

a new collection, but in reality an addition to an old collection of his retreat conferences and sermons. It is fourteen years since Father Vincent's death, but those who were privileged to know him can hear his voice again by reading this new series, for the style is of speaking and not of writing; therefore it is much more really Father Vincent. For those who never knew him there is much here to ponder. That was the original intention. The words were spoken to be pondered upon during a retreat. Not pleasant sentimental sermons as might possibly be suggested by the collection title, but strong theology strongly taught. The sayings of our Lord are the stars of comfort, and often enough it is a very different comfort that the worldly-minded would expect. The conferences are not in ordered series as he preached them. They are taken from a variety of times and places. The compiler has introduced an attractive order by grouping similar subjects under main headings—God's call, the way, the means, principles of the spiritual life, etc. One may dip here and there, begin the book at the end, or even break into the middle of a conference and still find purposeful teaching and useful advice. Father Vincent's thought must have been logical and consecutive, but it is often hard to see the argued line of demonstration, a fact which can be ascertained in other notable preachings which have afterwards been set down. The time, the place, the hearers might provide the explanation of the apparent gaps. For all that, no one will complain, because all will be grateful enough to hear Father Vincent's voice again.

DONALD PROUDMAN, O.P.

THE STORY OF A SOUL. The Autobiography of St Thérèse of Lisieux.

Edited by Mother Agnes of Jesus. Translated, with a critical Preface, by Michael Day, CONG. ORAT. (Burns and Oates; 2s. 6d.)

Fr Michael Day's translation of St Thérèse of Lisieux's autobiography is already well known. This third edition, remarkably cheap for the present day, is to be welcomed, except perhaps for the rather dreadful picture on the cover. Fr Day has written a new Preface, explaining at some length the history of the original manuscripts and of their editing after the saint's death by her elder sister, Mother Agnes of Jesus. While holding that it would have been impossible to publish the unedited originals at that time, he admits that Mother Agnes, in carrying out her sister's wishes, did not, in her manner of doing so, conform to certain generally recognized literary standards. Now that the recent publication of the original manuscripts makes comparison possible, 'it is a matter of regret', says Fr Day, 'that the exact nature of the editorial work carried out by Mother Agnes was not made clear when this edition was first published.'

This translation, in good, readable English, should do much to dispel the illusion of the 'Little Flower' as a deplorable example of insipid and mawkish sentimentality. Behind the girlish 'prettiness' there is real childlike simplicity joined to a wisdom and understanding beyond her years. Her strength of character and heroic courage brought her in a very short time to an astonishing spiritual maturity that bears the stamp of authentic sanctity.

This cheap edition should help to make the saint more fully and more widely understood.

L.S.

A TREATISE ON THE SPIRITUAL LIFE. By St Vincent Ferrer, O.P.; with a commentary by Ven. Mother Julienne Morrell, O.P. Translated by the Dominican Nuns, Corpus Christi Monastery, Menlo Park, California. (Blackfriars Publications, London; 12s. 6d.)

This volume is not one book but two. These two books are linked together, for Mother Juliana Morell was commenting on the well-known treatise of St Vincent Ferrer. Nevertheless one realizes very quickly that there is a great difference between them. While it is true that the Treatise is 'full of virile piety' (p. 7), the Commentary is clearly the product of a female mind. It is not wanting in 'learning'; Mother Juliana read the writings of many Fathers of the Church and gathered from them interesting and useful quotations, but they are put together in a mechanical and unimaginative way. Moreover the Commentary bears witness to the need for theological knowledge in a commentator on the Treatise. A theologically trained commentator would have been a little more sparing in the use of the word 'virtue', especially in reference to what, on St Thomas' showing, cannot be given that name (silence, fear, poverty, etc.). He would also refrain from stating that fear will survive even in heaven (p. 164). The preface to this volume leads a reader to expect much, for he is told that 'nothing has been left undone to render this edition as correct as possible'. His expectation will be short-lived, for he will discover that only one half of the quotations is identified, others are left without any indication. In addition to this he will be disappointed to find several misprints and the division of chapters will strike him in places as infelicitous. He will wonder several times about the translation to which 'no less attention has been given'. Despite all pains, it is unattractive and heavy; in places it is content to make no sense and at least once it is marred by a howler. These defects cause a reviewer real sadness, for the Treatise of St Vincent deserves to be known and studied and, above all, practised.

C.V.