers. As it moves towards the later Middle Ages and modern times the work covers more familiar ground and loses some of its interest, and in treating of medieval German Dominican spirituality it is not always perfectly accurate; but it is to be commended for the exceptional justness with which it reconsiders St Francis of Assisi and finds him no longer first in time but still pre-eminent in the quantity and the quality of his devotion to the Passion.

ERIC COLLEDGE