

their organization but on their interior life and personal love of God. Once Catholic Action puts the emphasis on the 'Action', and forgets the real meaning of 'Catholic' which in essence is the result of union with Christ, then failure of Catholic Action has begun'. (p. xi).

Perhaps Fr Boylan is at his best in his three chapters on prayer, and when he writes about daily spiritual reading. His golden rule for prayer is 'to pray the way one finds best'. (p. 85). The dispositions for prayer are 'the dispositions for healthy membership of Christ: faith, hope, charity, humility, and submission to God's will'. (p. 87). In spiritual and religious formation he inculcates complete liberty of spirit in all matters that are not of obligation. He does not agree 'with those who would have lay people live like religious, out of touch with their surroundings. They are members of society, they have their place in it and their relations to it, and they have quite a legitimate interest in it'. (p. 101).

'Regular reading of a suitable sort plays a more and more important part in the life of Catholics today, and that for the educated at least it is well-nigh essential for their progress if not for their salvation'. (p. 101). The grown and mature mind of a grown person cannot be expected to re-adopt the mental habits and immature outlook of a child, or to renew juvenile tastes. The Catholic cannot afford to be satisfied with what has been learnt at school. The proper foundation for true devotion and prayer is dogma. And there is much dogma put clearly and applied in the most practical way in these pages. 'Christianity is not a set of rules; it is a Person—the Person we call Christ'. (p. 217). Doctrine presupposes some idea of Catholic philosophy. Often theology is read by the laity exclusively from the point of view of apologetic argument, whereas it should also furnish a dogmatic foundation of devotion. (p. 106). But 'common sense can never be left aside at any part of the spiritual life'. (p. 108).

It is suggested that there should be three practices instead of one, of reading, reflection, and prayer. Many books written as 'meditations' are 'more fit to be included in the list of spiritual reading'. (p. 120). In an appendix there is a well-selected list of books. There are also timely instructions on the Sacraments.

We venture to offer some hints for another edition. Some pruning would make the reading less heavy. A long introduction and a preface are a little top-heavy. It is doubtful whether so much indulgence need be given to recapitulations. And certainly an index at the end would help the diligent reader to recapture some of the ideas which have particularly impressed him.

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

THE PRIEST OF TODAY: His Ideals and his Duties. By Thomas O'Donnell, C.M. (Browne and Nolan; 10s. 6d.)

This work was first published forty years ago, and is now pre-

sented in a revised form and brought up to date. It will be especially useful and instructive to the priest not long ordained who is entering on his formative years in the midst of a parochial apostolate. Above all he must have a high appreciation of his priestly vocation, and must not allow his spiritual life to deteriorate by ill-measured activity and at the expense of prayer and study. He must be a man of prayer, a man of study, a man of culture. A man who is rustic in his thought and behaviour will be hampered in his work for souls, and will arouse dislike in those with whom he comes in contact. When the curbs of discipline are removed it is easy to become idle. Idleness often takes the form of neglect of reading. It is not sufficient for the priest to read for reading's sake or in a haphazard fashion. 'A priest should apply himself earnestly to the science of human conduct and qualify himself daily more and more to be a teacher and a guide to others'. (p. 15). He should as a professional man fortify himself with principles rather than with casuistry, being studious in sacred learning, and alive to modern trends of thought.

Almost every topic within the range of a priest's life and work is touched on in this book. There are some points upon which there may well be a difference of opinion. We wonder, for instance, whether it need be taken as a general rule that 'writing is essential for a young preacher' (p. 165). There are subjects too which if not treated fully had better be left alone.

In speaking of the use of an invalid marriage, which is patient of a much wider treatment, it is said that in an extreme emergency 'the purely *ecclesiastical* impediment that originally stood in the way of a valid marriage ceases'. (p. 110). Whatever is meant by 'impediment' here, the statement is inadmissible notwithstanding Lehmkuhl and Palmieri.

We have not noticed that due place is given to the study of languages in the life of a priest. Undoubtedly he is the better equipped for the performance of his duties the less rusty he is specially in Latin, Greek and French, with which he presumably will have had some acquaintance in his seminary days. Thus although there are a number of scattered phrases of Latin throughout these pages, there is no suggestion in the reading list in an appendix that the reader should know any language but his own. Such limitation in the sphere of reading can only tend to insulate the clerical mind.

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*Les Editions Du Cerf* have produced an attractive French translation of Abbot Vonier's *Christianus*. This is the third of the Abbot's works in this series (*L'Eau Vive*) which shows the demand on the other side of the Channel for these satisfactory popularisations of St Thomas's theology. (Blackfriars Publications; 6s. 6d.)