

integrity (pp. 287 et sqq); that might well be an example of those who seem to place their 'virtue' above God himself. Moreover, one of the contributors goes to some length to warn us against the 'martyr of love' who derives a certain satisfaction from suffering, which can even develop into a kind of hankering for death (pp. 330 et sqq). Such people who seem to seek pain and suffering for its own sake do not manifest the perfect sign of true human freedom, but rather a return to some sort of compulsion arising from a psychological maladjustment. The great act of martyrdom by which all mankind was offered freedom was not the act of one who preached suffering and death for its own sake, but rather life, and that more abundantly.

One might ask in this context whether certain martyrs for the faith were not inspired by some type of 'enthusiasm' which had the nature of a compulsion, taken out of themselves by the exultation of the moment. It is possible in certain cases, and the authors of this volume are careful to show where this great act of Christian love and faith is fully and freely engaged. Another question in relation to modern martyrdom might also have been discussed in view of the diabolic methods of breaking down the personality and attacking the very will itself in current methods of torture. This question seems to have been passed by; yet it might have helped considerably in elucidating what is surely a very real problem to Christians when they read the 'confessions' of many men who have undergone the third-degree methods of the Russians.

Nevertheless the general trend of these three volumes seems to point to the fact that though the Christian subjected to all the modern attacks upon his freedom will continue to offer problems to those trying to enlighten and strengthen his conscience, the signs of the virgin and the martyr will serve to raise our eyes above the over-anxious scrutiny of men's hearts and show that the Christian's free act of love does in fact exist in every walk of life.

REVIEWS

THE LETTERS OF SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX. Newly translated by Bruno Scott James. (Burns Oates; 42s.)

The English reader will find here some principal sources of his knowledge, whether he be interested in St Bernard's healing of universal and local schisms, his invitation to the Crusade, his war against the heresies of Abelard, his discussion of monastic observance with Peter of Cluny, his urging St Ailred of Rievaulx to write the *Speculum Charitatis*, or a discourse of the love of God like that addressed to Prior Guy and his Carthusian brethren. In a work of over five hundred pages some faults and inaccuracies are to be forgiven. It is easy for the casual reviewer to spend

a few hours picking holes and listing mistakes in any book which has occupied much of a scholar's life and strength. These few paragraphs suppose that readers and the translator himself do not want another bouquet thrown in the path but welcome a serious review and a little constructive criticism.

It would be unjust to compare the English with that of Allison Peers's *Letters of Saint Teresa of Jesus*, for St Teresa's meaning can be preserved in good English far more more easily than St Bernard's. What is important is that we have the letters presented with fair accuracy. It was good to aim at a style neither archaic nor extremely modernised. God is rightly addressed as 'you' rather than 'thou', even though we find the two mixed ('I thank you, Father, . . . that thou hast hidden', etc., p. 221), and the verbs are not always accommodated ('You . . . who judges justly and searches . . .', p. 5, cf. bottom of p. 275).

Three of the letters are given as though yet unpublished. The longest is 391, an invitation to the Crusade. But the text hardly varies from 363 of the old edition. In fact this was a circular letter. Mabillon gave it addressed to the people of Eastern France and Bavaria. Seven separate addresses have long been known, and Dom Jan Leclercq, in the *Revue Mabillon* of this year (p. 7) has added an eighth. It is interesting to find it in our translation addressed to the English, but this does not make it an unpublished text. A shorter letter is n. 257, one of those addressed to Bishop Ulger concerning his troubles at Angers. Neither is this entirely new, for Dom Philbert Schmitz printed it in the *Revue Bénédictine* of 1935 (p. 351). There remains letter 396 concerning monks who wandered after the Crusade. Dom Leclercq has just printed the Latin text in the *Analecta Sacri Ordinis Cisterciensis* (1953, p. 141), but Father Scott James was right in calling it unpublished at the time of his translation.

Of special interest are letters 187 to 208, concerning the election of St William to the See of York, for here are eleven of the fourteen letters discovered by Dr C. H. Talbot and printed in the *Cambridge Historical Journal* of 1950.

The translator may have had to hurry over these newly found letters, for the standard of accuracy is below that of the volume as a whole. It is only just to support such a statement by example. Thus in letter 257 to Ulger the Latin of the Berlin MS. mentioned by the translator as his source, 'ut quod non (*feri* here deleted) potest non fieri quomodo potest componatur', is rendered, 'so that both may be induced in some way or other to do their duty in the matter'. In 198, to Queen Matilda of England, 'ut quem solum debet habere solum sibi retineret assensum', is rendered, 'so that it alone (the chapter) should have the decision to which it alone is entitled'. The chapter has not been mentioned in the sentence at all, but the meaning is, 'that he (the king) should keep to himself the

assent alone, to which alone he is entitled?.

Yet many mistakes of the earlier translator, S. J. Fales, have been corrected. The book should be in every Catholic institution, in the hands of every student of the twelfth century. The many letters hitherto difficult of access, now brought together, new arrangement and historical notes, make the book useful even to those who would read only the original.

JOHN MORSON, O.C.R.

SAINT BERNARD ET LA BIBLE. By P. Dumontier. (Desclée de Brouweri
n.p.)

The Scriptures crave to be read and understood in the spirit in which they were made. From such reading affection is drawn and prayer is shaped; a prayer which does not hinder our reading but purifies the mind and restores it to a better understanding of what we read. If we seek God in our reading, all we read works together to us for God and is subdued to the service of Christ. In this way Saint Bernard made the Bible his own: it held an outstanding place in every part of his thought and work. P. Dumontier here sets in detail Saint Bernard's method in the use of Holy Scripture. For him the Bible was God's impatient call to love, a revelation from the heart of God to the heart of man. In showing how Saint Bernard made use of the help of the Fathers, the author makes a very fine analysis of texts. He does not seek to hide the imperfection of Saint Bernard's interpretation: it is compared with that of the Fathers and other writers of the twelfth century, and throughout the book much light is cast on the other Cistercian writers, such as William of Saint-Therry, Saint Aelred, and Guerric. The chapter on Saint Bernard's biblical style is a masterpiece. The biblical character of his spirituality is dealt with in the last chapter. This book is a very welcome addition to the literature on Saint Bernard, and it cannot be ignored by those who desire a better understanding of the great Cistercian.

A.W.

THE SIGN OF JONAS. By Thomas Merton. (Hollis and Carter; 18s.)

Thomas Merton is almost certainly the only Catholic writer on the spiritual life in the world today whose books have been read by more than a million readers. This fact is both significant and impressive. The readers, be it said, are of widely differing intellectual capacity, yet they share an enthusiasm for Fr Merton's talents in autobiographical writing, for his descriptions of Cistercian life, and in a lesser degree for his exposition of the classical doctrine of Catholic spirituality. His chief assets as a writer lie in a strongly marked individuality of style, and a certain transparent sincerity. His autobiographical work clearly has the wider appeal and is more successful than his expositions of doctrine, which though they are