

successful.

Anselm became Archbishop of Canterbury, and his life changed. The axis of Part III of the book is strung between the two poles of 'liberty' and 'obedience'; monastic and episcopal obedience; liberty in the Church and in the monastic community and of the Canterbury See and its primacy. The tone of the book subtly changes here, as does that of Anselm's own correspondence, so that we are perforce looking at Anselm's outer man as much as the inner. The heart of this section lies in the chapter on the *Cur Deus Homo*, the work of the early years of the Archbishopric, in which Anselm himself was struggling intellectually with exactly the issues of obedience and liberty, will, power and necessity in the context of his study of incarnation and redemption, with which he was confronted in practice in his life as Archbishop.

Eadmer now occupies Part IV, where he is joined by others among Anselm's friends and disciples who wrote themselves, or were in various ways mediators of his thought and influence. Here, too, is a discussion of the way in which Anselm's talk and sermons as well as his letters were gathered up and preserved. The final chapter sees Anselm balanced 'between two worlds', as, by historical change, he was, for after him the twelfth century schools were to flourish like young trees and grow into a forest and change the climate of thought.

Southern's interest in Anselm began in 1934 with an exploration of the possibility of editing his letters. This plan was abandoned because Schmitt's projected edition was to include the *opera omnia*. It is a fitting elegance that the story should end with an appendix covering the history of Anselm's letters, about which several mysteries remain unresolved. Anselm's disciples played a part in the making of the collections and in their transmission which is as yet clear only in outline. This is indeed work in progress and it lays a tempting project before some future scholar.

It is hard to know what to say in brief summary about the qualities of this book. It is immensely rich, a plum cake in which one is constantly finding some new ingredient by way of an insight or a piece of information. The reader need not agree at every point with conclusions drawn to find the whole incomparably satisfying. Perhaps the best compliment the book can be paid is to say that it has about it that air of *rectus ordo* and fittingness (*convenientia*) for which Anselm himself always strove; and above all, that it has a freshness which is perhaps its most remarkable achievement, encapsulating as it does fifty years of thought and work.

G.R. EVANS

**MYSTERIUM PASCHALE, THE MYSTERY OF EASTER, by Hans Urs von Balthasar, translated with an introduction by Aidan Nichols, OP, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1990.**

This work represents the English version of the long essay on the paschal mystery which Balthasar wrote for the multi-volumed theological encyclopedia *Mysterium Salutis* and which appeared in German in 1969. We should be extremely grateful to have this fine English translation, for it offers an English-speaking public one of the best introductions to 246

Balthasar's thought. There is no doubt that the cross stands in the centre of Balthasar's theology. Here in one volume the reader can get an overview of some of Balthasar's most important theological insights. Moreover, in this work we see Balthasar at his best; drawing upon his vast knowledge of the Fathers, appealing to the great ascetical writings of the Christian tradition, entering into dialogue with philosophers and men of letters, borrowing upon the mystical insights of his friend Adrienne von Speyr.

The book is structured according to the order of the three days of the Eastern triduum. But the author begins by treating a number of more general concerns which pivot around the central question of the relationship between the incarnation and the paschal mystery. Basing himself upon a host of patristic testimonies, Balthasar shows convincingly that the whole purpose of the incarnation is the death of the Lord on the cross. The reason for this is that the Word not only became flesh but took upon himself the condition of a sinner (*caro peccati*). Jesus would not have fully assumed our human condition if he had not descended into the depths of our alienation from God and redeemed this God-forsakenness from within. Another key concept which links together the incarnation and the paschal mystery is *kenosis*. The first self-emptying of the Logos in the incarnation is ordered to the second *kenosis* of the cross. For Balthasar John 1:14 and Phil 2:5–11 must be read as a unity. In discussing the problem of *kenosis* Balthasar does not shrink from facing the thorny question of God's immutability. He tries to steer a middle course between process theology with its changing God and the Thomistic doctrine of divine impassability. The paradox is that God is both able to remain himself and to suffer with us. For Balthasar this paradox can only be illumined (not explained) by situating it within the *kenosis* of the inner-trinitarian life where each of the divine persons does not want to be God without the others. Hence the Trinity itself involves a giving away of divinity without a surrendering of the divine essence. As he puts it, 'That essence is forever "given" in the self-gift of the Father, "rendered" in the thanksgiving of the Son, and "represented" in its character as absolute love by the Holy Spirit.' (p. viii)

