

helping us to love our Lady better as well as understand the theological terms which make Marian doctrine more precise and fruitful.

Dr Most intends, as we are told on the cover, to co-ordinate and integrate the dogmatic truths underlying devotion to Mary with a solid, unsentimental and balanced application of these truths to the life of the soul.

For the dogmatic truths and their explanation he leans heavily on papal pronouncements, which is excellent, and is, to my mind, another instance of the acceptance, by Marian writers in general, of the living voice of the Church as the first and most important source of guidance. Less happy is the occasional numerical measuring of the views of theologians.

Great stretches of the book are explanations of Christian virtues and ascetical principles, given for the purpose of showing that our Lady, mediatrix of all graces, model of all virtues, is closely and personally concerned in all that we do in our quest of perfection. This part of the book is perhaps more useful as a store of thoughts than as a persuasive explanation. His theme is that everything in the spiritual life is, in fact, in the hands of Mary, whether we are aware of it or not. With St Louis de Montfort he teaches that those who realise this universal actual power and activity of Mary make quicker and easier progress towards perfection. 'Marian' saints have an easier path.

In six useful appendices we are given brief and meaty information, comment, demonstration, on the title 'The New Eve', on our Lady's knowledge, on Co-redemption, on the Protoevangelium and Apoc. 12, on St Dominic as author of the rosary, and on the brown scapular. On the last two Father Most leans towards what is traditional rather than what is critical.

SAINTS AND OURSELVES. Second Series. Various Authors. Ed. Philip Caraman, S.J. (Hollis and Carter; 12s. 6d.)

A dozen saints chosen and described by a dozen writers of distinction—what better recipe for a spiritual reading book of general appeal? And this book comes up to the high expectations raised by a glance at the contributors' names.

Christopher Dawson is the most impressive, with a statement, proved most arrestingly, that 'St Boniface was a man who had a deeper influence on the history of Europe than any Englishman who has ever lived'. Sir John McEwen, whose article is the best, translates us into the heart and mind of the middle ages with his sketch of St Louis of France. Milton Waldman had only to tell us the story of his saint (Joan of Arc) without frills to produce the most touching picture of them all. St Jeanne de Chantal (Vincent Cronin) is to my mind the most helpful.

St Albert the Great (Dr Sherwood Taylor) should not be missed by anyone interested in science and philosophy. Dr Sherwood Taylor has left many monuments of his great, penetrating, prehensile, honest mind. None, comparable in size, will do so much good as this portrait from life of an ideal Catholic scientist. The picture of St Hugh of Lincoln (Renée Haynes) is, in a curious way, more of a landscape than a portrait. Difficult to say why, as it is unmistakably a likeness.

Excitement (Bl. John Ogilvie, by Christian Hesketh), an interwoven thesis on sanctity (St Peter Claver, by Katharine Chorley), Welsh fire and wit (Blessed David Lewis, by Wyndham Lewis), unimpassioned remarks on Probabilism by a scientist (St Alphonsus Liguori, by Reginald J. Dingle) are all here provided in plenty, in good modern idiom. If there be a dim picture in this gallery it is George Scott-Moncrieff's 'St Margaret of Scotland'—but perhaps this impression is due to excessive expectations of such a theme. The unique saint, Nicholas von Flue, was given, of course, to E. I. Watkin, who begins thus: 'If during his later life Nicholas von Flue had eaten and drunk like other men, Switzerland as an independent State would probably not exist today.'

SAINT JOHN FISHER. By E. E. Reynolds. (Burns & Oates; 25s.)

In this companion volume to his St Thomas More, E. E. Reynolds has endeavoured to provide a modern life of St John Fisher which incorporates the materials brought to light in the years since Fr Bridgett published his pioneer work. From the outset it must be said that Catholics are greatly indebted to Mr Reynolds for producing a book at once scholarly and readable. There are however two criticisms which should be made.

Although at first there appear to be two flaws, on further consideration it will be seen that one is the child of the other. First, the character of the saint is never conveyed to the reader with sufficient conviction, nor are his actions and motives satisfactorily discussed. In chapter twenty-five, 'For his sister', for the first time do we get any picture of his personal love of our Lord crucified, the true substance beneath all the outward manifestations of sanctity and learning in colleges, sermons, controversial literature and asceticism. This lack is set beside some extremely interesting treatment of the people with whom St John lived and worked, and of the important events of his life.

The child of this first flaw is the rather dry and impersonal style of the book. If the author had tried to avoid the pitfalls of the traditional presentation of academic history and give a more personal picture of the man and saint the appeal of the book would have been much wider.

The book is pleasing in typography, illustrations and dust-cover and will undoubtedly become the standard life of St John Fisher. H.M.