

by the Rule, one does not feel that it gives anything like a true picture of the Benedictine spirit. The chief reason for this, we think, is that the concentration on the lives of individual monks and nuns tends to make one lose sight of the greatness of the whole movement. We get instances of individual piety and holiness but little sense of the corporate whole. This is a particular weakness in dealing with the Benedictine order, because it is of the very essence of the Benedictine spirit that the individual monk is a member of a body and belongs to a whole which is greater than himself. It is for this reason that the liturgy is the typical prayer of the monk because it marks the subordination of the prayer of the individual to the prayer of the Church, which is the prayer of Christ himself. In the same way the holiness which is typical of a monk is surely that which comes from his incorporation in Christ. It is the lack of this distinctive character in so many of the lives which Dom Romanus studies which makes one feel that it is not truly representative of the Benedictine life. As a result, though his book tells us much about certain individual Benedictine monks and nuns, we do not feel that it gives any adequate idea of the spirit and meaning of the Benedictine life today. ·

D. B. G.

HIS WILL IS OUR PEACE. By Gerald Vann, O.P. (Sheed and Ward; 3s.)

The advertisements in our newspapers and magazines have been urging us, as the year comes to its end, to prepare for the second Christmas of peace time. The very phrase that is used reflects the attitude of so many. After the horrors of a long war we are now at peace. Everything now takes place in a 'peace-time' mood. Our young people have left the Services or the factories to return to their 'peace-time' work, their 'peace-time' way of life. 'Post-war' and 'peace-time', they have the same meaning. That is the tragedy. The day of peace is but a negation, it is not war: it is the cessation of the noise of war, the silence that comes when the guns have ceased fire. It is the time for doing what we have not had time to do for so long when our liberties were restricted, when we were at the beck and call of those who were leading us in the common cause. Restrictions are going; we are now free, free to do what we like when we like and how we like. And yet man is not happy. This day of peace has become for him a day of disillusionment. Somehow it has not come out in the way he had planned. He fought a war for peace; now he has no war, but he also has no peace. Wherever he looks he sees misery and trouble or the threat of trouble; everywhere there is distress, hunger, suffering. It is understandable that even good people should be disturbed and disappointed. The fruits of victory have not been peace. But then peace is not the fruit of war. It is something which is real and positive and lying deep in the heart of man, not in the material world about him. Is it possible, then, to

be at peace in this vale of tears? Where is peace? Who can give it to us? Let us hear again the message of this time which is also Advent time, the time of the Coming of the Prince of Peace. He came not only to redeem us but to bring us peace. That was the angelic message which the shepherds heard on the slopes of Bethlehem. That is the message which he gave and gives to those who follow him. 'My peace I give to you'. It is from him alone that we can obtain true peace. He will give it but we must ask. It is, maybe, that we have asked for the wrong thing, that we have looked for the wrong thing. 'Not as the world giveth, give I peace'. What then is the answer? *In la sua voluntate è la nostra pace*. In his will is our peace. Around these words of Dante, the author of this little book under review builds five simple essays or meditations on the nature of peace and the way of peace. He examines with keen insight the difficulties that confront the soul in its search for peace and shows where it is that their solution lies. Five chapters simply, clearly and beautifully written. They will help equally the learned and the unlearned. In a true sense the author has worked out a simple and practical philosophy of life in these pages. You should read this little book and keep it by your bedside.

KENNETH WYKEHAM-GEORGE, O.P.

C H R I S T M A S C A R D S

WESTBROOK'S cards are becoming a familiar feature of many Catholic homes at Christmas time. His energy and perseverance have won him a deserved place on the mantelpiece from Christmas Eve till Twelfth Night. For 1946 he offers some new designs of his own, but he has in particular sought a Catholic public by combining with other designers in producing a great variety of greeting cards. He now includes in his catalogue a set of the well known Prinknash Cards executed by the Benedictines; also among his stock the interested reader will find the work of Philip Hagreen, Brenda Rutherford, Doris Paulthorpe and Gilbert Sheedy. The catalogue, free on request, may be had from: *Edward R. Westbrook, 11 Dorset Road South, Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex.*

For another selection the reader should apply to the headquarters of the Catholic Action Girls' Organisation (22 Brainham Gardens, S.W.5), as they are making a drive for 'Only Christian Christmas Cards', a campaign which might be disastrous if Christian art were restricted to the sentimental repository art of the past, but which in the hands of C.A.G.O. will be directed to a successful issue.

SONGS OF THE GREAT 'O'S. By Tom Piper (from M. Bleaden, 36 Chepstow Villas, W. 11; 7d. post free).

This should be an acceptable Christmas card for priests and religious, consisting as it does of a translation of the O Antiphons and a sequence of verses inspired by them.