

'Religiousness A', to which he opposes true Christianity, 'Religiousness B', which stands for the unbridgeable gap between this world and God. 'When Christianity has lost its power to offend it has lost its power to save.' The significance of Kierkegaard must be in the depth and wisdom of his *obiter dicta* rather than in the truth of his teaching on superhuman questions which can only be answered by a superhuman teacher.

D.S.

THROUGH A CONVERT'S WINDOW. By Doris Burton. (Duckett; 7s. 6d.)

The writer came to the Church by way of agnosticism and the Groups. Becoming a Catholic, she became an optimist. In finding the answer to her own spiritual difficulties, she discovered that she 'held the key to things temporal and things eternal'. In the essays which make up her book she applies that key to a variety of problems. If her treatment, especially of social questions, does not always penetrate very deeply, still, her well-founded confidence in the Christian answers should be infectious. She ought to persuade many unconverted readers to consider the Catholic solutions; and she herself will be the first to acknowledge that their application may demand hard thought and self-sacrifice *usque ad mortem*.

J.H.



EXTRACTS

DOMINICAN REVIEWS on the spiritual life have been multiplying since the war. The third one in the English language has now appeared from Dublin under the title of *Doctrine and Life* (1s. 6d. every second month, or 10s. per annum, from St Saviour's Dublin, C.16). The Irish Dominican Provincial introduces the first number:

The writers in this magazine undertake the task of initiating the faithful into the treasures hidden beneath these sacred mysteries [of the Christian life]. In doing so they will stress the *dogmatic* truths. . . . The purpose of *Doctrine and Life* will be to explain 'the abundant riches of God's grace', so that 'doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in him, who is the head, even Christ'. With this end in view they will draw on the traditional sources of Catholic teaching—Sacred Scripture, the Fathers and Doctors of the Church. In everything they will follow, of course, the guiding light of St Thomas of Aquin.

And the Archbishop of Port of Spain, the Most Reverend Finbar Ryan, O.P., takes up this theme showing how it links up with the original plans for *La Vie Spirituelle*. It is clear from these opening

articles that the review is intended in a special way for Ireland, for the primary need for the average Irishman according to these authors is to deepen his faith so that it can grow into a full-blooded Christian life. In this respect perhaps every country has its own peculiar spiritual needs arising from national temperament and circumstance. It is therefore a very excellent thing that Ireland will be so well served by *Doctrine and Life*—for the first issue augurs well: a reprint from Fr Gabriel of St Mary Magdalen's book on St John of the Cross dealing with Christian Perfection, followed up by the Editor, Fr Anselm Moynihan, O.P., on the 'Precept of Holiness'; Fr Moran, O.P., makes a timely 'appeal' for liturgical spirituality in a country where the liturgical revival has not yet gained a footing, Miss Hilda Graef provides an introduction to prayer, both balanced and practical. The whole issue illustrates its title very clearly—pieties and 'devotions' do not appear, and the keynote is that of the mystery of grace as the source of life. One small request we would make is that the individual pages should be given titles to help the reader to find his way.

Cross and Crown, the American version of LIFE OF THE SPIRIT and *Doctrine and Life*, concludes its second year in the December issue with a handsome number of some variety. It draws considerably from European sources with articles from Gerald Vann (England), Garrigou-Lagrange (France), Hyacinth Hering (Switzerland), Joseph Geenen (Belgium), and James Visker (Holland), all of them Dominicans. We may quote a significant passage from Fr Vann:

If you rediscover hell, you are on the way to rediscovering heaven: you are on the way to discovering not now a purely transcendent God, and still less a purely immanent god, but a God who is transcendent-immanent: a God who has descended into the abyss of man's folly and iniquity, who has gone down into the darkness, and in the darkness is recognised, and in the darkness is worshipped with a *De profundis*.

THE ROMAN CONGRESS concerned with the State of Perfection, held last autumn, is only gradually being reported fully in the press. The latest contribution towards our enlightenment on this subject comes from *La Vie Spirituelle* (February), whose editor was present at the discussions. As a Congress, he says, it was insufficiently representative, the 'anglo-saxon' world was scarcely apparent and the problems discussed were mainly Italian, in particular the problems regarding the laity. The Congress nevertheless surveyed almost the entire field with seventy lectures and reports on religious discipline, formation and apostolate, so that the programme was overloaded; and while it was evidently intended to be the first of a series and therefore to give a conspectus of all the

problems, many delicate and pressing problems were skated over with little consideration. Little time was left for discussion in the meetings. Despite these disadvantages the benign and masterful presidency of Padre Larroana established a great harmony among the members of the Congress, who were able to make many valuable contacts and elaborate the themes of the lectures in their private discussions. Moreover, in the assemblies themselves there was considerable unanimity on some points, such as the need of revision in the studies to prepare religious for the apostolate. The whole Congress was established on the foundation of prayer, which was organised morning and evening for the members.

La Vie Spirituelle (February) also contains a review of the Apostolic Constitution 'Sponsa Christi' for religious sisters.

In *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique* (October-December, 1950), Père Bacht contributes a learned article on the importance of St Pachomius in the history of Christian monasticism in view of the recent discovery of a coptic library of gnostic origin, for St Pachomius wrote in the same locality and language and at the same period.

Vedanta and the West (Los Angeles) is a review which has only recently become known to LIFE OF THE SPIRIT. It is a journal devoted to the neo-mystical school of Huxley and Heard. The contents of the January-February (1951) issue explains its nature: 'The Yoga of St John of the Cross: a Study in Comparative Mysticism', 'The Eternal Gospel and the Cow', and 'What Vedanta Means to Me', by Gerald Heard.

A new *Album Liturgique* (No. 16, Cerf and Blackfriars Publications) is very welcome; it is 'La Clé de l'histoire sainte', containing eight chapters which cover 'the eight main stages in the religious history of the world'. In other words, it is a popular biblical study describing the history of the Jews up to the time of the coming of the Kingdom of God. The illustrations are perhaps not up to the usual standard of these Albums, but its letterpress makes a vivid introduction to Old Testament history.

LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

Contributors are encouraged to submit original MSS. or translations from the Fathers. *Literary Communications* should be addressed to The Editor, Life of the Spirit, Blackfriars, Oxford (Tel. 47221). The Editor cannot be responsible for the loss of MSS. submitted; and no MS. will be returned unless accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. *Subscriptions, Orders and Communications* regarding *Advertisements* should be addressed to The Manager, Blackfriars Publications, 34 Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1 (Museum 5728). Annual Subscription 12s. 6d. post free (U.S.A. \$2.00). *Binding*: Orders and Enquiries for binding volumes of the review may be sent to the Kemp Hall Bindery, 33 St Aldate's, Oxford.