

pressed thought acquires in the expression an existence independent of the thinker and the book as a whole would gain in weight if it was made clearer, whether Newman's personal orthodoxy was being defended, or the adequacy of his theories.

We find ourselves unable to believe that Mr. Belloc wrote the words: "To have been an undergraduate at Oxford College was his happiest memory."
Ivo THOMAS, O.P.

THE SOUL'S BETROTHAL-GIFT. By Hugh of St Victor. Translated by F. Sherwood Taylor. (Dacre Press; 3s.).

There is much of the greatest of the Victorines that would repay translation but this is one of the gems. The translator has mastered his style admirably so that Hugh can address himself as convincingly to the modern Englishman as to his fellow Augustinians of Hamerleve in the first half of the twelfth century. He writes in the form of a dialogue (or soliloquy as he more accurately calls it) between man and his soul, man persuading his soul to forego attachment to things visible and created in favour of the unique love of the invisible Bridegroom. The first loves must be taken to Him as an engagement ring set with precious stones: "If you delight in these things, delight in them as subjects as things that do you service, as gifts, the betrothal-gift of your bridegroom". Man leads his soul onwards by playing upon her selfishness, for she does not relish loving one who is loved by all and being loved by Him as a unit in a vast concourse. The rest of creation and even wicked men are disposed of with an individualistic sweep that might surprise even our own subjective age: "As hearts were created, not for their own sake, but for man; so evil men do not live for their own sake, but for that of the good . . . The bad are allowed to live among the good, so that their company may be a source of exercise for the lives of good men . . . the good, seeing them deprived of divine grace and rushing through every dangerous path of vice, may learn what thanks they should return to their Creator for their salvation." He then shows how the One can be singly loved by all, and Himself singly love each; "single but not private; alone, yet not solitary; shared but not divided; common and singular; a single love of all and the whole love of each." The soul, therefore, chooses this Bridal love fired by the account of all that God has done to her in his personal love. And thus the soul begins to taste the fruits of love: "What is that sweetness which sometimes touches me when I recall him in my heart and so strongly and delightfully affects me that I begin to be, in a manner, estranged from my own self and withdrawn I know not whither." All this shows how very individualistic the Victorines could be despite their robust orthodoxy and their objective approach to truth. In this point of view Hugh's treatise has much in common with post-Reformation spirituality; a fact that deserves a detailed study.
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