

conscious activity remains closely bound to physical organism. The activity is controlled by ideal values which each organism realizes; at the conscious level these values are understood by the metaphysician in non-discursive knowing.

This is reminiscent of Whitehead, and behind him of Aristotle; but a brief summary gives little idea of Mr Tomlin's range of thought. His book includes penetrating criticisms of many philosophical and scientific theses; eventually he takes us through mystical experience to the edge of revealed truth. Yet on the whole he is more impressive than convincing. His thought is too close-packed to be fully worked out; too much is expressed through other people's ideas and words. The reader is hard put to know where he is being led, and his appreciation of the frequent insights is drowned in the general flood. Mr Tomlin admires Scheler; he suffers from a similar failure of style. But his next book could well be very important indeed.

LAURENCE BRIGHT, O.P.

ST MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR: THE ASCETIC LIFE. THE FOUR CENTURIES ON CHARITY. Translated by Polycarp Sherwood, O.S.B., S.T.D. Ancient Christian Writers XXI. (Longmans; 25s.)

St Maximus is a theologian, according to Dom Sherwood, rather in the sense in which St John is a theologian than that in which we speak of St Thomas as one. For the coherence of St Maximus' thought 'does not derive from the systematization of the Church's teaching in function of some humanly-positing principle or philosophy'. This is surely a judgment very much from outside: St Thomas would not have written his philosophy so far into his theology unless he had been convinced that it was the true one, and therefore equally, though not equally directly, from God. The theology of St John comes directly from God, is part of our Christian Revelation; St Maximus meditates on this revelation in the light of the experience of the contemplative life, St Thomas in the light of the experience of a Christian philosopher. This is surely St Maximus' true greatness; although the *Centuries* are professedly a catena of quotations and paraphrases from the Fathers, a weight of personal experience can be felt behind each one of them. Charity commands love of our neighbour and the keeping of the commandments, and therefore a purification of our affections through the ascetic life: this is St Maximus' central theme. Both the works translated here were written for monks, and we should keep this very much in mind when reading passages like the following: 'one is then able to entemn women when, after withdrawal into solitude, one properly emaciates his body with self-mastery'. This attitude to women is the one likely to shock us most; several times they are placed among

the things that are objects of passion, 'women, money, gifts, and so on'. We should remember the early monastic setting, and the desert monk who would not embrace even his mother lest the hard-won tranquillity of passion might be disturbed.

The translations are clear and readable, and the introduction interesting, though not always clear. 'Supernal' is not a pleasant adjective in modern English, nor 'laudative' or 'ensuant'. *Enchoresis gnomike* perhaps defies translation, but 'gnomic emigration' conjures up quite the wrong picture; a fantasy from Walt Disney possibly?

J.S.

THEY STAND APART. Edited by Judge Tudor Rees and Harley V. Usill.  
(Heinemann; 21s.)

It may be accounted for righteousness to this generation that whatever their moral shortcomings, they are deeply concerned about the justice of criminal laws, and the effect of penalties inflicted on law-breakers. Inevitably, acute searchings of conscience have been caused for some time by the increasing number of prosecutions for homosexual offences, of which seven times as many are now known to the police as was the case twenty years ago. Are these unfortunates really responsible for what they do? Should they be given medical treatment instead of punishment? If they must be punished, are they being punished in the best way? Before these subjects can be discussed intelligently, a great deal has to be learnt about a subject until recently under a rigid taboo, and there is a real danger of rushing from one set of errors into another. This symposium, comprising contributions from experts on the legal, theological, medical and statistical aspects, should prove invaluable for removing misconceptions and indicating lines of advance. If it has few solutions to offer that is not the editor's fault.

The full and able summary on the law in other countries prepared by Mr Hammelmann is, I believe, the best available in English. He shows that with one obsolescent exception (Norway) no attempt is made to restrict the private activities of adults, but considerable pains are taken to protect juveniles up to twenty-one. An illuminating chapter on homosexuality and Christian morals (very necessary for a public unaccustomed to consider the rational foundations of Christian rules of conduct!) is contributed by Dr D. S. Bailey, author of a learned work on *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition*. All that he says will not be accepted even by the members of his own communion, but his conclusions in respect of the unnatural and essentially sinful nature of homosexual practices, and of the moral responsibility of the invert, are unimpeachable. Like many people nowadays he does not consider that the state is morally justified in making homosexual acts between