

ticular moment in the history of Christian Hellenism. St John, at least in his longer and more studied letters, is deeply under the influence of what may be called the Stoic-rhetorical moral tradition. In studying his dealing with it, how it at times overmasters him and at times is subdued to an authentically Christian thought and expression, we can form some idea of the complexity of the situation of a Christian brought up in the ancient culture (itself a very complex thing). It is something which always has to be kept in mind when assessing the degree of authority to be given to the teaching of any particular Father, and the study of it can often be of great value in many ways to us in our still more complicated intellectual situation.

A. H. ARMSTRONG

THE MYSTICAL BODY AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE. By Fr M. Eugene Boylan, O.C.R. (Mercier; 5s.)

The author of this essay has already made a well-deserved name for his spiritual writings. For that reason the book, of which the subtitle is 'The Foundation of the Spiritual Life', is rather disappointing and gives the impression of a successful author who is pushed forward too rapidly. The subject is of paramount importance and there is little in English to supply what the book sets out to provide. But the Papal Encyclical on the mystical body, often quoted at length, does not receive very much elucidation, and considerable space is occupied by the endeavour, so frequently made before, to describe the nature of the unity of Christ in his member, a unity called 'ontological' by Mersch, 'quasi-formal' by Mura. It would have been more in conformity with the title, as well as with the desire to convey the nature of the unity, had the author given far more space to the effect of the unity in the individual Christian who 'puts on' Christ, lives by *Christian* virtues, and suffers in the death of Christ on the cross. The identification of Christ with his members could in fact be traced in its spiritual effects right up to the transforming union of the highest and holiest Christian life. However, there are good things in the book, and the reader must remember that it is the first of a series edited by the capable theological learning of Fr James, O.F.M.Cap., so that it is designed to open the subject and raise the problems rather than to provide a complete guide to the spiritual life in terms of the mystical body. And there is a unique feature in the book in the *Publisher's* introduction; for the director of the Mercier Press takes the opportunity of stating the aims of his firm in recalling men to the spiritual life.

JOHN HUNSTER

LA SYNTHÈSE THOMISTE. Par P. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. (Desclée; n.p.)

The interest of this tremendous contribution to the *Dictionnaire de Théologie catholique* (here only slightly enlarged into a book of 740 pages) for readers of LIFE OF THE SPIRIT lies in its synopsis of the