

while *The Four Centuries on Charity* are largely concerned with the purification of our passions brought about by charity. St Maximus is well aware that it is the same vital force of desire and love that is expended in gross passions or sublimated and turned to God: 'For him whose mind is continually with God, even his concupiscence is increased above measure into a divinely burning love . . .'. He is perhaps too negative in his attitude towards natural human things, but we have to remember that both these works were written for monks, and human love is renounced only for the sake of a more inclusive love: 'He that loves nothing human loves all men'. 'The friends of Christ love all sincerely, but are not loved by all; the friends of the world neither love all nor are loved by all.'

The translations are clear and well bring out the serene wisdom of St Maximus. The introduction does not make easy reading and produces a rather confused impression, particularly in the sketch of the life of St Maximus; the summary of his teaching repays a careful reading with a deepened understanding of the works here translated by placing them in their context in St Maximus's theology.

JEROME SMITH, O.P.

PATRISTIC HOMILIES ON THE GOSPEL. Translated and edited by M. F. Toal. (Mercier Press; 30s.)

FUNDAMENTALS OF CATHOLIC DOGMA. By Ludwig Ott. Translated by Patrick Lynch. (Mercier Press; 30s.)

Fr Toal's preface does not contain much actual information, but it can be gathered that he is adapting and translating a seventeenth-century compilation of patristic homilies on the Sunday gospels—to each gospel some four or five homilies, preceded by the relevant portion of St Thomas's *Catena Aurea*. The translations are made from 'the best texts now available'; unfortunately they are made in the heavy nineteenth-century conventions of 'translator's English', so that actual comparison was necessary to convince me that the old *Library of the Fathers* translation was not being used. So this volume and the three to follow will lie gathering dust on presbytery shelves, where fresh modern prose might have done so much for Sunday preaching, might even have given, to use the translator's words, 'models and sermons to which the people will listen eagerly, as they listened to them long ago'.

If Fr Toal's translation is uninspired, Dr Lynch's is catastrophic. He seems to have made no attempt to get away from the Latin and German idioms of his original, and often enough his meaning can only be got at by translating back. The value of such a book, with its 'proof-texts' from Scripture, potted patristics, cut-and-dried assurance, is in any case not easy to assess. Perhaps it may, as the present Editor suggests, be

useful to 'students who desire to revise rapidly, in the vernacular, the tracts which they are presenting for examination'; whether in the long run such treatment of revelation and tradition does the Church good service is more doubtful. The further suggestion that an educated layman could find it useful is, I think, patently untrue.

The standard of book-production is in each case well below anything normally acceptable in this country. The second book especially has a fantastic number of misprints; the usual conventions for the use of capital letters and italic fount appear to be unknown. It is to be hoped that these books do not come into the hands of those cultivated pagans whose mockery St Thomas was at pains to avoid.

LAURENCE BRIGHT, O.P.

THE ANCRENE RIWLE. Modern English translation by M. B. Salu, with Introduction and Appendix by Dom Gerard Sitwell. (Orchard Books, Burns & Oates; 15s.)

The Orchard Books have now added another work to their series, which will be of great value to students of medieval English religious literature, and upon which its authors are greatly to be congratulated. For the general reader a few words of explanation of the names used to describe this text may be useful. Although Miss Salu has called her book the *Riwle*, she has in fact translated the text found in MS Corpus Christi College Cambridge 402; and although this may be the oldest extant manuscript, it contains a number of additions, as well as other variants, which show that it is not so faithful to the author's original manuscript, now lost, as is MS British Museum Cotton Nero A.XIV, and it is to the group of texts which are best represented by the Nero MS that the title *Riwle* usually is reserved. Miss Salu in her Preface lists the manuscripts which have survived, both of the original English in its several versions (one of them, she forgets to mention, interpolated with Lollard teaching) and of medieval French and Latin translations. These many manuscripts alone show the popularity and influence of the *Riwle* in medieval England: and Miss Salu's admirable translation, cast in an easy, living English retaining no trace of the innumerable difficulties, textual, linguistic and historical, which she has overcome, shows us clearly why the *Riwle* has become so well-known. To call it a work of genius is not too much. The circumstances of its composition might today seem archaic and 'Gothick' to the point where all resemblance to modern religious life, all correspondence to our own spiritual needs disappear: for it is a code of conduct, spiritual, liturgical, moral and social, for three sisters enclosed in an anchorage and vowed to a life of strictest seclusion. Yet as we read, and this is the chief merit of Miss Salu's work, we are drawn into that seemingly impossibly remote