

In itself it was surely a gathering of his richly-endowed personality to the one source of diversity and multiplicity. The sign of this was the peace which flowed from him. Grabmann hits upon the happy phrase, '*Veritas et pax osculatae sunt*'; the monk and the schoolman met. Speculation as it must be, more could perhaps have been made of the development of this union. It does not consist simply in the fact that although no one was more continuously engaged in argument, no one was less argumentative than St Thomas, that the wide circles in which the slick of tongue delight to walk, led him always to the still centre. It is, above all, the most just symbol of his particular quality of soul. For that soul was uncontaminated by the things of this world, yet it was never an enclosed garden. It was more like an open plain stretching down to a limitless sea; complete receptivity. However it may seem from outside, there is about this a very special heroism. We do not know what price had to be paid for that intellectual synthesis that has dazzled later generations or for that more hidden one, no less remarkable though less remarked, that kept a man of the future so much a man of the past. We only know that he prayed often before the crucifix, for he often had difficulties. Perhaps those who, remembering how widely his mind had ranged, ponder the strange coincidence that the boy who grew up at Monte Cassino should die in the peace of the Cistercian cloister at Fossa Nuova, are in the best position to understand what a very full circle his life had come.

Of the present translation of Mgr Grabmann it only remains to say that it is very readable, though the book is produced with a hideous dust jacket showing an athletic St Thomas in a Dominican habit without a scapular. The frontispiece is also distinctly unworthy. The one notable fault in the text is the startling information that the biographer of St Anselm was Eadem.

A.S.

THE ASCENT TO TRUTH. By Thomas Merton. (Hollis and Carter; 18s.)

Before any reviewer opens the fire of his criticism on Thomas Merton's latest book, it is chastening for him to reflect how few there are who are writing for the public that he evidently attracts. It is a public sometimes on the fringe of the Church, sometimes having no obvious affinities with it, and perhaps predominantly American. The climate of its thought is so alien to an Englishman, born and bred in a very different culture, that he is somewhat at a loss to explain why that public buys the volumes that stream from Gethsemani nearly as fast as the newspapers. It scarcely seems credible that a net so widely cast will not draw in a good many fish, but with the ocean between a sound judgment and the evidence, one can only agree to speak at all if it is understood that what is said must necessarily be out of context.

*The Ascent to Truth* is an interesting book and, up to about half way through chapter eight, it is very nearly a good one. It is a short treatise on faith as the beginning and, in this world, the end of the spiritual life; faith seen, in fact, as St John of the Cross sees it, not simply as the mind's assent to a number of propositions, but as a veritable journey into the luminous darkness of God. Parts two and three of the volume are devoted to a not-very-systematic exposition of the doctrine of the great Carmelite mystic with special emphasis on the harmony of his teaching with that of St Thomas. There is a simplicity and unity of vision in the writing of the early chapters which carries one along, and a coolness and balance with regard to the rôle of speculative theology which makes a striking contrast to certain passages in *Elected Silence*. Suddenly, however, this refreshing simplicity departs. Instead of having his matter under his feet, the author has it about his ears. The change is marked by the incursion of scholastic technical language and frequent cautious glances at schools of thought which can have little meaning for anyone not already somewhat versed in these matters. How can an audience which genuinely needs the biographies of St Thomas and others, which are given at the end of the book, be expected to take phrases like '*ex necessitate medii*' in its stride? The resulting style is neither precise enough for the professional theologian nor plain enough for the beginner.

One cannot help feeling that the reason why the whole of the latter part of the book, which has its good passages, tends to fall to the ground, is that it is constructed on a false and unreal apologetic principle. The great doctors, St Thomas Aquinas and St John of the Cross, instead of being taken as norms of orthodoxy, are used rather like steam-rollers to flatten everything before them. Surely one has only to examine the development of the saints, who reach that union with God which is the desire of every true Christian, to discover not simply how alike they are, but how different? (The two doctors in question would make an excellent beginning.) They are those *par excellence* who find that the Lord has set their feet in a large room. Why is that when one has laid down *The Ascent to Truth* one finds oneself longing to hear something of the primitive mysticism of the monastic order to which, on the whole, Fr Merton displays such a consistent indifference? It is probably true to say that nowhere in his writing does he show more than an incipient understanding of the early Cistercians and, of the three occasions on which they are mentioned in the present book, two are disparaging. Yet if there is a single reason why the promise of the opening chapters is never realised this neglect provides it. William of St Thierry's *Mirror of Faith*, probably one of the most masterly works of the twelfth century, lay, as it were, at his elbow. Admittedly it

could not be so easily raped as the products of the high scholasticism can, but in its way it is a model of what Thomas Merton was endeavouring to do. *The Mirror of Faith* represents the synthesis of a mind deeply versed in the best that was available from East and West, the whole profoundly and prayerfully pondered, so that it emerges as something quite new. Nothing much less than this would have made possible the extremely worthwhile task that Fr Merton set himself. But it would, of course, have required much more time and meditation. A.S.

ST CYRIL OF JERUSALEM'S LECTURES ON THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS.

The Procatechesis and the Five Mystagogical Catecheses, edited by F. L. Cross (S.P.C.K.; 12s. 6d.)

The catecheses of St Cyril of Jerusalem are one of the treasures of ancient theological and pastoral literature, editions of which are unfortunately rare; the most recent, that of Dr Quasten, which was limited to the mystagogical catecheses, is now out of print and that in the *Sources Chrétiennes* series is still to come. Accordingly, many others besides Oxford students will be grateful to Dr Cross for this new edition.

In this work Dr Cross has published not only the mystagogical catecheses but the Procatechesis. Certain modifications, relatively few in number, have been made in the Greek text. It is a pity that the points on which the author differs from the Maurist text, reproduced in Migne, are not indicated in a note, since that is the text followed in Dean Church's translation, the one reprinted here.

Neither Greek text nor translation have any notes other than Scripture references. On the other hand, an excellent introduction, concise and at the same time showing a perfect awareness of the present state of these questions, frames the catecheses in their historical, doctrinal, doctrinal and liturgical setting. We should like to point out a few matters of detail: On p. xxvi Dr Cross treats with reticence the theory recently put forward according to which the anaphora used by Cyril did not include the account of Institution. It should be noted that Eastern Syrian liturgies did include this account in the fourth century, even if they lost it afterwards. This was shown by Dom Botte ('L'anaphore Chaldéenne des Apôtres' in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 1949, pp. 259-276). In the bibliography on the catechumenate it might perhaps have been useful to mention Dom Pierre de Puniet's article 'Catechuménat' (*Dict. d'Archéol. chrét. et de Lit.*, t. II, 1910) which remains fundamental.

Dr Cross supports the authentically Cyrillian authorship of the mystagogical catecheses disputed some years ago by Dr Swaans. In our opinion he is right in thinking that the question is not yet finally settled, but the convergence between Dr Swaans' arguments and the indications of liturgical history make the attribution of these catecheses to John of Jerusalem very probable.