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say that "Mary is our Co-Redemptrix in the sense that, with Christ and under Christ, she paid the ransom which freed us from the captivity of sin and made the realm of grace accessible to mankind." (p. 89.) Perhaps this thesis has been wisely left aside for one which is easier to explain, though we do not feel convinced that the reasons raised against it are unanswerable. There is for instance a similar seeming identification of cause and effect in the truth that salvation is gratuitous whilst not unmerited. Again it is possible to distinguish between Mary's redemption and ours without considering the price as already paid. Indeed it might be urged that it is precisely this supra-temporal aspect of divine efficacy which made it possible for Our Lady to collaborate with her Son in paying the price of redemption. This is not however to say that she added something to the price paid by the Redeemer. It is therefore prudently concluded that "in the absence of convincing reasons for maintaining that Mary's merit-atonement was able, even subordinately, to contribute to the price of Redemption; indeed in the presence of an objection to that view which cannot easily be solved, it would seem that we must assign to her co-redemptive activity of essentially the same order as that which belongs to the other members of the mystical body; that is to say, she merited that the fruits of Christ's redemptive act should be applied to her soul and to the souls of others." (p. 100.) This however does not prevent our Blessed Lady from being uniquely associated with that Life, Passion, and Death which were the universal cause of Redemption. Since her role was so unique we venture to suggest that only by analogy can co-redemption be assigned to her and to others.

From what little we have been able to say of this book it may be gathered that it is a most excellent contribution to a clearer understanding of the Mother of God, who is so uniquely associated with the sacrificial purpose and will of her Divine Son.

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS. By Bede Frost. (Hodder & Stoughton; 18s.)

St. John of the Cross remains among the greatest and the most enigmatic of Catholic mystics. Heroic in his following of Christ, subtle in his human psychology, supreme as a poet, he was to be first officially interpreted by 17th century scholastic controversialists who were not psychologists nor poets and were perhaps not saints. The acrid controversy on *contemplatio acquisita*, the emphatic resolve to dissociate Mount Carmel from Illuminism, the desire for an alliance with a dominant theological faction,

all coloured the first popularisation of his doctrine in the schools. It is not an unmixed advantage that the tradition of his teaching has stayed unbroken for, in corollary, the thought of Philip of the Holy Trinity and Thomas of Vallgornera still lie between the modern Catholic theologian and the *Living Flame*.

It is the purpose of the present volume to directly utilise St. John's doctrine in a handbook of practical spirituality; "the aim of the present writer is to present the Saint's own teaching with as little reference as possible to that of other spiritual writers, an over-abundance of which has at times obscured it" (p. 324). It is precisely this independence of approach that gives the attempt an especial interest. The eighteen chapters form a complete survey of St. John's thought and are characterised by clear prose and clear insight. The standard of accuracy is notable; John of Baconthorpe seems to be referred to as John Bacon on p. 130 and there is an untenable generalisation on Spanish mysticism on p. 22, but these are mere slips. The planning of the volume is admirable and there is the sobriety of thought and deep sense of spiritual values which we have come to expect from the author.

Yet both the purpose and the method have their inevitable defects. Because the study is so practical in intention it remains ascetical rather than mystical in temper; the ecstatic and prophetic element in St. John's thought seem minimised. Because the theological controversies have been ignored the author's own comments ring at times almost superficial. This is most noticeable in his treatment of the relations of meditation to contemplation. It might seem that the theses of PP. Arintero and Garrigou Lagrange were judged from their naive summary by Abbot Butler. And though the author writes so often as a Thomist there is no evidence that he is acquainted with the greatest of Thomist mystical theologians, John of St. Thomas and P. Gardeil. While precisely since St. John is considered apart from his commentators there is too little sense of period. It may be advisable to consider the *Spiritual Canticle* or the *Ascent* without relation to the controversies of 17th century disciples; it is perhaps impossible to understand them apart from the half-orientalised underworld of Renaissance Spain.

The only source of St. John's teaching that is analysed in detail is the *Summa*. Possibly as a source it is emphasised unduly. It has long been clear that an adhesion to the Carmelite school may be reconciled with Thomism and that even the accepted stratification of the States of Prayer can be rendered theologically intelligible by an application of the doctrine of the Gifts. But the extent to which St. John was consciously Thomist

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remains problematic. It is obvious that his faculty theory presupposes the eclectic scholasticism of his time and that his theory of knowledge was indomitably Realist. But his conception of the role of *Intellectus* in contemplation, the lack of explicit references to the Gifts and his emphasis on memory as a separate faculty all seem to suggest either unfamiliarity or disagreement with the Thomist mystical tradition. The author has himself made reference to the testimony of Fray Juan Evangelista "I never once saw him read any other books than the Bible, St. Augustine, *Contra Hæreses* and the *Flos Sanctorum*."

Yet though the frequent references to the *Summa* may not be always relevant to a study of St. John of the Cross they serve to emphasise the lucid sobriety of approach which gives this volume its chief value.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

SYNOPSIS LATINA QUATTUOR EVANGELIORUM SECUNDUM VULGATAM EDITIONEM. Ioannes Perk, Sal. Soc. Sac. (Coldwell; 5s. 6d.)

To be well versed in the Vulgate is an essential part of a liberal Catholic education. And it is not its famous quality of "authenticity" that makes this version so remarkably important. In point of authenticity it is a second-best thing, a substitute: for whereas the original text of the Scriptures is authentic absolutely and *per se* (its canonicity once established), the authenticity of the Vulgate rests on its substantial faithfulness to that original. Nor is it as a Latin version of the Scriptures, nor again as being a translation stamped by the genius of St. Jerome that the Vulgate attains its quite special cultural importance. The determining fact is that the Vulgate—this "vetus et vulgata editio, quae longo tot saeculorum usu in ipsa Ecclesia probata est" of which the Council speaks—presents that text of the Scriptures in terms of which the Church has chiefly hammered out, evolved, enunciated her doctrine and also expressed her feelings. It is a sacred shrine that has grown ever richer in being plundered by her. To read in the Vulgate with the Church is an important way of coming to know her mind and her fancy.

Of the book that has here to be noticed, it has to be said in its disfavour that it supplies no more than the very minimum prescribed by its undertaking. That is to say, it provides the text of the Vulgate gospels—according to the Clementine edition—in parallel synoptic form. The synoptic arrangement itself is merely conventional, presented without anything of conviction or enthusiasm. The accessories of the work—the data and dicta