

Dr Altholz takes his hero at his own valuation, and is less than fair to others, Newman in particular. Him he depicts as a rather insipid and lukewarm fighter, too worried about his own problems - his position as an awkward convert, his already difficult relations with the hierarchy, his preoccupation with the Oratory and the Catholic University that never was, to be able to give the kind of whole-hearted support for his journalistic campaign that Acton wanted and that Dr Altholz thinks Acton deserved. In fact, Newman saw in Acton's attitude and activities genuine theological difficulties not apparent to one like Dr Altholz, who writes from the secure position of the uncommitted. It is apparent that Dr Altholz has no real comprehension of, or at any rate sympathy with, the depth of Newman's thought, or of Newman's doubts about the wisdom of challenging authority (however misguided about non-dogmatic matters) in a Catholic society which, because of its immaturity, might well have misinterpreted legitimate criticism of attitudes as a justification for criticising the nature of authority itself. Newman may have been wrong about the degree of English Catholic society's maturity at that time, but he has a case.

Nor does the author ever consider what a waste of talent Acton's life represents. As has been wisely remarked, the polymath Acton, with his massive range of learning, could have achieved far more both for the reputation of Catholic scholarship and for the cause of Liberal Catholicism in England, had he, instead of canalizing his energies into a sterile journalistic struggle that got him nowhere, got down to writing his history of freedom.

Yet this book well repays reading. It is a notable achievement in lucid and incisive writing; the story is admirably well told; and there is an abundance of fascinating quotation from letters, often hitherto unpublished. While for those who like books with a moral, the moral is plainly here for all to draw.

G. D. GREGORY

*THE MIRROR OF CHARITY*, by St Aelred of Rievaulx, translated by Geoffrey Webb and Adrian Walker; Mowbray, 25s.

The awakened interest in every department of the Church's life, theological, biblical, liturgical, patristic, has blown away the dust, disturbed the cobwebs, in many sadly neglected corners. Authors, whose reputations survived on prestige alone and the blessed Latin ignorance of the faithful, are now subjected to the merciless microscope of modern critical methods. Their language pruned, analysed and transformed into terms which the everyday Christian can grasp and assess.

Not all pass this test of merit with flying colours. Some are dated beyond redemption. Even the most adept of translators bogs down in the dross which has sometimes to be cut away so that the thought may stand clear. Modern man looks for meat to sink his teeth into. He just hasn't time to savour the gravy. That is why straightforward word-for-word presentations of writers whose

mode of expression and literary forms are virtually incomprehensible to us today are so much dead wood. The disciple can usually read the original. The curious has his inquisitiveness speedily damped. If readers are sought who will do more than scan the first few pages and run through the index the incentive to read further has to be provided. An adequate summary of the doctrine, intelligent editing, a smooth and accurate flow of English, are indispensable, both from the public's and the publisher's point of view.

It is difficult to fault the translators of the Abbot of Rievaulx's *Speculum Charitatis* on any of these counts. The preface is brief but sufficient. Everything extraneous to the author's main purpose has been dropped or relegated to a condensed appendix. The English is unpretentious - as terse and unadorned as Aelred's Latin - and nowhere jars. The mark of scholarly care and precision is everywhere evident.

Aelred is too well-known to require biography. His human qualities have made him one of the best loved and most attractive monastic saints of the twelfth century. The *Mirror of Charity* was one of his first major works on the psychology of love and clears the way for the treatise on spiritual friendship which will always be associated with his name.

It is surprising that the translators of this admirable edition, while noting the spiral-like movement of the saint's thought and his predilection for St John's Gospel, fail to recognize the influence of the one upon the other.

STEPHEN PEATE, O. C. S. O.