

in developing the natural contemplative condition of the soul (whether in children or in adults) as a seed destined to grow up into the grace-nourished contemplative attitude can find here both inspiration and practical guidance. 'If deliverance thou wouldst have from the Lord, in silence await it' (Lam. 3, 26).

C.V.

CHRIST AND THE CAESARS. By Ethelbert Stauffer. (S.C.M. Press; 18s.)

This is the application of numismatics to the study of history. The sixteen studies together form a cross-section history of the first three Christian centuries, during which the Church and the Empire were in uneasy and unsettled relationship, *via* Domitian's attack, the 'counter-attack' of Revelation, the century of 'static' warfare that followed, and the final battle that ended with the Edict of Milan. Professor Stauffer's style is at times direct, at times difficult; but the narrative is consistently gripping, and some of the essays—notably that on the tribute money and that on Julius Caesar's policy of conciliation—are memorable.

Many of the seventeen beautiful plates are from contemporary coins or medallions. The famous medal of Constantius Chlorus, struck at the London Mint, is the frontispiece. There will be wide debate among his readers about several of his interpretations of the Scriptural texts against their background, but nothing but gratitude for the lively studies of the Emperors, personified in their fiscal and sculptured memorials.

A. C. F. BEALES

NOS SENS ET DIEU. (Les Études Carmélitaines 1954, Desclée de Brouwer, Bruges-Paris; n.p.)

Paul Claudel's essay 'La sensation du divin' is the starting point for nine other essayists, who, from various points of view, try to answer the question: 'Do our senses lead us to God—and how?' There is without doubt a problem here. It is true that the whole universe is an echo of the Word of God, a creaturely answer to the call of the Eternal. At the same time we know that 'Non potest . . . aliqua forma creata esse similitudo repraesentans . . . Dei essentiam' (S.T. I, 12, 2c). This is one reason why one may talk of 'la dialectique du monde sensible', a sense of opposition of the sensible to the spiritual. The psychologist, the student of the history of religions, the art critic and others help us each in their way to rise beyond the initial tension, but it is significant that only theologically are we offered satisfactory solutions of it in this stimulating collection; for only in theological perspective is man seen as the knot tying together the universe, a microcosm in the borderland between the spiritual and the material (p. 156). The human senses are the means designed by providence for the salvation of the physical

world: through them it becomes aware of itself and grasps its destiny. The world is designed to be a sanctuary, and the sensible is the material element of the sacrifice of praise offered to the Maker. All things made by his hand and contemplated by his eye are good in themselves; sensible objects no less than others. In fact, we are reminded (p. 154) that often the healthy way of looking at the world of sense is a sign indicative even of the soundness of the Christian's faith. For that reason one of the most helpful contributions to the discussion is probably the concluding essay 'Anéantissement ou Restauration?' written by the Carmelite theologian P. Lucien-Marie de St-Joseph. Its theme is well summed up in the quotation he chose for himself: 'The fight against the senses is doomed to failure unless it is transfigured at once by a certain triumph of love over love. It is a sad victory when a soul denies itself but does not go forward to new ardour.' Many will agree with the suggestion that there is nothing more urgent in spiritual theology than to re-establish the right idea of asceticism. Naturally enough, a Carmelite tries to do so through a study of the writings of St John of the Cross. This study 'from within' clarifies the problems of 'the dialectic of the sensible' by reminding us that even for the author of the Dark Night the ultimate goal was Light: not to destroy the senses but to purify them in such a way that all might be able to feel more frequently what a recovered patient experienced, in the words of his diary, as 'Présence de Dieu dans la beauté des choses' (p. 145).

C.V.

SANCTITY THROUGH THE ROSARY. By Edouard Hugon, O.P. (Michael Glazier & Co.; 5s.)

Theologians writing devotional books are sometimes tempted to give their pens a holiday and to use theological terms and phrases in an apparently carefree, incidental way which shocks us into thinking: 'What *can* he mean?' There is something of this in the devotional reflections put together in the seventy-four pages of this book. 'Devotion to the Blessed Virgin is one of the fundamental principles of Christianity' (p. 31); 'The Rosary is the most sublime, the surest and the easiest form of contemplation' (p. 25); 'Mary is the model of our predestination' (p. 32); 'The world was redeemed by a Virgin Trinity, Jesus, Mary and Joseph' (p. 46): there is, of course, a legitimate sense in which each of these things may be said, and Père Hugon does qualify his assertions, especially the one about predestination, but such phrases out of their context are ammunition for the incredibly ill-informed critics of Catholic devotion to Mary.

This being said, one can agree wholeheartedly with the statement on the cover that this small book is one of the greatest we have on the subject. Standing at the centre of each mystery of the Rosary, the