

It is of course most appropriate that these words should be referred to the undivided divinity and glory belonging to the Three Divine Persons.

An antiphon is not of its nature a Scripture lesson, but rather a short phrase set to music to indicate the tone and general ideas either of the feast or of the psalm which follows. It might be useful to add that the Church does sometimes quote passages from the Old Testament which are believed to be foreshadowings of the New Testament revealed doctrine. But that is not the case here.

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*The Prayer of Manasses appears in editions of the Latin Vulgate Bible, together with the Third and Fourth Books of Esdras. Does this mean that these books were once regarded as canonical Scripture? And if not so regarded today why are they included in the Vulgate? When and by whom was the Prayer of Manasses written?*

These books are among those which were once thought by some Fathers, but never by the Church, to be canonical Scripture. They were excluded from the official lists of the Scriptures, and are hence to be reckoned among the apocryphal writings. The Prayer of Manasses, which we have in Greek, was probably written in that language originally and appears to be based on the account of the king's repentance recorded in II Paralipomenon (Chronicles), xxxiii, 12 f. It is not however the actual prayer which (the author of Par. states) was to be found "in the words of the kings of Israel" (verse 18). Nothing is known of the Prayer referred to by the Chronicler and it appears to have been lost early. But the repentance of the most infamous King of Juda clearly made a profound impression on the Jewish people, and what more natural than that a devout Jew should compose a prayer based on the theme and put it in the king's mouth?

The work appears first in extant literature in the *Didascalia*, an early Christian writing of the first half of the third century, A.D.; and it must have been composed an appreciable time before that. It never formed part of the Septuagint Greek Old Testament. It was used as a Canticle in the liturgy of the Eastern Church and is found appended to the Psalter in certain uncial and many cursive manuscripts. As it was never part of the Hebrew or Greek Bibles, St. Jerome did not translate it. We do not know when the Latin translation of it was made, but it was probably after the time of St. Jerome. The Prayer, however, is found in many mediaeval manuscripts of the Vulgate, immediately after II Par. and under the title *Oratio Manassae*. The earliest of these manuscripts dates from the thirteenth century, so far as is known. The Prayer was printed in the Latin Bible of R. Stephanus (1540). The Vulgate issued by Pope Sixtus the Fifth did not contain it, but the

revised edition of Pope Clement the Eighth (1592) printed it together with III and IV Esdras at the end of the New Testament. A short prefatory note by St. Robert Bellarmine (which still appears in modern editions) states that these books were not reckoned by the Council of Trent among the canonical Scriptures and are therefore placed outside the series of canonical Books. But why, one asks, are they included at all in editions of the Vulgate? The note gives the answer: "lest they should altogether perish" and explains that they were quoted by some of the holy Fathers and were printed in some Latin Bibles, both manuscript and printed. That is to say—they hold a privileged position among apocryphal works; and deservedly. For their contents are dignified, orthodox and devotional and largely drawn from the canonical Scriptures.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Space and Spirit*, by Sir Edmund Whittaker, F.R.S., T. Nelson and Son.

The substance of this little book has already seen publication in another place (cf. "*The New Physics and the Philosophy of Catholics*" in *The Month*, March–April, 1944). In its present form it is somewhat more developed with a historical survey of the physical sciences and what the author calls in the sub-title: "Theories of the Universe and the Arguments for the Existence of God." The aim of the work, given on page 40, is as follows: "I leave on one side many abstract philosophical questions, and concentrate rather on a humbler, but I hope useful, enquiry as to whether the conceptions of the external world on which St. Thomas based his arguments (for the existence of God) have been affected by the development of scientific knowledge since the thirteenth century." Finding that such conceptions have changed, he argues that cosmology, and above all, the five classical proofs, should likewise be revised in the light of these new conceptions. The complaint of the author is that, so far, no such revision has taken place, and that the Neo-Thomists will not admit the need for it.

Sir Edmund Whittaker therefore leads the way in his self-appointed task. What precisely is this task? First, he attacks "the principle that metaphysics is completely independent of physics" and declares it to be a statement inconsistent with the facts (p. 71). Yet this "principle," he asserts, is at the root of modern Catholic philosophy which consequently is rendered sterile and ineffective. This is simply untrue. Apart from a few, venerable, die-hard Thomists, no modern Catholic philosopher would admit this so-called principle (least of all when applied to cosmology), any more than they would admit what Sir Edmund seems