

Blackfriars

haps open to criticism, on the ground that it tends to lead the untrained mind to identify one science with the other, and the unwary to think that the ecclesiastical lawyer is preoccupied with cases of conscience. Those whose labours prevent them from embarking on the study of speculative theology may profitably read the chapters on the administration of this Sacrament, and the requisite conditions in the recipient, together with the rites and ceremonies to be observed. In an appendix there is an account of the laws and usages affecting the various branches of the Oriental Church. The whole work, with the previous volumes already published, is very well documented and is to be recommended as an extremely useful text-book.

A.F.

SAINT AUGUSTINE. *The Odyssey of his Soul.* By Karl Adam. (London: Sheed & Ward. Pp. 65; 2/6.)

It is not easy to say much about a map, beyond pronouncing it a good map, or maybe a bad one. This little work is not the *Odyssey* itself, the lengthy epic of Augustine's great voyage of discovery through the turbulent waters of contradiction. But it is a good map of workable scale and projection. It is not a biographical sketch in the accepted sense. There are few space-time details, geographical, environmental, and the like. It is the story in brief of the wanderings of a soul, the heroic struggles of a fighter in the realm of spirit. *Non enim pedibus aut spatiis locorum itur abs te, aut reditur ad te.* It is the study of a mind, though it is not at all a sort of scientific dissection. Rather is it the study of a man, a personality, a living, growing thing, a great thinker painfully working out his salvation in the concrete. 'Herein is manifested the very heart of Augustine, the passionate searcher for truth, struggling after the ultimate meaning of life, wrestling with God,' a man who could not rest content with axioms and doctrines, but must needs press onward to the foundations of all knowledge, to the invisible source and origin of all reality; a mind that identified the *cupiditas sciendi* with the *cupiditas vivendi*; a soul for whom truth and happiness were one and the self-same thing. Augustine is sure of his place among the great figures of history for the single reason that he was, as few have been, a seeker of the truth. It is a classic tale, with the Faust-like figure of Augustine wandering through a darkness filled with demons of error; there are heroic combats—the fight with the body, the struggle with sex; the grappling with materialistic Manichaeism; the clever, dangerous duelling with

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the Neo-Platonic concept of spirit ; and ultimate victory, through the revelation of the love that unfolds into blessedness, in the true Word, the Wisdom of God, the living Christ. A dignified theme, an organic unity, an orderly progress of action, Aristotle's three essentials of an epic are here.

There is much in the accustomed Karl Adam vein on Christianity, with a somewhat detailed presentation of the Augustinian concept of the Body of Christ, the concept of all Christendom as 'one Christ, loving Himself.' Evidently the formative idea behind the book. There is the inevitable contrast with Aquinas, rather after the accepted fashion. And much that is very readable on the problem of true love, with enlightening passages on the nature of the re-birth of the Christian. But the work is not flawless. There are, for example, some lapses into current psychological jargon, in particular an occasional descent into the subconscious unhappy in the case of one so manifestly the immediate product of the living spirit of a personal God. Augustine's God, whom he knew and loved intimately, is something more than a vague abstract 'force'—as the author himself is careful to point out in the sequel. There is likewise an attempt, laudable enough, to present Augustine in present-day dress, his claim to modernity resting on the fact that over and over again he makes psychological observation the preliminary and basis of his metaphysic. The world is always modern. Modernity is a state of consciousness basically correlative with life according to the body, the state of a mind still clinging to its original concept of action and progress as movement in a straight line ; a precarious state, loose at both ends, an unstable present perilously balanced between undefined expectation and a floating memory (Confes. xi, 28). Souls rise, or rather are raised, above it, a soul, like Augustine's, that lives by the spirit. Though, obviously, the fundamental distinction between the development of the individual and the progress of the race as a whole justifies the author's point as at least apologetically useful. The book is certainly worth having. The best thing about it, perhaps, is its truly Augustinian quality, the power to inspire.

R.M.

THE PROBLEM OF MACHINERY. By C.T.B.D. (London. The Distributist League ; 2 Little Essex Street, W.C.2. Pp. 23 ; 6d.)

The author is technically equipped to examine machinery, but has commonsense enough not to be caught up in the works. His