

and his Oxford companions discovered in book and stone), then into the real earth of the Cotswolds (by an experiment in living the same in principle as that of the Desert Fathers), and at last (discovering Scripture) into the absolute ground, God.

The climax came after a night of prayer: 'the hard casing of exterior reality seemed to have been broken through, and everything disclosed its inner being'. Certainly a great deal was still to be learned, but prayer was the key that had turned the lock. Yet he had still to be taught by the Catholic Church, and particularly by the discipline of monastic life, that this and the other instruments of his entry into truth could not be handled without subtle danger: 'I realised that what I had been seeking was a fantasy under which my own self-will was disguised. . . . I had followed my own desires for so long and worked out my own ideal, that it was difficult for me to see that the process had now to be reversed.' When God leads, it is obedience and detachment that are demanded of the creature; and it had been God leading all the time. . . .

This is a notable book. It is more than the unfinished autobiography of one man; it records the spiritual experience, in the most authentic tones, of a whole generation—a generation in captivity; and it shows how one man has found freedom. Some readers may feel (and I think the author certainly feels) that the journey is still to be continued. The last chapters of the book are less certain than the main portion—as if there is still a balance to be achieved, a perfect charity still to be laid hold of towards that modern world and its achievements which made the prison. Are they not materials, which, rebuilt, may yet make the temple of God?

COLUMBA RYAN, O.P.

THE CONFESSIONS OF ST AUGUSTINE. Tr. by Sir Tobie Matthew, Kt., revised and edited by Dom Roger Hudleston. (The Orchard Books; Burns Oates; 15s.)

The volumes of the new Orchard series are designed to adorn a bookshelf rather than to fit a pocket. They are in fact about three times as large as their forerunners of the old series, and quite four times as expensive. Otherwise this edition by Dom Hudleston of Augustine's *Confessions* is identical with the one which first appeared in 1923.

The editor is surely right to include the last three books of reflections on the first chapter of Genesis. As he remarks in the introduction, while the exegesis may be a little old-fashioned nowadays, it is of value as a corrective to the attitude of people who, in Sir Tobie's rendering of Augustine, 'are so hot upon the negative that Moses did not mean that which I say, but that which they say'. But more than that, these Books XI-XIII are integral to Augustine's design in writing the *Confessions*.

His latest biographer, Professor O'Meara, accepts the common judgment that Augustine didn't know how to plan a book. Hence the tangled jungle of the *City of God* and the ill-assorted jumble of the *Christian Doctrine*; hence also this incongruous tail to the *Confessions*. But it would perhaps be truer to say that Augustine had such a keen sense of pattern and design that he could never fit his books into the obvious or merely conventional scheme. On top of this, his unflagging pursuit of the intricacies of a pattern effectively obscure its main lines for the reader, by making him giddy with mental fatigue.

The *Confessions* then will not fit the conventional category of religious autobiography. As the Xth book shows, Augustine combined a staggering power of self-examination, a most lively awareness of himself, with a complete lack of self-consciousness. So he was not in the least interested in his own religious experience for its own sake, but quite fascinated by it as manifesting a design—the design of God's redeeming grace. The confession of his own sins is only a means for the confession of God's praise. And the design which he sees worked out in the microcosm of himself, of a being created by God (like Tristram Shandy he begins the story of his life from the womb), broken away from God, and then created anew by God in grace, this design he contemplates again in the macrocosm as it is shown us in the Genesis story of creation. His meditations on it, culminating in its allegorical interpretation, might be called a treatise on God the one author of nature and grace. And so in Book XI, c. 2, he prays for grace to understand the Scriptures in these words: 'I beseech thee by thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ . . . thy Word through whom thou madest all things, and amongst them me also; thine only begotten Son, by whom thou didst call to adoption the multitude of believers, and me amongst them, by him do I beg this grace . . . in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. These same treasures do I seek in thy books.'

E.H.

LA GRANDE PRIÈRE EUCHARISTIQUE. Par J. A. Jungmann. Traduction de l'allemand par Marc Zemb. (Cerf; n.p.)

In four sections this book consists of the best type of liturgical commentary, taking and expanding four key phrases from the Ordinary of the Mass: *Memores, Offerimus, Plebs Sancta, Socia Exultatione*. *Memores*: if we are to appreciate fully the sacrifice of the altar we must bear in mind that God the Father has once and for all accepted Christ's sacrifice (Heb. IX, 24-28); we may overlook this if we insist exclusively on immolation and forget the commemoration. *Offerimus*: it is truly our sacrifice with Christ; in opposition to the Gnostics the early Fathers of the Church had to emphasize the holiness of the material we offer.