

Fr Conrad Pepler's essay, 'The Great Mother', which comes next, is the most satisfying for the theological reader. This essay alone takes a really universal theme and keeps to it. The one idea, motherhood, as a human, perennial, powerful factor in the whole life of man, is finely developed as a real principle of Marian theology. This section combines speculation and devotion in true Dominican style.

'Our Lady and Civilization' is the subject aptly assigned to Daniel Sargent. From a vast store of reading he draws a thesis that our Lady has given value to civilization in the past and can do so in the future. 'Mary and the Flesh', by Paul Palmer, S.J., turns out to be an excellent exposé of the great truth that our Lady has always been a bulwark against any kind of Manicheism. This essay is a masterly review of the impact of the Marian dogmas upon the persistent heresy of matter-spirit dualism. Father John Lafarge, S.J., is concerned to refute a suggestion made in *The Christian Century*, December 23rd, 1953, to the effect that the popularity of 'the Marian cult' is a danger to the ethical content of Christianity. He boldly puts the offending words 'ethical content' in his title, refutes the implied sentimentalism and draws, incidentally, a picture of Mary which clings to the memory. Of the remaining essays Father John S. Kennedy's is outstanding: Mary's message to modern man at La Salette. It is a story excellently told, a moral excellently drawn.

The other contributors are Father William A. Donaghy, S.J. ('Mary's Place in Reality'), Fr Martindale ('At Lourdes and Fatima'), William Juhasz ('Mother of the Church of Silence') and the Editor, Father Thomas J. M. Burke, S.J., who writes on Mary's 'Sense of the Apostolate'.

G. M. CORR, O.S.M.

COURTES PRIÈRES POUR LE CHRÉTIEN DANS LE SIÈCLE. (Desclée de Brouwer; 105 fr. b.)

This is an excellent manual of prayers, dating from earliest Christian times to the present. Grouped under the petitions of the Our Father and subdivided into different acts of a soul at prayer, are extracts from Holy Scripture and the Liturgy, words of saints recognized as masters of prayer, beside touching strophes of Negro spirituals and lines from many other uncanonized persons, living and dead. We find Verlaine next to St Bernard, Pascal preceding Tagore, Péguy following St John of the Cross, the prayers of St Thérèse and Sister Elisabeth of the Trinity. Varying in length from a developed meditation of Lancelot Andrewes to the ejaculation of St Augustine, 'Mon Dieu, ma vie', these prayers meet every human need. One appreciates particularly the moving 'Prière d'une Jociste' and 'Prière quotidienne des catholiques chinots persécutés.'

Occasionally to the English mind the headings of the sub-divisions appear slightly forced and tend to encourage introspection rather than spontaneous conversation with God. But there is a fine selection of Scriptural passages, 'Peuple de Jahvé', which reflect the dignity of a Christian. Under the seventh petition one welcomes prayers of such vigorous apostles as Cardinal Suhard and Abbé Godin, appealing for guidance lest activity should become too natural. Chiefly in the Scriptural passages it is God who speaks to the soul, opening the way to a more intimate dialogue. The only notable omission, the prayer of our Lord in St John, chapter seventeen, is perhaps being reserved by the compilers for their future books of prayers, to which this volume makes us look forward.

SR M. AGNES, O.P.

PHILOSOPHY FOR THE LAYMAN. By Aegidius Doolan, O.P., S.T.M.
(Dominican Publications, Dublin; 12s. 6d.)

This is the second edition of a book first published ten years ago. It consists of fifty-eight short essays originally contributed to 'Hibernia'. Its aim, the author says in his Foreword, is 'an orderly treatment, as brief as clarity allows, of the fundamental problems of Natural Philosophy, so as to show their bearing on our moral life'. The larger part of the book is concerned with Moral Philosophy but, since 'what a man ought to do . . . depends upon what he has the power to do', this is led up to, after a handful of essays on general basic questions, by an examination of some main theses in Thomist Psychology. This treatment is necessarily slight but is nevertheless sufficient to make the discussion of Ethics that follows more intelligible, and the author endeavours not merely to state the Thomist position, but to consider some of the major objection to this view. The essays are, for the most part, brisk and lively and are full of quotations from a remarkably wide range of sources. Whilst the exposition is generally clear there are a number of cases where the brevity of the articles and the need to end one and open another seems to interrupt rather than aid the development of a single train of thought. An impression of jerkiness might have been avoided had several articles been forged into a longer essay at these points. However, in spite of a somewhat misleading title, the book should be of value to the layman, who realizes that the problems, personal and communal, besetting us are not to be solved at the level upon which they are commonly approached, and who appreciates that 'to bring things back to principle, to link life with its object, words with their meaning, whatever is a means with its end', is, as Fr Doolan observes, 'the principle need of today'.

M.T.