

ance, the utter necessity of divine love. Their eyes are held. They are shrouded in a web of their own fancies, desires, impulses and weaknesses. They are distracted by distraction unto distraction, torn asunder by a faction of warring fears and anxieties. How can they see God when they lack that single-mindedness which cuts through all entanglements? Because they fail to see, they fail to desire and love; because they are blind to God's beauty, they feel no attraction towards his love. They lie pinioned to the earth. The bonds that fetter them are made of gossamer, easily broken and thrown aside, but because they have no faith, they are without strength. For it is faith that digs the foundation of love. Faith is the knowledge that breeds desire. Faith sees things from the divine viewpoint: it gazes on the universe with the eyes of God: it looks out from the centre of eternity, so that everything in time falls and moves infallibly into its appointed place. Thus, divine love fills the forefront of the soul's vision and all else recedes into the void of immeasurable distance. But who have this penetrating gaze of faith? Who are imbued with this desire and this love? Only the maidens, the children at heart, the innocent. The self-seekers, the worldly wise, the complacent and the pharisaic 'seeing, see not' (Matt. 13, 13).



## REVIEWS

A STUDY IN ST MARK. By Austin Farrer. (Dacre Press; 25s.)

The Church's children have for centuries venerated the Holy Scriptures, and they will do so to the end of time. But why do we call them 'holy'? Because through these Scriptures 'holy men of God spoke, borne along by the Holy Ghost' (2 Pet. 1, 21); because the Scriptures contain holy truths, and finally because they are a powerful means of generating holiness of life (St Thomas, *in Rom.* 1, lect. 2). The Scriptures are a library of books of different epochs, origins, authorship, literary build-up, language, etc. Yet all these books are one in that they are inspired scripture. Inspiration is the essence of scripture, the profoundly mysterious reason why these books are not as other books, even though to all outward appearances they may again and again appear as other books. Inspiration

is a mystery of faith, as mysterious as the doctrine of the most Holy Trinity or that of our Lord's presence in the Blessed Sacrament. The term or outcome of inspiration is a book, or part of a book, 'the very word of God given to the men under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost' (*Divino Afflante*).

The theologian approaches inspiration in a spirit of great faith, as he would consider other revealed truths, and strives first of all to have a true grasp of the revealed data on the subject, to get to know ever more perfectly what the Church has taught and sensed. Accordingly he will scan the Scriptures themselves (viewed as ancient documents), the utterances of the Fathers, the declarations of the Church. In this domain he will come upon much that is arresting and enlightening. He will note how St John Chrysostom, and St Augustine, compare scripture to a letter written from heaven; or again the human writer is compared to a harp or lyre, an instrument played upon by God . . . and so he continues, approximating more and more to the mind of the Church on the subject.

The next stage is to explore, as far as is humanly possible, the nature of inspiration, helping himself by what means he can. Thus he may consider in what sense God is an author; he may apply (as thomists will) the principles of instrumental causality to help to understand the dual authorship of the Sacred Books. But at the end of all this searching he will realise more and more that though inspiration is a social charism, or gratuitous gift of God, for the benefit of the Church generally or rather all humanity as destined to life eternal,<sup>1</sup> yet in itself it ever remains, in itself and in its permeating activity a transient impulse, profoundly hidden and mysterious, of which the author himself, more often than not, *need not be aware*.

But for Dr Farrer, St Mark was very much aware of his inspiration, and the fact that we can proceed at all is because 'we share St Mark's belief in St Mark's inspiration' (p. 8),<sup>2</sup> and further, Dr Farrer strives from the outset 'to grasp the process of St Mark's inspired thinking' (p. 9), 'for the control of the Spirit is visible and evident; it issues in precisely that shapening and patterning, that unfolding of symbol and doctrine, which the Gospel exhibits'. (p. 9.)

From these and like sentences we can only conclude that Dr Farrer is talking about something other than what we understand by inspiration.

For the rest, this 'Study in St Mark' is stimulating and refreshing, and an alert student could learn an immense amount from it just by following the argument and checking the references, text in hand. We are particu-

<sup>1</sup> *societas . . . secundum quod ordinatur ad finem vitae aeternae non potest conservari nisi per justitiam fidei cujus est initium prophetia. . . . (De Verit. XII, 3, ad 11.)*

<sup>2</sup> *cf. p. 53: 'Some inspired writers are conscious of inspiration or even seek it; and the sacred writers of the New Testament age were mostly such men.'*

larly grateful to Dr Farrer for rich typological suggestions, for an immense light thrown on the text in many places, and for treating St Mark as a unity.

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.

REVELATIONS OF DIVINE LOVE. By Julian of Norwich. Edited and introduced by Dom Roger Hudleston, o.s.b. (Orchard Series; Burns Oates; 16s.)

How can we reconcile the evil which follows from the abuse of the free will with the certainty of divine providence? This problem has fascinated philosophers in the past and it is today one of the most serious obstacles for many outside the Church in the acceptance of the Catholic faith. It is therefore most helpful to return to this great classic which shows such insight into this very question. It should be noticed that Mother Julian offers no easy solution, and unlike Origen, who conceived of suffering only as a purification leading towards a universal resurrection to glory at the end of history, she combines her firm faith in the providence of God with a recognition of the reality of eternal suffering in Hell.

She asks us to accept the thing in its true light as a mystery, which defies the capacity of the human reason to see in this life, but which must be accepted on faith without vision. 'The use of our reason', she writes, 'is now so blind, so low and so simple that we cannot know that high marvellous wisdom, the might and the goodness of the Blessed Trinity.' It is easy to dismiss this as a convenient way of avoiding a difficulty, but it is fundamental to the whole problem, and rests on the truth that our own conceptions of wisdom and justice can be applied to God only analogically. We inevitably reverse the true order of procedure and judge divine wisdom according to the faint reflection of it in our human intelligence, instead of understanding at the outset that our intelligence has the same kind of relation to divine wisdom as the human eye, in Dante's image, which sees clearly the depths of the sea from the shore, but further out can no longer see them. They are still there but are hidden from our sight. We try to judge the wisdom of God by what is only a created participation in his wisdom.

But once this necessary foundation is laid, Bl. Julian of Norwich gives us indications showing the direction towards which we should look for light. We are shown that the satisfaction made for the sin of Adam was more pleasing to God than that sin was harmful, and the conclusion follows: 'Since I have made well the most harm, then it is my will that thou know hereby that I shall make well all that is less'; it is the theme of the *felix culpa*. It is very significant, too, that she sees the unity between Adam and the whole human race. Adam is all mankind, and Christ, the second Adam, in taking flesh becomes all mankind.