

growing estrangement is documented from each party's point of view. Once ensconced in Nola Paulinus was on corresponding or personal terms with almost everyone of significance in the Latin Christian world. Professor Frensd treats his change of world as a paradigm of a form of escapism which contributed to the collapse of the West, a plausible if not a novel view; he tells the story well, if rather allusively, and has interesting things to say about Paulinus's influence in constructing a distinctively Christian poetic vocabulary.

Claudian is in a quite different league from the other writers treated in this book; an astonishing figure, an Egyptian Greek who attached himself to Stilicho, the power behind the Western throne, and in his patron's service composed the most effective and entertaining invective poetry in the Latin language. Professor Alan Cameron's essay does not add much to his brilliant

book on the poet, but it is invaluable to anyone who wants a glimpse into the methods of Claudian using all the resources and resonance of classical poetry to rewrite contemporary history or deflate, with dexterous and sometimes uproarious malice, an opponent of his patron.

To sum up, this is a useful book for those already interested in the period, sometimes stimulating and original, almost always readable, but the failure of most of the major actors on the literary scene to put in a personal appearance and the lack of a detailed framework within which to place the individual contributions will make it somewhat frustrating reading for the uninitiated, who would be well advised to read Peter Brown's *Augustine of Hippo* first if they want to get the full value of the many insights to be found in *Latin Literature of the Fourth Century*.

DUNCAN CLOUD

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS: SUMMA THEOLOGIAE Vol. xxxi: Faith Fourth Part (II IIae i-vii), by T. C. O'Brien. xxvi + 246 pp., 1974. £3.75. Vol. lvii: Baptism and Confirmation (IIII lxvi-lxxii), by J. J. Cunningham OP. xiv + 256 pp. 1975. £4. *Blackfriars*, London: *Eyre & Spottiswoode*; New York: *McGraw-Hill*.

The tractate on Faith is of special importance from the position which it holds at the beginning of the discussion of the theological and the cardinal virtues which are the subject of the *Secunda Secundae*, but also on account of the peculiarly paradoxical character which, in more than one respect, attaches to the virtue of faith itself. For faith, on which salvation depends, is an intensely and radically personal activity, yet, we are assured, it is a sheer grace of God, infused by him and not the product of human effort. Again, it is a kind of cognition, having God who is the first truth for its object, yet it is contrasted with the knowledge of God which we are promised in heaven; and, while it is alleged to be highly obscure, it is also alleged, in contrast to mere opinion, to be absolutely certain. Discussion has not been made easier by the fact that many New Testament scholars, from the time of the Reformation to the present day, have argued that the meaning that *fides* has come to hold in Latin theology is not identical with that held by *pistis* in the Pauline epistles. Furthermore, to many people today faith is thought of chiefly in the context of the problem of evil, and, while this

is a matter of which St Thomas was by no means negligent, he did not see fit to discuss it under the heading of the virtue of faith. Dr O'Brien has wisely confined himself to St Thomas's own topics and the result is impressive and illuminating. In the very ample footnotes which he has provided he shows himself to be amazingly widely acquainted with the relevant material, patristic, scholastic and modern; his comments on textual variants elucidate a number of obscurities. Throughout he keeps clear the distinction between the *fides quae* and the *fides qua creditur* and his four appendices emphasise this. And in his fully justified concern with correct belief he never forgets, any more than St Thomas did, that faith is in the end directed not upon propositions about God but upon God himself.

On p. 95, 1. 17, 'explicit' should be inserted before 'belief'.

The rites of Christian initiation have received a great deal of attention, both theoretical and practical, in recent years in most Christian communions, and not least in the Roman and Anglican, where the relation of Confirmation to Baptism poses a specially difficult problem. Since

the Thirteenth Century much light has been thrown on the thought and practice of the early Church and there has been so much reassessment of the authenticity and authority of many previously unquestioned documents that St Thomas's discussion of these two sacraments, for all its range and penetration, is in many respects outdated, though there is still a great deal that we can learn from it. Fr Cunningham has in fact performed his task very skilfully, and his notes, while interpreting and locating in their context points

in the *Summa* that modern readers may find obscure, contain frequent references both to recent historical and theological research and to the recent reform of the initiatory rites in the Latin Church. In six appendices Fr Cunningham and Fr Gerard Austin deal with some of these matters at greater length.

Both these volumes contain the usual glossaries and indices. The standard of production remains as high as ever, and the price-rise shows commendable restraint.

E. L. MASCALL

THE ALCOHOLIC, by B. McGuinness. *Catholic Truth Society*, London, 1974. 20 pp. 8p.

The subtitle of this pamphlet, *A Christian Approach*, is well justified. The author gives an enlightened account of alcoholism and the alcoholic, with admirable comment on the programme of Alcoholics Anonymous in relation to the Catholic tradition. Whether a besetting sin or not, alcoholism has world-wide acceptance as a disease for which there is no known cure, although it is effectively arrested a day at a time by no further intake of alcohol. Rather unfortunately, while rightly stating that there is no known cure (p. 9), here and there Fr McGuinness does use the term 'recover' or 'recovered' (e.g., pp. 10, 14). I am recovering, not recovered, spiritually awakened rather than converted.

The disease has been variously defined, but to reduce the stigma attached to it needs enough knowledge and education to make recognition possible. Skid-Row drinkers account for about 5 per cent of all alcoholics. The rest are sprinkled through all sectors of society—and help is more accessible for some sectors than for others. Skid-

Row is rock-bottom for some, but it is well to remember that for many rock-bottom is the point from which ascent starts, whether high or low in terms of deterioration.

I, myself, find the fellowship of A.A. provides the help where I could not help myself alone, and what doctors, psychiatrists and priests could offer separately is combined in the A.A. programme. Even so, although the programme does include spiritual approaches, it is not itself a substitute for Christianity. What Fr McGuinness has written here should help to inspire 'a healthy climate of opinion', through making people more aware that being a Catholic is no barrier to A.A. membership. Neither, though, is absence of any religious belief a barrier. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. Being a Catholic may not direct me towards A.A. On the other hand, I believe thoroughly following A.A.'s programme must inevitably make me a better Catholic than I am.

AN ALCOHOLIC ANONYMOUS