

West is of course true; but the East had a quite different tradition in the matter. And neither East nor West alone constitutes The Church.

DONALD ATTWATER

THE DOCTRINE OF THE VOID. By Rev. Leonard A. McCann, C.S.B. (The Basilian Press, Toronto. Duckett, London; 21s.)

The most satisfying part of this book is the first, an excellent summary of St John of the Cross's teaching of the voiding of the faculties by the active and passive nights of the soul. For this is the main theme of the book despite its misleading title, which suggests an esoteric Eastern doctrine rather than Christian mystical theology. Nevertheless, while reading the latter parts of the work, I could not rid myself of the impression that Father McCann, rather like Don Quixote, is fighting windmills. Who are those theologians whom he implicitly corrects, who would assert that St Thomas and St John of the Cross are teaching opposite doctrines? He is trying to prove by a wealth of citations that, despite certain superficial differences, both agree in fundamentals. But are there any serious Thomists who deny this? He stresses again and again that the differences are due to the fact that St Thomas treats his subject as a speculative theologian and St John of the Cross as a 'practitioner' of the spiritual life—surely something quite obvious to anyone even superficially acquainted with both. Nevertheless, the book contains much useful ammunition for those who have to defend true mysticism against the assaults of some of our contemporaries who, as Father L. J. Bondy, C.S.B., writes in his Foreword, 'place a dangerous faith in irrational forces'.

The book is unfortunately marred by its style. Whenever it is possible to choose between a good English word of two syllables and a Latin equivalent of four to six, the author invariably plunges for the latter. Thus: 'The laws and conditions of their development in the direction of Christian perfection, as manifested in the revealed word of God, wherein we find concrete exemplification of supernatural perfection', or 'Our connaturality with God is rendered operative by the virtue of charity' and, of course, 'contact' instead of touch even when translating the French verb *toucher*!

While our theologians are writing like this, can we really blame non-Catholics if they regard our religion as a foreign importation?

H. C. GRAEF

WILLIAM WESTON: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN ELIZABETHAN. Translated from the Latin by Philip Caraman, S.J. With a Foreword by Evelyn Waugh. (Longmans; 18s.)

Father Caraman's *Weston* has all the enthralling excitement of his