

modern world, for Mr Shewring, is sick with irrationality. His main topic is 'making' or art, which for him—as for Gill and the Scholastics—is a thoroughly rational activity: the making well, according to known rules, of things required by body or spirit. Therefore art and utility (in the sense that includes what may be usefully contemplated) are inseparable, according to nature and reason. Their divorce in a world governed by mass-production and the profit motive involves a deep cultural debasement, the chief symptom of which, from the point of view of these essays, is the withdrawal of a small class of 'artists' from the mass of ordinary men, with the consequence that art itself has become emasculated, a prey to the vanity and illusion of a pseudo-autonomy. The decline of art as handicraft since the Industrial Revolution has joined hands with the decline of religion since the Renaissance (and of reason too—the Renaissance was intellectually a decline); the result being an art divorced from both kinds of utility, the bodily and the spiritual. This last sentence is, admittedly, what I take Mr Shewring to mean rather than what he actually says: and if he constantly implies this double 'decline', he never explains just how they are connected. In any case, he denounces on every page the 'decadence and abnormality' of the modern world, using always his criterion of the Scholastic notion of art; and this with a mordant wit and faultless logic.

Granted his premisses, then, I find it impossible not to agree, in general, with his thesis. But I have two objections, which, for brevity's sake, I must state rather crudely. First, as to the 'arts' that supply the body's needs: according to Mr Shewring's ideal they ought to be, in the main, such handicrafts as were practised before applied science got to work on a large scale. But applied science has also caused, indirectly, an enormous increase in the world's population, requiring an enormous development of natural resources to meet its needs. Is this conceivable with pre-industrial methods? Secondly, as to the arts that minister to contemplation, the so-called 'fine arts', Mr Shewring's assault on the snobbish mumbo-jumbery that has been and still often is associated with them is absolutely right in principle; but he gives his enemy a rather old-fashioned look, at least when it is poetry and the theory of poetry that he is speaking of. I don't wish for one moment to under-rate the problem of the poet's or painter's or sculptor's or musician's integration into modern society; but at least certain attitudes have changed for the better in the fifteen or twenty years since these essays were written. And even before Mr Shewring, in 1938, wrote the one entitled 'Book-learning and Education', with its splendid scorn of the 'harmonious madness' view of poetry, such a view had been badly damaged by the criticism of Mr Eliot and the practice of Mr Auden. And in general the impression given here that modern art-theory is dominated by anti-intellectualism does not, I think, quite tally with the present situation.

KENELM FOSTER, O.P.

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM AND HIS TIME. By Chrysostomus Baur. Vol. 1. Antioch. (Sands; 30s.)

ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM. By Donald Attwater. (Harvill Press; 18s.)

ELEMENTARY PATROLOGY. By Aloys Dirksen. (Herder; 35s.)

EARLY CHURCH PORTRAIT GALLERY. By Maisie Ward. (Sheed and Ward; 25s.)

One sometimes wonders whether, if St Thomas Aquinas had been able to obtain Chrysostom on Matthew, which he would have given Paris to possess, he might not have found it rather a disappointment. Is that work not most remarkable for the glimpse it gives of the skill of a great preacher rather than for any hint of deep theological insight, remarkable above all for its occasional brilliant characterizations of contemporary life, which make one feel that it might be more exciting to read *about* Chrysostom than to read him? It seems, however, that we shall still have to wait that for deft recreation of Chrysostom in his setting which ought some day to be possible. Dom Baur's painstaking and monumental study, of which the first volume now appears in an English translation that avoids few of the idioms of German grammar, may well require of the reader something of the ascetic arduous appropriate to the gymnasium in which, according to the translator, the author received his earlier education. The student will be better able to find his way about in a book which will never make easy reading, when the second volume, which will contain an index, becomes available. Meanwhile Mr Attwater's more modest book, which is continuously aware of Baur's work, will be of better service to the general reader. For, although it does not give us the portrait that would bring Antioch in Chrysostom's day to life, it is likely to leave one with a taste to know more about him.

This is presumably the service that an elementary patrology ought also to do, but it can scarcely do so without a more vital and personal contact with the materials than that which Fr Dirksen, with disarming frankness, claims for himself in the preface to his *Elementary Patrology*. It is, he tells us, 'meant to be a relatively inexpensive tool. For these reasons there are no footnotes, there is no bibliography, and quotations from foreign languages have been reduced to a minimum.' It is difficult to appreciate the reasoning that connects these two sentences and anyone who is really beginning to take an interest in the Fathers will be likely to turn with relief and a good deal more profit to Maisie Ward's *Early Church Portrait Gallery*, which may not be a student's tool, but is a workmanlike demonstration of how to use one's reading well, and a generous, personal, appreciative introduction to many great saints and Fathers from St Ignatius of Antioch to St Benedict. The student will even find a bibliography at the end which he will probably reach in a mood to follow up.

ÆLFRED SQUIRE, O.P.

J. G. HAMANN. *A Study in Christian Existence. With Selections from His Writings.* By Ronald Gregor Smith. (Collins; 21s.)

The Wizard of the North is certainly not everyone's cup of tea. Nobody would describe him as a systematic thinker. Nor did he ever claim to be one. On the contrary, he declared that he had no aptitude for 'truths, principles, systems', but only for 'crumbs, fragments, fancies, sudden inspirations'. But his style is so allusive that even these fragments and sudden inspirations tend