

sarily much wider knowledge of Aristotle's thought in its own proper contemporary setting, would generally be disinclined to accept as representing his real intentions. But on the whole there can be no doubt that the Commentary not only intends to be, but succeeds in being, an accurate exposition of the text, and one which modern students of the original are very ill advised to neglect (the greatest modern Aristotelian scholars do not). St Thomas was clearly determined that his judgment on and use of Aristotle should be based on the closest, most accurate, and most dispassionately objective, knowledge possible to him: and in nothing is he more worthy of imitation. He shows himself, as always, a thinker who respects other people's minds enough to make him want to know the exact truth about them as far as possible. This of course means that we shall not acquire a full and adequate understanding of his own thought about the soul of man from the Commentary. For that we must go elsewhere.

The volume is one of a series entitled 'Rare Masterpieces of Philosophy and Science', whose exact purpose is rather difficult to see. The books appearing in it are scholarly and well edited translations of works which are not easily accessible and in themselves important. But the price and the difficulty of the subject-matter will in most cases put them out of the reach of the general reader, and the fact that the original texts are not printed and the absence of any extensive commentary will greatly reduce their usefulness for the specialist scholar (one cannot hope to gain any real understanding of a philosophical text by reading it only in translation). They will probably have a career of limited usefulness in university and public libraries as source-books for moderately advanced students in the various disciplines concerned with the history of ideas. But within the limits imposed by the general pattern of the series the work in the present volume has been admirably done. The translation of Moerbeke's version and St Thomas's commentary is accurate and readable, and reasonably free from neo-scholastic jargon: and Fr Ivo Thomas's 24-page introduction provides much valuable help towards the understanding of the text.

A. H. ARMSTRONG

SATAN. (Sheed and Ward; 30s.)

A book of five hundred pages, written by thirty-two people, is not to be lightly reviewed; but perhaps this is the only way to do it, short of taking the whole of an issue of BLACKFRIARS and engaging several theologians to do it justice. This book is the result of one of those inestimably valuable annual Conferences sponsored by *Études Carmélitaines*, translated from the French, but with additions and emendations.

A bright red cover hides under a jacket on the front of which is Blake's Lucifer—a lovely drawing—and on the back a terrifying

modern picture: 'Satan self-bestialised' by Van Roenberg. The whole production is certainly a credit to the publishers. The choice of pictorial illustration, too, is most striking: twenty-four plates which range from the archetypes and gods of many religions to the surrealists. They have certainly done the Devil proud.

In the chapter on 'the Devil in Art' I was particularly impressed by the resemblance shown between Aztec bas-reliefs and those of some ancient Chinese religions: fragments of broken labyrinths, arabesques without unity, gods of violence and disorder. This 'demonic element' the author finds reappearing in some negro heads and in some of the work of Picasso.

It is this 'chaotic discontinuity', these 'leering puzzles', which are found in the subject of the repellent yet fascinating story which the book unfolds. The masks under which Satan appears in story are infinitely diversified; they range from the comic devils of medieval mysteries to the dull brute munching and munching in Dante's hell; the intelligent tragic Satan of Milton; the 'seedy little gentleman' of Dostoevsky; the 'boredom of eternal sin' of Baudelaire.

What of the Devil himself; the Devil of theology? I cannot pretend to be able to read much of this (the book anyway is one to dip into), but I was struck by the chapter entitled 'The Fallen Angel'. It seeks for the psychological reasons why Christians today are unable to give real, as distinct from notional, assent to the idea of a personal devil. The objections we raise are addressed not to the real object of that belief but to an image which is so twisted as to have become a caricature, a phantom. We forget that that Satan is essentially an Angel, though a fallen one, kept in being by God, because the very notion of Angels has become so dim. We tend to set up a dualism which opposes the Prince of Darkness as a sort of rival of the God of Light.

Again, he is not a Personality like God, or in the sense that an individual is a person; comparable, perhaps, but not the same as either. He is a hostile intelligence but one with no power over the will, that can only act through the 'sensible' part of man. He is indeed 'ambiguity incarnate; we never know which mask it is that hides him'.

The chapters on the pathology of Satanism, possession and other diabolical manifestations, seem to me less satisfactory. There is a chapter on Jeanne Frey, a remarkably unpleasant 'possessed' nun of the sixteenth century. At the end of it the question is asked: 'was it a mystery of diabolical cleverness, or one of feminine psychology? It may be that it was both at once.' Again the doubt, the mystery, the ambiguity.

So we come to the history of satanism; to the sixteenth century, its witch-hunts and faggots: such unsavoury annals of our poor race that

the reviewer had to read a few pages of Jane Austen as an antidote before bedtime.

But we have yet to face, in the last chapters, the satanic era of our day; the 'Death of God' prophesied by Nietzsche; the Waste Land; the streamlined horror of genocide. It is well to be reminded, in the Introduction, that fundamentally the condition of the Christian soul is one of triumph: 'Take courage, for I have overcome the World'.

PARACELSUS. Selected writings, edited by Jolande Jacobi. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 25s.)

With Paracelsus, we are back in the sixteenth century: in a kind of murky twilight blending with a dusky dawn. It is a world of half-science, of new wine fermenting in old bottles. The figure of this physician who is also philosopher, astrologer, alchemist, typifies most vividly that epoch of Faustian conflict between old and new. He was a good man, searching for truth in every possible cranny of this strange world. He kept his faith through all the aberrations of pseudo-science which for him were reflections of the Truth.

The book is a selection from the voluminous writings, and must have entailed an immense labour from the author-editor. It is copiously illustrated with woodcuts, which have too the peculiar quality of that epoch.

C.B.

CHRISTIANITY AND PAGAN CULTURE. By M. L. W. Laistner. Cornell University Press. (Geoffrey Cumberlege; 20s.)

SANCTI AURELII AUGUSTINI SERMONES SELECTI DVODEVIGINTI. By D. C. Lambot, O.S.B. (Spectrum: Utrecht-Brussels; 6.25 Dutch guilders.)

SAINT AUGUSTINE: LETTERS. Vol. I (1-82). Trans. by Sister Wilfrid Parsons, S.N.D. (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc.)

TERTULLIAN: Apologetical Works. MINUCIUS FELIX: Octavius. Trans. by Rudolph Arbesmann, O.S.A., Sister Emily Joseph Daly, C.S.J., and Edwin A. Quain, S.J. (Fathers of the Church, Inc.)

Dr Laistner's book is made up of three lectures delivered at the University of Virginia, together with an English translation of St John Chrysostom's *Address on Vainglory and the Right Way for Parents to Bring up their Children*. It was a happy thought to make the complete text of the *Address* available in English, and the translation, which is lively and careful, deserves the attention of anyone concerned with education. It is not only historically interesting, sometimes amusing, but full of shrewd practical advice. The pages on how to teach Scripture to children are especially worth attention for their sound psychology.

The text of Chrysostom is a relevant appendix to the lectures, which are concerned not so much with pagan culture in general as with