

exposition (this begins with Plato, Aristotle, Philo and Plotinus and goes on to the Christian Alexandrians, Augustine and Gregory the Great), the controversies about acquired contemplation, the theological aspect of contemplation, the relation between the Christian life *in via* and *in patria*, and the nature of the apostolate.

All the volumes follow the prescribed pattern of Introduction, Latin text with English translation *en face*, footnotes, appendices, glossary and index, and they maintain the high standard set by their predecessors.

E. L. MASCALL

THE DESERT A CITY. An introduction to the study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism. by Derwas J. Chitty. *Blackwells*. 42s. pp. 181.

Father Chitty writes with love and understanding of Eastern Monasticism between the fourth and the sixth centuries. It is a subject that he has studied for forty years. His book consists of nine lectures beginning with one entitled 'The Call' which deals with monastic origins and ending with one 'A High Mountain Apart' on the Abbey at Sinai. The last chapter is particularly perceptive and appealing. The book is only intended as an introductory sketch and there are many problems that Father Chitty has left untouched. Granted that some forms of monasticism were already rooted in first century Judaism why is there no evidence for it in the Judaeo-Christian Church of the second century? How far was there continuity between the ideals of the Christian solitary and of the pagan ascetic? Granted that Monachism in Cappadocia took an essentially Hellenic form and that in the pilgrimage centres round Jerusalem it was in some fashion international, how rapidly did it become Coptic in Egypt? and Syriac in Syria? How far did such cultural differentiations affect the organization of monastic life as well as its ideals?

These should be central themes for some other book. Father Chitty is primarily concerned with the highest common factors of early eastern monasticism. He writes that 'one thread alone can give our story its true meaning - the search for personal holiness, the following of the Lord Jesus whether in the solitary cell or on the

abbot's seat or in all the menial works of the monastery'. He illustrates this admirably through anecdotes and sayings. There was, of course, another side to this monastic history, to which he only refers as he passes; Monks racked by unceasing lusts, that were perhaps the sequel to their asceticism, a sporadic obsession with homosexuality, an emphasis on the recitation of the Divine Office which turned easily into deadening formalism. Yet it is true that some of the early eastern monks remain among the most appealing of all Christian saints. Perhaps this was due primarily to two ideals; that of the naked following of a naked Christ and that of the love of God and of men as a single virtue.

Generations of students have utilized the 'Documents illustrative of the History of the Church' published by the late Dr B. J. Kidd in 1923. This¹ will replace its second volume. Though based on it, the extracts are longer, more numerous and better annotated. Once again it would be a good introduction to the use of original sources and could be a dangerous substitute. There seems to be an undue predominance of extracts dealing with the West and in spite of the title the subject seems to be Church history rather than the history of doctrine. Still the documents dealing with the development of the Christological controversy seem admirably selected. And essentially this book is an anthology and every anthology can be criticized.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

¹CREEDS, COUNCILS AND CONTROVERSY, edit. J. Stevenson, *S.P.C.K.* 45s.

ROMAN STATE AND CHRISTIAN CHURCH. 3 Volumes, by P. R. Coleman-Norton. *SPCK*, London, 1966. 9½ guineas the set.

These three volumes, published by the S.P.C.K. but the work of an American scholar from Princeton University, pose one immediate problem: it is difficult to know for what sort of reader they are intended, in what category they fall. On the one hand, their content is specialised, consisting exclusively of ordinances emanating from the emperor (6 documents dating from before the Edict of Galerius in 311, stopping the

persecution of Christians, the Edict of Galerius itself, 4 transitional documents before Constantine's ordinance of 313 declaring general freedom of conscience and applying this to the practice of the Christian faith, 155 documents from the period between 311 until the edict *Cunctos Populos* of 380 making the Church in the empire the Church of the empire, and the rest of the 652 documents from between 380 A.D. and