

must be unusual faithfulness, for it bears all the marks of the meditation which any one of the author's readers might make for himself: now spontaneous, now contrived, as when a pattern, for example of the Trinity, is seen stamped on so many situations, both natural and supernatural, and with a clarity which seems almost to belong to private revelation. Again, any one of us might see similes, might make unqualified statements, statements so bald in their affirmations as to be almost scriptural, which would not explain or require explanation, for we should make them to ourselves; the association of ideas would be habitual, *we* should understand what *was* meant, but it is at least problematical whether anyone else would.

With such a book, to ask whether a given statement is true or false seems to be asking the wrong question, or at least one would need to know the author intimately to be able to give an answer; as it is, one must just participate when one can, and leave the rest for someone else. That such participation is possible, and at many different levels, is claimed by the translator in his introduction, and there is at least one level, that of human relationship, where a mind not set in the same key as the author's may make contact with her. Here the thought and the language are very like Martin Buber's; here the private view is, so to say, thrown open, and one may see that this is, after all, a book written for love. 'Love must allow others to be others; it must accept the proximity of other circles, in which others are related, not to it primarily, but to God. It is only by letting others alone and leaving things to God that one learns that the neighbour one does not know belongs to God, and then the light of real helpfulness and true community become possible. It is only when we set our neighbour free, when we recognise and respect his darkness because it is open to the mystery of God, that our reciprocal strangeness is endurable.' (p. 63.)
G.B.

THE GIFT OF GOD. A Study of Sanctifying Grace in the New Testament.
By John Morson, O.C.R. (Mercier Press; 12s. 6d.)

In the Rule of St Benedict there is a period each day given to *lectio divina*, or sacred reading, that is the meditative study of the Scriptures. This book is the product of such meditative reading and it needs to be approached in the same spirit. The author makes use of the Westminster Version of the New Testament, which is closest to the original Greek, and he keeps his eye constantly on the Greek text, so that it is a work of real scholarship. But it does not require any knowledge of Greek in the reader as the Greek words are always transliterated and their meaning carefully explained. At the same time it is a work of sound biblical theology. There is no attempt to read later meanings into words, but a deliberate effort to catch their exact meaning and so to trace the gradual development of doctrine. The books of the New Testament are studied in their chron-

logical order, so that the Gospel of St John comes last, and a brief account is given of the date and authorship of each book. Fr Morson relies chiefly on Catholic authorities, but an interesting use is made of Westcott's *St Paul and Justification* and still more of Newman's *Lectures on Justification*, written when he was an Anglican. The whole book is marked by careful scholarship and sincere thought, though there are inevitably points upon which one would be inclined to disagree with his interpretation. Above all one would quarrel with his interpretation of the works of the Law in St Paul, when contrasted with grace, as applying merely to the ceremonial Law. This seems to be an over-simplification of St Paul's thought, which loses much of its significance. But on the whole it is a book which can be recommended to anyone who wants to make a serious study of the doctrine of the New Testament in the light of the original and who is prepared for the labour of quiet meditative study which it entails.

BEDE GRIFFITHS, O.S.B.

DIE SEELENREISE. By Alfons Rosenburg. (Verlag Otto Walter, 1952.)
 ESSAI SUR L'EXPERIENCE DE LA MORT, suivi du, PROBLEME DU SUICIDE.
 By Paul-Louis Landsberg. (Editions du Seuil.) Translated by Cynthia Rowland; with a foreword by Martin Jarrett-Kerr, C.R. (Rockcliff; 8s. 6d.)

Not long ago a student told me she believed that the human person is annihilated at death; the reason she gave was that she 'could not imagine what it would be like, otherwise'. When communities had a livelier sense of the supernatural this was no difficulty—they had rather to be restrained from too vivid an exercise of their imaginations. Perhaps Alfons Rosenburg's book will stimulate someone to throw up some convincing images to help my student-friend in her dilemma. His work contains brief accounts of the soul's journey after death as envisioned by pagans, Jews, the Gospels, Dante, and various modern seers, Thomas Bromley, Oberlin, Anna Katharina Emmerich, Goethe, etc. Accompanied by several striking illustrations, this volume is full of interesting information and sidelights on the people whose thought it discusses.

A person who really faced up to the mystery of death—indeed, he thought it to be fundamentally *the* philosophical problem—was Paul-Louis Landsberg. A pupil of Max Scheler, and a Catholic, Landsberg was driven out of Germany by the Nazis. In France he used to carry poison around with him so as to be able to kill himself if ever the Gestapo captured him. The Gestapo did capture him, and he eventually died on April 2nd, 1944. But some two years before this date he had already overcome the temptation to commit suicide, and had thrown away the poison. As he told a friend, 'I have met the Christ, who has revealed himself to me'. And as he tells his readers, 'You must not kill yourself, because you must not *throw your*