

17. PRAISE HIS NAME BECAUSE THE LORD IS SWEET. Look for no cessation of praise: it will be as food for you, at once strengthening and sweet. *Praise his name because the Lord is sweet.* HIS MERCY ENDURETH FOR EVER. Once you have been delivered his mercy towards you will not cease, for it remains in his constant protection of you throughout eternal life. *His mercy endureth for ever* AND HIS TRUTH FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION. This may mean *all* generations, or that of earth and that of heaven. The former is the generation wherein mortal man has his birth, the latter generates unto immortal life. His truth prevails in both; not merely in heaven but also on earth, else we should not read: *Truth is sprung out of the earth* (Ps. 84, 12), nor would the very Truth have declared: *Behold I am with you all days, even to the end of the world* (Matth. 28, 20).

REVIEWS

AWAKE IN HEAVEN. By Gerald Vann, O.P. (Bles; 7s. 6d.)

In *Awake in Heaven* there is unity of thought but there is not unity of expression. One is continually asking oneself for whom is the book written? There are many beautiful passages but it is not a beautiful book, and since the beginning is the most beautiful part one reads on with a sense of increasing disappointment. The beauty of the beginning is glimpsed again in 'What think ye of Christ?' and in passages of 'Dogma and Freedom' and 'Come, live with me', but it is disturbing rather than relieving. One has seen what Father Vann can do and one regrets that he has not done it continually—it is not because it is beyond him. The reason is surely to be found in the making of the book—it has been put together from two series of broadcast talks, from conferences delivered at the University chaplaincy, from papers read at the Plater Dining Club and on other occasions and from various published articles. There have been a few additions and of course there has been a certain amount of dove-tailing, and Father Vann's claim is true, the whole book does form a single argument . . . but he is apparently not arguing all the time with the same person. (To Father Vann, whose great thesis here and elsewhere is that all man's 'making' must make for unity, pp. 74 and 75 and *passim*, this must be a particularly galling criticism, but whether it is justified or not may be judged by reading consecutively Chapters 4 and 5, and the contrast is all the more striking if you start at the beginning of the book.) There are one or two minor criticisms on matter: it is hardly true to define inspiration quite baldly as that 'whereby the biblical writer is guided as to what to put down or not, like a pen in

the hand of the Holy Spirit', (p. 64) and several of my theologian friends and myself are still pondering why 'the definition of the Immaculate Conception was necessary to preserve the universality of Christ's redemption'. (p. 66).

It may be presumptuous, it is certainly a '*cri de cœur*'—Father Vann can put the truths of faith over in a homely, beautiful way: he can make faith sound exciting, enticing and he does it by meditating out loud, not by didactic teaching: by letting us see his thoughts not by explaining to us the thoughts of the Church. He is too thorough a Thomist for there to be any essential difference but there is a very great accidental difference of form. One's imagination boggles at the thought of what might be achieved by his genius of expression coupled with the genius of a Kirkland Bridge in getting a thing over. Father Vann ought to write for the more simple people—nothing but the very best is good enough for them. They are people whose humility would prevent them from reading a book whose contents page showed a plan divided into Background, Statement, Presuppositions, Applications and Appendices. They are simple people who would think that such a book demanded a power of sustained reasoning and concentrated thought that is beyond them, and they would leave the book aside. Now Father Vann could (I am not going back on myself—in this book he has not) take such people by the hand and lead them through the whole argument of this book and make them so want to read on by the twofold beauty of thought and expression that they would not realise that they were concentrating or even thinking—it would be such sheer enjoyment. They are the mass of the people, inside or outside the Church, and Father Vann could be their prophet, but instead he drives them from him with chapter-headings such as 'Thomist Ethics' and the 'World of Today', and by arguments for the existence of God which are too succinct for those who need to be convinced and too long for those who do not. Let him address himself to the lowly and the mighty will stand around cap in hand, but if he addresses himself, or even seems to address himself, to the mighty, the lowly, his people, will hurry away.

TERENCE TANNER.

WE DIE STANDING UP. By Dom Hubert van Zeller, O.S.B. (Sheed and Ward; 7s. 6d.)

When faith is displaced by disbelief, and later by unbelief, then morality gives way to immorality and later to amorality. When spiritual values yield to material values, when the Christian degenerates into the pagan, the mind as well as the will atrophies, and man tends to become a creature anæmic and insipid. Since he lives in a pagan atmosphere and environment, the Christian might well become infected. It is to attack and expose such infection that Dom Hubert