

REVIEWS

WITH FATHER VINCENT AT MARBLE ARCH. By E. A. Siderman. (Blackfriars Publications; 2s. 6d.)

I remember when I was still at school finding myself one Sexagesima Sunday in Hyde Park just as Fr McNabb mounted the platform of the Catholic Evidence Guild. He announced his intention of speaking on the Gospel of the Sunday—the parable of the Sower. It was my first introduction to the Catholic Evidence Guild, and to Fr McNabb—and to the parable of the Sower, which I had already heard expounded an hour earlier at Farm Street and the same morning at Mass. I can still remember my disappointment when Fr McNabb announced his intention of speaking on this parable, but even to this day, I can remember what he said.

All those who ever heard Fr McNabb at Hyde Park will be very grateful for this memoir of treasured sayings and reported incidents which Mr Siderman has preserved for posterity. Many of these extracts will be remembered by those who heard them, almost in the very words which Mr Siderman has used. And those which we did not hear ourselves have the same authentic tone about them which make them ring true.

But this book will not only appeal to those who heard Fr McNabb. It will have an appeal to that much wider audience who knew him only by repute. Mr Siderman has given us Fr McNabb's considered opinions on most of the debated questions of modern times, on the rights and wrongs of the war, on Catholic education, on the duties of parenthood, the relation of the Catholic Church to modern movements in the world. It is a book which will have a very wide and popular appeal.

DANIEL WOOLGAR, O.P.

STUDIES IN RELIGIOUS POETRY OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. By W. L. Doughty, B.A., B.D. (The Epworth Press; 7s. 6d.)

Some idea of the nature of these studies of half-a-dozen seventeenth century poets can be gained from the titles which Mr Doughty gives to his essays: 'Religion under the Stars'—Vaughan; 'A Mystic in Half-lights'—Quarles; 'Cross and Crucifix'—Crashaw; 'The Scrutinix of the Soul'—Sir John Davies; 'A Cynic among Sectaries'—Henry More; 'Songs of Spiritual Felicitie'—Traherne. They are not simply literary criticism but precisely studies of religious poetry, by a writer eminently well equipped to appreciate, question and compare. Comparison is more often than not with the Wesleys, John and Charles; but the wealth and variety of Mr Doughty's allusions and quotations are remarkable.

The book is hardly an introduction, or at any rate not a simple introduction (if such be possible), to these poets. Rather is it one that will bring light and depth to the appreciation of those who already read them. Sir John Davies (1569-1626) is the least known

to the general reader. Mr Doughty expresses hope for his future, but realises that, even for one who 'has not demonstrated the undemonstrable . . . but has fortified the probable', appreciative readers can only be a 'select circle'. Mr Doughty's insight and delicacy of perception are seen at their best in his treatment of Crashaw. On only one small point does he seem to fail: here and there (notably on page 17, with reference to Quarles) he gently upbraids infelicities of speech which surely are due simply to the changed meaning or associations of certain words.

D. A.

SALT OF THE EARTH. A Discourse on the State of Priesthood. By Fr S. M. Shaw. (Burns Oates; 8s. 6d.)

This book is a notable achievement. The author has mastered by long practice and experience all that he sets out *contemplata tradere*. The craft of prayer is expounded with a freshness that swerves not from traditions, its development is ably traced. The overcoming of difficulties and besetting perils is handled with especial skill, and a sense of humour comes into play to light up the shallow pitfall of priggishness that fancies itself spiritually advanced. Above all and through all runs an intense earnestness of purpose, the unrelenting war with self, the completeness of the holocaust demanded of the priest. Subtle forms of compromise and *rapina in holocausto* are ruthlessly detected and exposed, and yet the dominant note is encouragement. Our Master's yoke is indeed sweet and his burden light *provided* we seek not to evade the cross, which we must learn to welcome. Examples are well chosen and practical. It is not enough, he insists, to accompany our divine Lord to the light of Tabor; we must be no less ready for the darkness of Calvary. Signally beautiful are the chapters which *see* through prayer-purged eyes, many scenes and characters of the Gospels. 'He would initiate them (the Apostles) then into the deepest mysteries of God's love, a love that drove him to Gethsemani, to the pillar and to the cross. He, in his love for them that he would have them learn to love in the same way.' One point we could wish had been added, 'Distractions which are not deliberate are a trial, not a fault' (Boylan, *Difficulties in Mental Prayer*, p. 57). Designed for young priests, this work should be no less helpful to many no longer young. It will live and bear much fruit.

H. E. G. ROPE.

LIGHT OVER FATIMA. By Charles C. O'Connell. (Mercier Press; 8s. 6d.)

THE MESSAGE OF FATIMA. By Sister Mary Joseph, O.P. (The Irish Rosary; 3s.)

Men have no conceivable interest in inflicting war on each other. Yet the problem remains how to make the popular desire for peace effective against the present ascendancy of might and force. A way is initiated by our Lady herself who appeared to three children in Fatima in Portugal thirty years ago. She taught them with renewed