

## REVIEWS

ST TERESA OF JESUS. By P. Silverio de Santa Teresa, O.D.C. (Sands; 7s. 6d.)

A new life of St Teresa by so distinguished an authority as P. Silverio de Santa Teresa must be welcomed by all admirers of the saint.

P. Silverio explains in the foreword that in undertaking this 'short life' his intention has been 'to enable those who have no time for lengthy Teresian biographies to become acquainted in a few hours with the life and doings of a great writer who, as woman and saint, has acquired a universal reputation, seldom equalled in the domain of Christian spirituality'.

The present work is thus, intentionally, elementary, rather an introduction to St Teresa than a critical or prolonged study such as the name of the author might lead one to expect, and this is at first disappointing; but such an introduction is no doubt needed, and is of course far better done by an expert.

The only way to get to know St Teresa fully is to read her own works, and that not once or twice but many times, but many people hesitate to embark on what they think of as too rarified a spirituality, and they may be encouraged to attempt it by acquaintance with her vital and human personality 'at once divinely human and humanly divine'. This important element of personal charm is indeed admirably brought out in this little book.

The text is supported by constant reference to original sources and by many useful footnotes.

The translation seems to suffer in many places from a too literal rendering of the Spanish idiom: phrases which in the original would read, no doubt, quite naturally and simply, produce in English a stilted and over-pietistic style, which is out of keeping with the general tenour.

The illustrations are quite unworthy of the text.

ROSALIND MURRAY

THE POEMS OF ST JOHN OF THE CROSS: Spanish-English text, translated by E. Allison Peers. (Burns Oates; 3s. 6d.)

The publication of the Poems of St John of the Cross in a separate volume fulfils a long-felt want, and the present edition, in which the Spanish text is accompanied by an English translation, page by page, is particularly useful.

The poetry of St John of the Cross has baffled the endeavours of many translators. Perhaps it is intrinsically untranslatable into English; the form and idiom of literary style may be too different; for any attempt to reproduce in English the fluent rhyming and lyrical cadence of the Spanish results inevitably in a jingle, more reminiscent of a popular hymn than of the original poetry; yet to