

review is divided into the three classic books called: I The Active Life, II The Life of Yearning for God, and III The Life of Contemplation of God; though the last one, as would be expected since the author's object is primarily practical, is extremely short compared with the other two. The translation reads well, and the introduction is scholarly: probably the best short account in English of Ruysbroek's doctrine, though readers who hitherto have only known Ruysbroek through the carefully annotated French edition of his works prepared by the monks of Oosterhout may be surprised that no mention is made of these volumes in the bibliography. Bl. Jan van Ruysbroek was beatified by Bl. Pius X in 1908.

DESMOND SCHLEGEL, O.S.B.

**THE GOAD OF LOVE:** an unpublished translation by Walter Hilton of *Stimulus Amoris* formerly attributed to St Bonaventura, now edited from MSS by Clare Kirchberger. (London: Faber and Faber; 18s.)

This edition of Walter Hilton's version of *Stimulus Amoris* is greatly to be welcomed. It is a beautiful piece of work and it contains some important implication for readers of today. There is a good introduction explaining the sources used by Hilton, and there are some interesting comments on the changes which he introduced showing his own original contribution. The most significant of these is the constant translation of such words as *Deus* and *Creator* by 'Christ' and 'Our Lord'. This Christocentric character, with its emphasis on the Incarnation, was the immediate result of the need to counteract the heresies of the day and the false mysticism which disregarded the Humanity of Christ, and also the practice of the virtues. It was the expression, too of the traditional English devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus, to the Passion and to our Lady. But the fundamental reason, as the introduction shows, lies in the Faith itself—in the 'law' of the Incarnation whereby we can only reach God through the Person of Christ.

Several very striking impressions are left by this book: one of them is the almost complete absence of any detailed analysis of the states of prayer. This shows us, we are told, a poetical affective side of Hilton's nature which is much more evident here than in the more schematised work of *The Scale of Perfection*. We are here brought into touch with that simple, direct approach to God, without any 'spiritual gymnastics'. We are reminded that this approach was shown, in *Brother Petroc's Return*<sup>1</sup>, to be the mark distinguishing medieval from post-Reformation spirituality. A further impression—closely linked with this simplicity—is Hilton's insistence on self-forgetfulness.

<sup>1</sup> *Brother Petroc's Return: A Story* by S.M.C. Chatto and Windus.

This attitude is indicated early in the book in the words: 'First, then, let thy heart be so oned to him in longing that it be his and not thine'. Again and again he omits passages which seemed to have a self-centred emphasis. This appears in his treatment of the virtues of humility and obedience which he stresses so forcibly. 'Obedience', he writes, 'is a gracious virtue that maketh a man to forget himself and aye tend to his Lord.' He warns us continually against the dangers of pride in the contemplative life, and above everything he warns us against any inclination to judge our neighbours. All prayer is the free gift of God: 'think in all things, God doeth all, and then mayest thou come to rest'.

This life of prayer does not necessarily imply a withdrawal from other activities; but can be arrived at through all things by the unity of their relationship to God: seeing and beholding 'right nought in all things but God himself'. At the same time he adds: 'I reprove not great yearnings and lovely longings that some men have to God, that give themselves only to attend to him in contemplation and to nothing else, for that is good'. But the one thing on which he insists is that we come to God through the humanity of Christ: 'He that cometh not by the bitterness and compassion of Christ in his manhood, he is but a thief'.

In the Preface it is suggested that the reader should, if he wishes, omit the first nine chapters. But if he does so he will miss some of the most characteristic expressions of that deep compassion with the sufferings of our Lord.

For us today this work has many attractions. It offers us a vision of mystical life in closest union with normal Christian life; never as an extraordinary state treated in isolation. It restores for us the unity of Christian experience, much of which had been lost since the Reformation. Most important of all, its Christocentric character will appeal to all who wish to see individual prayer centred in the living expression of the Incarnation, which is the Sacramental worship of the Church in Holy Mass, and drawing from this source all its strength.

ODO BROOKE, O.S.B.

LE CHRIST, MARIE ET L'ÉGLISE. By Yves M.-J. Congar, O.P.  
(Desclée De Brouwer; n.p.)

This short book, of just over a hundred pages, is one of the most stimulating and thought-provoking to appear for some time, and it is to be hoped that it will soon find a competent translator. It consists of two essays, the first of which was previously published in *La Vie Intellectuelle* of October last year to commemorate the fifteenth centenary of the Council of Chalcedon. The second gives a negative answer to the question whether Catholic piety towards Christ, the Church and Mary has always succeeded in avoiding a monophysite tendency. And 'Catholic piety' for Père Congar does not only mean popular manifestations