

that in any case charity must supply the defects of justice, who shall blame him?

It is, however, a little difficult to know for whom this book was written. It is not easy to read and has much of the apparatus of a learned work. If it is to reach the poor souls who need it, its thesis must be more boldly uttered and more clearly expressed. J.D.C.

JEAN MOSCHUS: *Le Pré Spirituel*. Introduction et Traduction de M.-J. Rouët de Journal, S.J. (Editions du Cerf: Blackfriars Publications; 11s.)

The latest volume in the *Sources Chrétiennes* series is devoted to an author too little known in this country. Born about 540, Moschus became a monk at the monastery of St Theodosius, near Jerusalem. Later he retired to the laura of Pharan, in the desert of Judah, where he spent ten years. From 578 until his death (which probably took place in 619) Moschus travelled the length of Palestine, Syria and Egypt with his inseparable companion Sophronius. His purpose was to gather all the existing monastic traditions of the Christian East, and at the end of his life he retired to Rome where he collected the fruit of his investigations into one volume, *The Spiritual Meadow*, which may, in the form we know it, be largely arranged by Sophronius.

'I find the sight of meadows in springtime full of delight with all their variety of flowers capturing our attention.' Thus begins this charming record of the monks of Sinaia and Egypt who have brought spiritual flowers to bloom in unlikely places. Moschus's method is a simple one. He is a storyteller, and his accounts of his heroes—their lives, their virtues, their eccentricities as well as their ascetical teaching—have a fidelity which is irresistible. He is not a moralist, he draws no conclusions. He has no need to do so, for the men and events he describes speak for themselves, revealing a life of heroic austerity as well as one often of all too human weakness. Here are prodigies of renunciation together with delightful domesticities; and over all is the sense of a vocation at its most absolute, providing at every turn a reminder that the search for the *unum necessarium* must be the permanent preoccupation of all Christians.

In a magnificent introduction, Père de Journal emphasises not only the documentary importance of Moschus's work but its relevance. We are taken back to a world that is fresh and even naive, and we can join with the author, when he remarks at the end of his last story—'A Lesson in Humility'—in saying, 'Greatly edified, I gave glory to the Father, the Son and to the Holy Ghost, to whom are due glory and honour world without end'. I. E.

THE GREAT LOVE. By the Very Rev. Thomas A. Canon Wright. (The Word Press; 8s. 6d.)

Canon Wright lets us know without mincing words to what a mediocre state we have come, castigates vigorously the peculiar

lukewarmness—supported by concrete examples and adequate statistics—of our time and in the light of the Encyclical on the Mystical Body urges the adoption of the only possible remedy: We are saved by his Passion we shall only get out of our present *impasse* by sharing in it as co-redeemers—with obvious limitations, but after the pattern of Mary and permitting nothing but the inescapable limits to restrict our ardent charity. It is both practical and illuminating as may be expected from the author's long experience of Catholic activities and his earlier books. But one could have wished that he had said more about the necessity of solid instruction and the duty it imposes on his fellow priests. He does indeed mention 'the confraternities now established in parishes, the one for the teaching of doctrine as applied to the Christian life, the other in honour of our Lord in his most holy Sacrament'; but the fact is that the Christian doctrine confraternity is not established in numerous parishes—it ought to be, but it is not. And neglect of instruction is such that there are many who would have greatly profited by this book, but who will be unable to appreciate many of its most telling and comparatively simple points.

EDWARD QUINN.

GOD AND GOODNESS. By J. W. C. Wand, P.C., D.D., Bishop of London. (Eyre and Spottiswoode; 5s.)

This is a kindly book. Dr Wand addresses himself to the modern world in terms expressive of his own wide sympathies, calculated to obtain a fair hearing for the lessons he wishes to inculcate. Scientists, humanists, politicians and 'bright young things' are treated with respect, and offered a simple dosage of warm approval mingled with gentle remonstrance. There is nothing of brutality in his presentation of Christian doctrine. God is described as 'so richly personal that we cannot speak of him as a Person, but only under the figure of multiple personality'. In the same spirit, many problems of morality are dealt with by reference to the 'mind of Christ', without mention of the Ten Commandments.

Doubtless, Christianity is a powerful force in politics, in social life, both national and international, in the field of culture and education, in the sanity it confers on the mind and whole personality of the individual; but the very use of such arguments, lends support to the not uncommon idea of Christianity as a utility, an element of life, a department of state. There is all the difference in the world between the approval of an infant for its parents, and a benevolent uncle's patronage of a favoured nephew.

ROMUALD HORN, O.P.

CHRISTMAS IN THE VILLAGE SQUARE. By Henri Ghèon. Translated by Sr Marie Thomas, O.P.

The original of this little play must be a superb piece of spontaneity and freshness. A strolling band of gipsies, camping in the village square on Christmas Eve, find themselves the centre of a group of interested spectators, and decide to perform an extempore