

power of the pamphlet propaganda from Catholics and Jesuits in exile in the Low Countries in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. His view is steady enough to isolate the unhealthy Puritan obsession with salvation from the traditional Catholic spirit. One would perhaps question details. Is it entirely just to attribute the agony and turbulence of Donne to Jesuit influence? There is, as Professor Martz himself points out, 'a tone of stridency, almost of truculence' in Donne's *Angst* and one suspects that his apostasy from Catholicism may account for this (none of the other metaphysicals was, I believe, an actual apostate). It is not wise to judge such things hastily but Doctor Johnson has reminded us that no man can do what Donne did 'without great laceration of spirit'. However, that is a small detail and Professor Martz's work is valuable because it suggests fruitful thoughts about the relation of poetry to prayer and religious life in general. Above all he is to be warmly commended for the temperate manner in which he presents his arguments. On subjects such as this the gutters of universities have flowed with the blood of dons. Dr Martz claims no scalps. It is to be hoped that his reviewers will be as restrained.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

CITEAUX AND HER ELDER DAUGHTERS. By Archdale King. (Burns Oates; 30s.)

This volume on Cîteaux and its four daughter houses of La Ferté, Pontigny, Clairvaux and Morimond, is a work of a kind we seldom see nowadays, the 'commonplace book' of an enthusiast, a collection, now full, now rather thin, of the information that can be pieced together about the history of five ancient religious houses, from their foundation to the present day. The book is about the houses as such, about their fabric and disposition, and about those who governed and administered them precisely from a household point of view. In his introduction the author explains that he has renounced larger perspectives, so that his appeal is rather to antiquarian than to more general historical interests. But all those who are fascinated by the Cistercian movement will enjoy reading it: it is curious commentary upon the fate of ideals. How rapid, it seems, was the disappearance of primitive austerity, how long the baroque malaise. The men of the generation which built the great, bare church at Pontigny—the only one of these ancient churches that we can still see for ourselves—could scarcely have foreseen the very different building projects of their successors, or have guessed that an eighteenth-century abbot would run through a fortune of 2,200,000 francs during his term of office, gathering about him a salon patronized by distinguished ladies who would recall with delight the orchestral concerts, 'la courtoisie de l'abbé, et ses prévenances, et son bon goût.'

Yet those later days too are now remote; far more remote, indeed, to us than the days of the monks who saw nothing fanciful in comparing the first four daughters of Cîteaux to the four rivers of Paradise. Moreover, at Cîteaux, where not a stone of St Bernard's time now stands, monks are working and praying again.

ÆLRED SQUIRE, O.P.

BACK TO REALITY. By Gustave Thibon. (Hollis and Carter; 13s. 6d.)

The 'back to the land' movement has always been popular amongst socially-minded Catholics, and nowhere so more than in France. The pessimism of Malthus and Sismondi regarding the future of industrialism greatly influenced Catholic thought, and almost a hundred years before Distributism was even thought of, the first attempts to find a solution to the social problem took the form of land colonies.

The appeal of the land is easy enough to understand, and there can be few people that at one time or another have not been attracted to it. On the one hand there is the appealing beauty of the static rural civilization which the Church has managed to christianize after many, many centuries, and on the other hand there is the dynamic but hideous and raw industrial civilization which has spread with such devastating speed over the whole world, and with which the Church has not yet been able to come to any sort of terms. Faced with these two alternatives, the Christian is greatly tempted to adopt the pessimistic, the defeatist attitude; to predict some sort of apocalyptic disaster, to leave the apparently irredeemable industrial world to its fate, and to preach a return to the simple rural life.

After the collapse of France in June 1940 the 'back to the land' movement became more popular than ever amongst the defeatist elements in French Catholicism. Pétain's plan, with Hitler's blessing, to turn France into a purely agricultural country appeared to be the way of salvation, and in the heart-searching that followed France's total and unexpected defeat, it was only too easy to accuse industrialism and democracy as the causes of disaster.

M. Gustave Thibon was the most distinguished amongst the many French Catholics who took this view, and when he published *Retour au réel* in February 1943, it became a popular text book for the keen supporters of Marshal Pétain's 'Révolution Nationale'. M. Thibon's arguments may indeed have sounded conclusive and irrefutable in occupied and defeated France in 1943, but it must be confessed that some of them sound rather silly today. His views on human love are likely to be distasteful to most Englishmen (and women) whether Catholics or not, and it is difficult not to be impatient with such rubbish