

Coventry Patmore's writings on 'woman', 'love' and 'marriage' can be fully understood only by some knowledge of the Aristotelean-Thomist philosophy which he held, particularly of the metaphysical truths and analogy. Years of meditation combined with a poet's insight gave him the vision usually called 'mystical' into these truths. Though he never mentions the 'Actus' and 'Potentia' of Aristotelean metaphysics, he saw them as the principles of all things created, as the basis of their union with each other and with God. As a poet he used the concrete term 'women' for the abstract idea of potentiality because he saw in the female the perfect embodiment of that principle. Wherever there is union between creatures, or between a creature and God, there is 'act' and 'potency': there is the 'giving' and 'receiving' of Divine Love and of its distant but true analogy of human love. For Patmore the physical union of the sexes further exemplified the principle but was negligible and not essential to human love. On page 149 he plainly states this to be, as St Thomas says, an 'accidental perfection' of marriage. It is in his wonderful poem named 'The Child's Purchase' that we see best what the terms 'woman', 'love', 'marriage', meant to him.

DAVID DONOHUE, O.P.

OUR SAVIOUR AND HIS LOVE FOR US. By Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. Translated by A. Bouchard. (B. Herder Book Co.; 45s.)

This English rendering of Père Garrigou-Lagrange's great book on the spirituality of the Incarnation and Redemption is a truly magnificent volume for which ordinary reader and critic alike can offer only praise and thanksgiving. The translator has done his work efficiently and artistically, combining clarity and fidelity to the original with a style not lacking in distinction and the qualities of good prose. He has been careful, too, in the footnotes, to refer to existing English translations of the French works mentioned by the author, and this will be greatly appreciated by those to whom the originals are not accessible.

Readers of Père Garrigou-Lagrange's other well-known books on the spiritual life will remember how the author's eminent mastery of Thomist theology was brought to bear on the subject of Christian perfection and contemplation; here they will find that same learning serving as the foundation upon which are built 'Elevations'—the word is suggested by an inevitable comparison with Bossuet's classic—on the mysteries of our Lord's Incarnation and his redemptive Passion and Sacrifice. For many years the author has explained to theological students St Thomas's treatise on the Incarnation; here, however, he is addressing specially souls that are seriously striving to live the life of the Spirit, and so, while in no way departing from the scientific precision of the schools, his manner of approach has become informed

with a quality of persuasiveness directed towards the heart, to love, as well as towards the mind, to understand.

The book, which is divided into two parts, runs to nearly four hundred pages, and ends with an illuminating chapter on 'The Grace of Christ and the mystics outside the Church'.

In the first part, entitled 'The Mystery of the Incarnation and the Personality of the Saviour', the mystery of Christ is considered in its bearing on our interior life; the teaching of the Synoptics, St Paul and St John on the personality of Jesus are discussed in turn, and finally we are given a synthesis of Catholic doctrine on the holiness, the knowledge, and the human will of our Saviour.

In Part Two, the love of God for man is contemplated in the light of the mystery of Redemption. Here again is adduced the witness of the gospels and St Paul. There are chapters on the Prayer, and the Priesthood of Christ, one of great beauty on 'The Peace of Jesus during his Passion', on his victory over death, on the Eucharist and the liturgical sacrifice, and our participation thereby in the mysteries of our Lord's life.

There is, in these pages, such a firmness of doctrine expressed with such simple lucidity that it may be doubted whether our time has seen anything to equal it on the same perennial theme. The chapter on mystics outside the Church, referred to above, deals however with technical problems (it already appeared as an article in *Études Carmélitaines*, October 1933, under the title: *Natural Pre-mysticism and Supernatural Mysticism*), and so, despite its interest, seems somehow out of place in the present volume.

DESMOND SCHLEGEL

THE QUEEN'S DAUGHTERS: A Study of Women Saints. By C. C. Martindale, S.J. (Sheed and Ward; 12s. 6d.)

Father Martindale has written a grand survey of the women saints in two hundred pages, beginning with the earliest martyrs and ending with St Francesca Cabrini. It is an immense list that he rattles through, sometimes so breathlessly that one is left behind not quite sure whether the saint in hand has yet been converted from the world, when lo! she is already in the mission field. But in its way his very speediness contributes to the force of the story and he contrives in his brief accounts to summon up figure after figure, now some great historic saint like St Catherine of Siena, now one from 'the hidden layer' such as Marie Teyssonier of Valence. He introduces us to very many saints who will be unknown to all except the most learned of his readers and whose work and character may be a revelation to many. It is tantalising, however, that only in a very few cases does he give references to further reading, to satisfy the interest which he arouses.