

the feelings and thoughts of her characters more romantic than is perhaps justified, and occasionally there is a touch of bathos or a lapse into the style of the poorer historical novel. This for example, from a passage on St Bede's boyhood, falls below the level of the book: 'Wherever you looked, you saw either the Lord or one of his saints; it made you feel very, very much in their presence, almost afraid'. Well documented, with a good bibliography, at once scholarly and readable, *Anglo-Saxon Saints and Scholars* should be popular.

ANTHONY ROSS, O.P.

THE WAY OF HAPPINESS. By John Gordon Jameson. (Hodge; 3s. 6d.)
Mr Jameson writes refreshingly about the Beatitudes, combining simplicity of appeal with a careful attention to the exact meaning of the Scriptural texts. E.Q.

JEAN CHRYSOSTOME: LETTRES A OLYMPIAS. Introduction et traduction de Anne-Marie Malingrey. Sources Chrétiennes. (Editions du Cerf; Blackfriars; 14s. 6d.)

This solid and attractive edition of the letters of St John Chrysostom, written during his last exile to his friend the deaconess and great lady of Constantinople, Olympias, is a worthy addition to the collection of Greek patristic texts appearing in the series *Sources Chrétiennes*. The admirable introduction of nearly 90 pages gives an account of the historical setting and the characters of St John and Olympias and deals with a fine balance and penetration with St John's at first sight rather disconcertingly Stoic rather than Christian principles of direction and with his attitude to suffering. There is also a useful *Notice Bibliographique* giving information about editions, translations, and studies relevant to the letters. The main interest of these letters is personal rather than historical or theological. They do not throw much light on the causes of St John Chrysostom's last exile (about which we have plenty of information from other sources); and what little light they throw on his theology is not altogether favourable. But they do show the very lovable character of the man and also the magnificent but by no means inhuman goodness of Olympias. Whatever may be thought of some of his spiritual direction there is nothing of the repulsive Stoic sage about St John himself. Suffering for him and Olympias was not an abstract 'problem'; their physical, mental and (at least in the case of Olympias) spiritual sufferings at the time of this correspondence were very real, and the worst of all was the pain of separation from their friends, a pain which St John, in a most un-Stoic way, felt very intensely and expresses in a most sincere and moving way, in spite of the rhetorical flourishes which were second nature to him. When he insists, as he repeatedly does, on praising God and rejoicing in and for our sufferings it is in the midst of great suffering, and so with a manifest sincerity and reality, that he is doing it.

The correspondence is also of great interest as illuminating a par-

ticular moment in the history of Christian Hellenism. St John, at least in his longer and more studied letters, is deeply under the influence of what may be called the Stoic-rhetorical moral tradition. In studying his dealing with it, how it at times overmasters him and at times is subdued to an authentically Christian thought and expression, we can form some idea of the complexity of the situation of a Christian brought up in the ancient culture (itself a very complex thing). It is something which always has to be kept in mind when assessing the degree of authority to be given to the teaching of any particular Father, and the study of it can often be of great value in many ways to us in our still more complicated intellectual situation.

A. H. ARMSTRONG

THE MYSTICAL BODY AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE. By Fr M. Eugene Boylan, O.C.R. (Mercier; 5s.)

The author of this essay has already made a well-deserved name for his spiritual writings. For that reason the book, of which the subtitle is 'The Foundation of the Spiritual Life', is rather disappointing and gives the impression of a successful author who is pushed forward too rapidly. The subject is of paramount importance and there is little in English to supply what the book sets out to provide. But the Papal Encyclical on the mystical body, often quoted at length, does not receive very much elucidation, and considerable space is occupied by the endeavour, so frequently made before, to describe the nature of the unity of Christ in his member, a unity called 'ontological' by Mersch, 'quasi-formal' by Mura. It would have been more in conformity with the title, as well as with the desire to convey the nature of the unity, had the author given far more space to the effect of the unity in the individual Christian who 'puts on' Christ, lives by *Christian* virtues, and suffers in the death of Christ on the cross. The identification of Christ with his members could in fact be traced in its spiritual effects right up to the transforming union of the highest and holiest Christian life. However, there are good things in the book, and the reader must remember that it is the first of a series edited by the capable theological learning of Fr James, O.F.M.Cap., so that it is designed to open the subject and raise the problems rather than to provide a complete guide to the spiritual life in terms of the mystical body. And there is a unique feature in the book in the *Publisher's* introduction; for the director of the Mercier Press takes the opportunity of stating the aims of his firm in recalling men to the spiritual life.

JOHN HUNSTER

LA SYNTHÈSE THOMISTE. Par P. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. (Desclée; n.p.)

The interest of this tremendous contribution to the *Dictionnaire de Théologie catholique* (here only slightly enlarged into a book of 740 pages) for readers of LIFE OF THE SPIRIT lies in its synopsis of the