

to respond to the grace of faith, if it is given him, is not primarily to answer difficulties (though of course this must be done and done satisfactorily); but to lay before him as clearly and attractively as possible that grace will enable him to accept, and to watch for signs of his readiness to follow God's call. The concentration on answering difficulties seems to spring from a confusion of means and end; and because of the implied suggestion 'I can *prove* to you that you ought to be a Catholic', also runs the danger of simply incurring resentment.

I should be wronging Dom Aldhelm if I were to suggest that his Letters carry this implication. He would, I am sure, agree that no one can be argued into believing. But it seems to me that there is a misplacing of the main emphasis in his book which would make me hesitate to give it to Anglican enquirers.

F.R.

THE YOKE OF DIVINE LOVE. By Dom Hubert van Zeller. (Burns and Oates; 16s.)

The sub-title, 'A Study of Conventual Perfection', warns us that the book is for monks, and the preface expresses a hope that it will be useful for those who 'while living in the world, practise poverty, chastity and obedience on their own'. It will help anyone who is seriously seeking perfection. Reading the book is like watching how the monks do it, and this is instructive for anybody.

The Yoke of the Religious Life, the Yoke of Prayer, the Yoke of Community Life divide it naturally into three parts. A Benedictine ideal emerges, practical, liturgical, embracing the whole man. The author's aphoristic and forceful delineations of human nature subjecting itself to the triple yoke are full of insight and sometimes perhaps a little discouraging. He seems almost to enjoy correcting our poor human self-deceptions. It is good for the soul and perhaps a bit hard on the feelings.

'Liturgical Prayer' (pp. 104-115) is a help for anyone who says Office. It does seem to attribute a quasi-magic power to this most wonderful form of prayer, but taken all together this chapter is a deeply impressive help to the recitation of the breviary, in or out of choir. The emphasis on its *per se* value is, after all, only an emphasis.

The usefulness of this, as of other books of Fr van Zeller, is rather in the direction of examination of conscience than in the direction of the actual deepening and strengthening of one's love and life. Each chapter is like a conference to the novices in which the Novice Master pulls no punches and draws his examples from real life. Weaknesses are mercilessly exposed and the Master, being on the right side of the conference table, allows no retorts. It is coldly compelling. We can

all benefit from this treatment, from time to time, indeed we all need it. That is why everybody should read at least one or two of the books of Dom Hubert van Zeller.

G. M. CORR, O.S.M.

LATE MEDIEVAL MYSTICISM. Edited by Ray C. Petry. (S.C.M. Press: The Library of Christian Classics, vol. XIII; 35s.)

The scope of this book is much wider than its title may imply, for it covers a period stretching from St Bernard (d.1153) to St Catherine of Genoa (d.1510). A long introduction explains the province and character of mysticism, and gives a detailed account of the setting of late medieval mysticism. The chapters on the writers of the period consist of biographical and bibliographical notices, synopses of doctrine, and long extracts from well-known and characteristic works taken from translations already published elsewhere. The authors discussed include Bernard, the Victorines, Francis, Lull, Eckhart, Rolle, Suso, Catherine of Sienna, Ruysbroeck, and the 'Theologica Germanica'. Such a vast field is almost bound to lead to many notable omissions, both in the introductions and in the extracts. For instance, there is not one mention of Gregory of Nyssa, who was such an important source in medieval spirituality, and the only Cistercian writers named are Bernard, William of St Thierry and Gueric, such important figures as Aelred, Isaac of Stella and Helinand being passed over completely. It is a great shame that the flourishing school of English mystics in the fourteenth century should deserve such little notice: the editor has completely ignored Julian of Norwich, 'The Cloud of Unknowing', and Walter Hilton. In fact, one gathers the general impression that this book is hampered by its ambitiousness: a more coherent and accurate picture of this long period might have been provided if this book had aimed at a less historical approach, and had instead tried to show the themes of late medieval mysticism by means of short and illustrative passages from the authors of the period. But this book does provide a convenient introduction to these writers in so far as it collects in one volume lengthy extracts from their works, and provides an excellent and thorough bibliography.

ADRIAN WALKER

THE DIOCESAN PRIEST. By Eugène Masure. (Geoffrey Chapman, London; 18s.)

The sub-title of this book is 'A study in the theology and spirituality of the priesthood'. This indicates the book's scope and shows that the book ought to be of interest to all Catholics—to religious and to the laity no less than to the pastoral clergy. It is therefore something of a disappointment that the treatment of the subject is so involved. All in