

REVIEWS

Church and St. Thomas. But who will not gain much from a simple, concise and pleasing explanation in the vernacular of the great scholastic arguments of the Doctor of the Schools? The scholar, even if he gains no new light, may yet learn much from a very able effort to teach even the smallest children of God to understand as much as may be of their ineffable Father.

The arrangement is very clear, and each chapter is headed by a summary of its contents. With regard to the theology, the writer usually follows St. Thomas, but frequently gives as an alternative the explanations of other theologians, especially of the Franciscan school. Sometimes this added illustration or alternative may be very helpful, but there are other occasions when it seems to me that the writer would have been clearer if he had not tried to unite the explanations of the two schools (e.g., p. 134). This however does not detract from the general value of the work. Especially commendable—and in this we Thomists might often learn from the Franciscans—is the deep reverence and devotion which inspires the writer's treatment of his subject throughout the work. From the apologetic point of view, readers will welcome the very lucid summary of the Scripture arguments for the Dogma.

The cheapness of the work perhaps excuses the number of printer's errors (e.g., p. 62, "preparatory feast" for "preparatory fast"; and the very strange Greek and Latin words which appear on pp. 145 and 170!). The translation is good, but I think Dr. Miller has occasionally regretted that English cannot express our theology so happily as French.

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CATECHETICS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. By R. G. Bandas, Ph.D., S.T.D. et M. (Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee; British Agent, E. J. Coldwell; 6/6.)

"Never did man speak like this man": the Personality of Christ is the golden background for the teaching office of the Church even to its minutest workings, the golden background above whose value and diffusive power for good no human thing can rise, on which all dogma rests, from which it overflows, communicating life through the minds and wills of men, and to which it returns, taking mankind with it to the Source—the Father.

Such is the inspiration of the Christian catechist—the word has no provincial but a cosmic connotation—and to it he turns through prayer and suffering, for the word which he must teach, the word containing and communicating life.

But the Christ of his inspiration is not the Christ of the featureless ikon. It is rather the reality of the crucifix—the living Personality of the Gospels, the Son of Man, our Brother, in

whose Messianic teaching office the catechist finds himself a participant, even in the minutest details, to which therefore he conforms his ideas, words, and actions, as wilful images of the one pattern. He scrutinizes every mood of his Master, His way of dealing with every situation, His method of teaching in each context: he appeals to the psychological background of his hearers and finds common ground in the Messianic hopes, apologetic validity in the tradition of prophecy (p. 6), a familiar point of departure for his contrasts (p. 8). He fires enthusiasm and attention by pointed and intimate questions, encourages discussion, and avoids all mechanical or labour-saving devices, leaving memorizing as the mere finishing touch to the vital process of apprehension and assent (p. 18). Above all he works upon the "apperceptive masses" of his hearers, interweaving the word of his preaching into the intimate personal life of each one. He knows "what is in men," and distributes to each according to the power of receiving. And where capacity is inadequate to the new form of operation he prepares the way by building up the "apperceptive masses" themselves, as Jahve prepared the minds of men for the Eucharist by a multitudinous network of Eucharistic types and symbols in the Old Testament and, indeed, in the very nature of human things (p. 24).

Such is the thesis and its development. The second part of the book is an analysis, and an approach to a synthetic outline, of the Pauline catechesis. St. Paul is a determination of what is said in the thesis: "The mainspring and sustaining power of all his activity was his supernaturally infused love of Christ. In fact, Paul became wholly fascinated with the Person of Christ . . . the powers which were once used for the ravaging of the Church were now enlisted for the upbuilding of Christ's mystic body." This is the psychological explanation, on the human side, of the inspired unity and coherence of his theology. Given the one sign, "Christ Jesus, and the whole Christ is there, mankind—his Mystical Body—and all that men shall contribute—dogma and all theology."

The appendix on Augustine is a corollary. The introduction of his "philosophy of history" in this context is most interesting, and the catena of fathers whose approach is the same, shows once more the self-consciousness of the Church for her cosmic vocation—she is no party but a life, no institution but a body, working, suffering—and thinking.

The luminous background of valid philosophy is apparent throughout the book. But expressions such as "erotematic method," "apperceptive masses," "nonfunctional memory loads," require definition in a work of universal applicability.

The material disposition of the book is excellent. The format is attractive, although Mr. Coldwell's rubber stamp would be better elsewhere than on the title page.

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