Perhaps the most original dimension of Balthasar's treatment of Good Friday is his interpretation of the cross as divine judgment. Here Balthasar emphasizes the Old Testament witness to God's anger. Passages such as *Lev. 26:14–39* and *Deut. 28:15–68* can still arouse in the reader the sense of terror that Israel felt before the prospect of being definitively abandoned by its God. God cannot tolerate sin, since sin contradicts his holiness. Hence he casts sin out from his life. This judgment upon sin is exactly what befell Christ on the cross. Insofar as Jesus identified with sinners, God let his wrath fall upon him. But because Jesus persevered in his yes of obedience even in the midst of this God-forsakenness, the no of divine judgment was consumed in the yes of salvation.

Balthasar's treatment of Holy Saturday is no doubt one of the most original and at the same time controversial aspects of his theology. Clearly influenced by the intensive mystical experiences of Adrienne von Speyr, Balthasar interprets this mystery as Christ's solidarity with the hopelessness of hell. He appeals to Nicholas of Cusa who affirmed that on the cross Christ experienced the naked reality of sin, that is, hell itself, being cut off from God. The accent in Balthasar's treatment lies upon the helplessness of the

human Christ in being dead. He cannot save himself. He fully shares the impotence of the sinner in hell. In developing these ideas Balthasar manifests his courage as he fearlessly takes on the centuries-old interpretation of this mystery as a triumphal journey into the underworld to liberate those captive in Sheol. Balthasar does not hesitate to be iconoclastic and polemical when a central issue of Christian faith is at stake.

If the section on Holy Saturday is a dialogue between Balthasar, the Fathers and the great spiritual masters, the last chapter on the resurrection finds him in debate with the exegetes. Balthasar is often reproached for neglecting modern biblical criticism. This chapter is testimony, at any rate, that he is far from ignorant of it. The chapter is filled with references to the great commentators on the resurrection in our century: Barth, Bultmann, Koch, Marxsen, Schlier. Balthasar shows that he is aware of the exegetical problems and is by no means naive in dealing with the texts. He also spells out clearly the exegetical options, but more importantly, he shows that the real issues are pre-exegetical. Do we want to read the New Testament texts shackled by the world-view of modern historical criticism according to which the dead do not rise and no event can in principle transcend our spatial-temporal matrix or do we take the texts as they themselves ask to be read? Do we let ourselves be challenged by them? For Balthasar the resurrection is a meta-historical event which cannot be grasped by modern historical methodology. Thus it is not *historisch* in the scientific sense but it is *geschichtlich* in the sense that it impinges upon our history and gives that history sense by opening up its genuine future.

This brief overview of some of the highlights of this book should be enough to indicate its richness. Balthasar often deplored the chasm which has separated theology from spirituality since the end of the Middle Ages. This work bears marvellous witness to the fact that it is still possible to write on the central mysteries of Christian faith in a way which both challenges the intellect to think and invites the heart to pray.

JOHN O'DONNELL, SJ

**THE END OF ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY** by Robert Markus.  
*Cambridge University Press, 1990. Pp. 258.*

Professor Markus states his purpose in writing this book as being the study of 'the nature of the changes that transformed the spiritual horizons of the Christian world between around AD 400 and 600'; the investigation of 'the shift that took place during these centuries in the way Christians understood what was involved in following their Lord' (Preface, xii). His concern is almost exclusively with the western, Latin half of the Roman Empire and Christian Church. He sees change as a process (a very complex one, as the reader is soon made to realise) of what he calls 'de-secularisation, "a contraction in the scope that Christianity, or more precisely its educated clerical representatives and officials, allowed to the "secular"' (16). One could also call it, I suppose, a process of sacralisation; the sphere of the secular is turned either into the 'Christian', or its religious opposite, the 'pagan/idolatrous'.

The author's attention is not given evenly to the two centuries of his

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