

MARY: A HISTORY OF DOCTRINE AND DEVOTION. Vol. 2 by Hilda Graef. *Sheed and Ward*. 25s.

With these two long chapters Miss Graef completes her history of Marian theology. Her lucid scholarship makes this second volume as much of a pleasure to read as was the first, but, the nearer she gets to the present day, the further the wood seems to disappear behind the trees. A 'Conclusion' of seventeen lines is surely insufficient to sum up so long and complex a process of development? This is not so much a criticism as a request for a further study from Miss Graef, for she set herself the limited task of giving, in these volumes, 'a survey of the teaching of theologians and preachers' (Vol. 1. p. xix). It is, however, a pity that she does not show the extent to which the contemporary biblical and theological renewal is influencing Marian thinking (neither Karl Rahner's essays on our Lady nor Max Thurian's beautiful book find a mention in the bibliography).

Nonetheless, in its wealth of detail, the whole work provides sobering evidence of how often, and to what extent, the most influential Marian writing has strayed from the sources of theology, particularly in the recurring contrast between the justice of Christ and the mercy of Mary.

Newman's reaction to Pusey's synopsis of the teaching of Bernadine of Siena, Alphonsus of Liguori and Grignon of Montfort illustrates well the discomfort of a great theologian: 'I will have nothing to do with statements, which can only be explained, by being explained away . . . I consider them calculated to prejudice inquirers, to frighten the unlearned, to unsettle consciences, to provoke blasphemy, and to work the loss of souls' (quoted on p. 117).

The problem remains; it was also Newman who wrote: 'love has its own language'. In terms of the overall reform of the Church, it is 'a matter of harmonizing what was excellent in the Marian movement - that vital movement towards the Mother of God which has been a constant element in the Church's life since Christian antiquity - and the unalterable demands that converged in the Council's work' (Canon Laurentin, in *Concilium*, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 79).

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