

to be permeated,' those ideas, it seems, which were implied in and by the revelation that was made, and which in their turn would be elaborated by, while informing, the thought of later ages. After an exposition of these ideas and the directions of thought which they involve, the author turns to 'La Récupération du Passé,' a survey of pre-Christian systems strikingly considered as finalised by the Truth that was to come. This guiding idea is spoken of as the retro-active effect of the Christian leaven. And so we pass to the work of elaboration accomplished by the Fathers and the writers of the early Middle Ages, and finally to the long chapter occupying about one third of the book, on the Thomist synthesis. This is displayed indeed as the coherent whole it is, but not without noticing various lacunae. The same spirit of moderation is shown in the final chapter and its estimates of the value of Latin Averroism, St. Bonaventure and his school, and Duns Scotus.

No one should imagine that this record of Christian thought is in reality a disguised Theology. Père Sertillanges declares emphatically his approval of the autonomy of philosophy, even while showing both the insufficiency of a philosophy that tries to stand purely on its own, and the numerous benefits derived from its contact with the Faith. The result is a picture of an organic growth of human thought, essentially natural, enlivened and impelled rather than restrained by the divine source of all truth in its supernatural manifestation. So it is that 'les purs philosophes disent sans cesse: recommençons; le philosophe chrétien peut seul dire: continuons.' It is in that spirit that we look forward to Père Sertillanges' second volume.

Ivo THOMAS, O.P.

MARIOLOGIA. By Benedictus Henricus Merkelbach, O.P. (Ed. Desclée de Brouwer; 35 frs.)

THE MYSTERY OF THE DIVINE MOTHERHOOD. By Charles Feckes. Trans. by Canon George Smith, D.D. (Geo. E. J. Caldwell; 10s. 6d.)

The first of these books is a very important treatise on the whole of that branch of theology known as Mariology. The method is scholastic and the arguments most easy to follow, since Fr. Merkelbach displays, as in all his other writings, a particular clarity of style. We have here an admirable textbook in which the matter is arranged in such order as to be almost schematic, and the treatment is concise without being

abbreviated. The purpose of the author is to give a short, clear, methodical and synthetic exposition of all the chief questions which arise out of his subject. His intention is to supply students and preachers with a sound doctrine which rests on solid grounds and not merely on pious opinions devoid of solid foundation. In this he has been singularly successful. When coming to the position Our Lady occupied in the redemptive work he consistently follows what seems to be the more extreme view, attributing to her an objective contribution to the ransom whereby grace is made available to mankind. The more restrained doctrine of Canon Smith and Goossens in their recent critical works, and in the more popular exposition of Dr. Feckes, is much less difficult to sustain. But undoubtedly students have been provided with an important theological treatise.

Dr. Feckes gives us a short book on our Blessed Lady, pleasing to read and full of golden thoughts. In the words of the author's preface, 'the book is not intended to be a theological treatise, but to provide a purely theological portrait of Mary which may bear fruit in a deeper understanding and richer life.' The brilliance of Our Lady's immaculate sanctity is best seen against the background of dark shadows. The world indeed is filled with ungodliness and sin. In Mary grace took entire and complete possession of her, she was completely permeated by grace in every way, as by a light which dispels every darkness and shadow. Mary came into existence as God's Immaculate Bride. At the very dawn of life she was already a child of God untouched by sin and adorned with the garment of grace. This grace of hers is unique. From the beginning she was the sanctuary of the Holy Ghost, the chosen Bride of the Son, and the only-begotten of the Father. The beginnings of Mary are already in the eternal plans of God. Even though descended of sinful parents, she was not involved in the natural consequences of sin. The threatened calamity of sin was turned aside from her in view of the merits of the Redeemer. Yet life was not made easy for her, since she was called by God to take her special part in the redemptive work. But the mirror-like purity of her soul, in which the image of God is reflected, was never marred by the dust of human imperfection. Temptation could never take her unawares, since she was always alert to God's will and immersed in Him alone. She appears, moreover, in this charming portrait as Christ's Helpmeet, for 'God willed to associate with him a new Mother of humanity, so that the work of Redemption might receive from her bridal co-operation an added beauty and perfection' (p. 143). 'To her he gave

the task of being representative of all those men who willingly opened their souls to the stream of divine grace' (p. 145). 'The close communion of life between Christ and Mary was destined to become a communion in suffering and in sacrifice' (p. 148). 'On Calvary the Bride Mother of the Word Incarnate reached the zenith of her earthly activity. Here she completed her life's task by sharing in the sacrifice of Redemption' (p. 151). From which it follows, 'that Mary's co-operation made no necessary contribution to the redemptive act of Jesus Christ himself; it could add nothing to what was already in itself complete' (pp. 153, 154). Further, in bestowing on us from her place of glory heavenly treasures, she is the Almoner of Grace. The translator has done his work exceedingly well.

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

SPIRITUALITY

LES TROIS AGES DE LA VIE INTÉRIEURE. Par le P. Reg. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. Tome 1^{er}. (Editions du Cerf; 25 frs.)

The contents of this book will be familiar to students of St. Thomas and largely to readers of the author's previous writings on the spiritual life, though the presentation is new. It embraces the matter of a course of ascetical and mystical theology given by the author for a period of twenty years in the Faculty of Theology at the Angelicum, Rome.

This indeed is a first volume of a synthesis of already published works following them in substance on the main lines. The spiritual life is represented as the beginning of eternal life, consisting of the life of grace, with the accompanying virtues both theological and moral, together with Gifts of the Holy Ghost. Under the divine sway the spiritual organism may be brought to perfection, grace developing normally, without the need of anything extraordinary or miraculous. To the soul that is submissive and responsive to the influence of God, the Gifts of the Holy Ghost become like the sails of a ship helping it persuasively along towards the port of eternal salvation. Useful instructions are to be found on the subjects of spiritual reading, direction, the frequenting of the Sacraments, and on prayer both private and liturgical. There are likewise chapters of particular interest to those in the priestly or religious state.