

when a man, after long sleep, still lying motionless in bed, becomes aware that he is now awake.'

It is the terseness of this account which gives it such force. It comes within a page of the end of a book which deserves many readers, not least for the virile good sense of such passages as this—

'What I like about experience is that it is such an honest thing. You may take any number of wrong turnings; but keep your eyes open and you will not be allowed go very far before the warning signs appear. You may have deceived yourself, but experience is not trying to deceive you. The universe rings true wherever you fairly test it.'

DAVID LLOYD JAMES

WILLIAM WESTON. Translated by Philip Caraman, S.J. (Longmans; 18s.)

Encouraged by the great and deserved success of his translation of Fr John Gerard's *Autobiography*, Fr Caraman has now produced this companion volume. Superficially there is much in common between them. Both were written abroad and in Latin by Jesuits of long experience of the English mission; both were written at the behest of superiors and without thought of publication; both are eminently honest and spontaneous. They cover almost the same period, for Weston was in England 1584-1603, and Gerard 1588-1606. Also both these works had already appeared in English, though in translations that left much to be desired. But there the similarity ends. Gerard's book is one of breathless thrills that put it in the first rank of adventure stories. Fr Weston, on the other hand, has no such epic to tell. It was not his lot to meet with hairbreadth escapes round every corner. All but two of his nineteen years in England were spent in prison. Nor had he Gerard's tense and terse narrative style, nor his sense of humour and love of sport. His narrative is often interrupted by other people's stories, some of which are without point, and most of them of the 'marvellous' type that seem to have edified our ancestors. Not all Fr Caraman's great skill as a translator can give this book the tempo and the zest of the earlier one. Not that the book lacks interest or importance. It is a valuable and authoritative source for the tragic years 1586-88, and has by far the fairest and fullest account of the daily life of Wisbech prison. Also the final story of Edmund Nevil's three escapes from the Tower is in the best Gerard manner. But for all that the truth remains that Weston was a mystic who wins our admiration by his obvious piety and exceptional suffering rather than by his gifts as a writer.

Once again Fr Caraman has illuminated the text with copious notes.

Although he disclaims any 'learning', these notes are the outcome of extensive reading, and they include many welcome citations from unpublished sources. There are some points, however, that seem to need a fuller explanation than is given. It is hardly adequate to dismiss Fr Weston's energumens as cases of hysteria. That does not explain his own credulity. Nor do I believe he was in this respect typical of his age. I can no more imagine Gerard casting out devils than Weston playing cards. These exorcisms appealed only to a very small group and lasted only a couple of years. For the most part the Elizabethan priests seem to have been quite hard-headed about supernatural manifestations of any kind.

It is surely rather naïve to recommend (page 198) Fr Parsons' *Briefe Apologie* as 'the only accurate account of the troubles at Wisbech'. Not only was Parsons an ardent partisan, but he was never within a thousand miles of Wisbech and depended on others for his information. To claim that he is 'more reliable both in fact and judgment' supposes an independent source for verifying his facts: but for some of the more colourful libels (e.g. that Fr Bluet got so drunk that he fell into the Thames) Fr Parsons is our sole authority. The sad truth is that in this controversy both sides attacked the morals rather than the tenets of their adversaries. Parsons was more dextrous and had more ammunition, but he did not rise above the controversial standards of the period.

In Chapter 19, Fr Weston gives a story told him by a fellow prisoner who was an Oxford man and a minister there at the time of the incident (1580). Fr Caraman suggests Thomas Bramstone, but this seems impossible. Bramstone was a novice at Westminster under Queen Mary, went to St John's, Oxford, 1562, waited on Feckenham (his old abbot) in the Tower 1566-72, and then was ten years schoolmaster with that great recusant Sir Thomas Tresham, till his departure from Douai. There is no period when he lapsed from the faith, much less became a minister. The only prisoner at Wisbech who fits the facts is Christopher Bagshaw, Weston's *bête noire*. The only other prisoner who was at Oxford in 1580 was William Wiggs, but there is no evidence that he was ever a minister.

In an appendix is reprinted the moving story of the Wisbech boy including the misreading of his name. It is time justice was done to this young hero, at least to the extent of giving him his rightful identity. His name was not Dowlton but Colton. Robert Colton (he later changed his name to Thomas) was the son of Robert Colton, a joiner of Wisbech. A year before the account here printed he had set out for Valladolid via Dublin, with nine other boys under a tutor, but they were captured at Chester, sent to London on foot 'for the sparing of

charges', and imprisoned in Bridewell. (H.M.C. 8th Report. Append. pt. I, page 376.) Three months later Fr Garnet reports that they were still there and 'hardly used'. This makes Colton's subsequent bravery all the more conspicuous, for he knew what to expect in Bridewell.

There are a few other inaccuracies in the notes. The date of Fr Metham's burial at Wisbech, for instance, should be 1 April, 1592 (page 177). These may seem pedantic criticisms of a book that is addressed to the average reader, but the general standard is so high that it may be worth attending to them in a future edition.

GODFREY ANSTRUTHER, O.P.

THE ALL-PRESENT GOD: A STUDY IN ST AUGUSTINE. By Stanislaus J. Grabowski. (Herder; 34s.)

Due no doubt ultimately to the influence of our dogmatic manuals, the omnipresence of God has become for us a rather unexciting doctrine. Nor would this seem to be a recent development, since in the *Summa* of St Thomas only one rather brief and summary Question is devoted explicitly to it. And while it would be, I think, unfair to St Thomas to say that the position of this Question (I, 8) shows that he would agree with the majority of modern theologians in treating of omnipresence merely as an attribute of the God of reason, nevertheless it cannot be denied that this doctrine was not one of the burning questions of the day which attracted his greatest attention and interest.

Apart, however, from the brevity, the equally remarkable firmness of St Thomas's treatment points to a history. It is the merit of the volume under review to have revealed in detail the history of the struggle to achieve the Christian doctrine of the divine omnipresence, of which achievement St Thomas's Question stands as the lapidary record. Behind St Thomas lies St Augustine; and behind the achievement of St Augustine lies the struggle of the earlier Fathers, a struggle which St Augustine brought to a successful conclusion only because it was one in which he fully shared.

For the early Church, indeed, the problem of omnipresence was *the* problem about God. In a world where religions and religious philosophies jostled each other, the Fathers were preoccupied, not as we are, with showing that there is a God, but with his true nature, and above all with the true nature of his relation to the universe. As the author points out in an interesting passage, this concern was as great in the early centuries as was the concern with the fundamental revealed Christian truths of the Trinity and the Incarnation. But while these latter were thrashed out in public before the whole Church, the former was the subject of a rather more private debate between the theologian and the intellectuals of the age, sometimes even, as in the case of St