

that the sayings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (and elsewhere) about divorce, for instance, are not absolute laws forbidding it under all circumstances but simply broad general statements of the *ideal* of a life-long indissoluble relationship . . .' (p. 123). Manifestly such statements in the book preclude it from being any help to a Catholic's knowledge of the Scriptures.  
R.D.P.

A TIME TO KEEP SILENCE. By Patrick Leigh Fermor. (John Murray; 15s.)

A passion for monasteries is not necessarily a sign of any deep understanding of their real function. They represent in the modern world a unique retreat from noise and neurosis, and the writings of Thomas Merton, for instance, have made them familiar to many who would hesitate to begin to believe in the truths they exist to proclaim. Mr Leigh Fermor has already revealed a real sympathy for the pattern of monastic life, and his present book—an account of visits to the abbeys of St Wandrille, La Grande Trappe, the Rock Monasteries of Cappadocia, and with a final chapter written at Farnborough—is subtle and observant, elegantly written and pleasantly illustrated. Even so, fifteen shillings seems much to pay for ninety pages, however distinguished.

Mr Leigh Fermor remarks on the discretion of the monks of St Wandrille, who never enquired into his own spiritual convictions. He is a detached observer, yet captivated by the peace and organic rhythm of a life so timeless and yet so filled at each moment with abiding meaning. He remains, in particular, 'perplexed and uncertain' about the life at La Trappe, so much harder to discern for the visitor than the human moderation of the Benedictines. And writing his postscript in the improbable setting of Farnborough, with its *mélange* of Napoleonic grandeur amidst the red brick semi-detached houses of an outer suburb and with supersonic bangs from test planes overhead, he finds intact—here as everywhere else subject to ancient monastic fidelity—'an ancient wisdom exorcizing the memory of the conflict and bloodshed of the intervening centuries, that brings its message of tranquillity to quieten the mind and compose the spirit'. His book is itself a peaceful one, yet monasteries are more than quiet places: their peace finally springs from the hard allegiance of a truth accepted and served.  
I.E.

THE WAY IT WORKED OUT. By G. B. Stern. (Sheed and Ward; 10s. 6d.)

This sequel to Miss Stern's *All in Good Time* continues the story of her Catholic experience. It is not the story of a conversion but reflections on this and that with little order to speak of by one who has been a short time in the Church. To some extent it reminds one of Miss