

that of the Society of Jesus, the emphasis on detachment and on meditations upon hell and judgment. It is significant that the first edition of the Greek *Philokalia* was printed at Venice '*Con Licenza de Superiori e Privilegio*'. Careful reading of even the present volume will disprove many current generalisations on the antithesis between Eastern and Western spirituality. But its primary value for the twentieth-century English public is the same as that for its readers in nineteenth-century Russia: the emphasis and re-emphasis on the closeness of the Person of Christ. 'We should always be turning the Name of Jesus Christ round the spaces of our heart, as lightning circles round the skies before rain.'

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

STUDIES OF THE SPANISH MYSTICS. By E. Allison Peers. (S.P.C.K.; 22s. 6d.)

With this volume, Professor Peers begins the re-issue of his well-known and useful book which, this time, is to be completed with a third volume. The chapter on St John of the Cross has been re-written. It is a very readable account with copious quotation from the works of this writer. One notes that the author agrees with Abbot Chapman in partly rejecting the idea that St Teresa excels in the description of initial states of prayer while St John excels in the final states. Professor Peers does not go quite so far as Chapman, who held, I think, that the reverse was the case—as it surely is? A comparison, however, might be made between them in regard to subject-matter. St Teresa's is pre-eminently psychology and St John's theology. Professor Peers is unduly hard on the latter's doctrinal ballads. Mr Campbell's recent translation will show readers with no Spanish some of their good qualities.

Professor Peers remains puzzling on Fray Luis de León. Briefly, one finds the insistence on the love of nature in that famous writer rather overdone; the statement that there is an almost total absence of asceticism in his writings is very difficult to square with the texts and the insistence that he is a mystic at all is unconvincing. We are told that León was a nature-mystic, but we are given no definition of this nor any description of its relation to mysticism in the other sense that is in question in the remainder of this volume. León was a mystic only in a sense of the word that exists, certainly, but with a different connotation altogether from that of a recipient of infused contemplation.

The Bibliography, as is well-known, is a model of its kind and endlessly useful. It will receive the augmentations of a quarter of a century in Volume III.

EDWARD SARMIENTO

RELIGIOUS OBEDIENCE. By Ferdinand Valentinc, O.P. (Burns Oates; 9s. 6d.)

This is a very thoughtful and thought-provoking little book and the fruit of a very wide experience in a particular field. Though written for

religious sisters, the principles involved have equal relevance for men.

In the title it is not altogether clear what is meant by 'Religious' Obedience. Perhaps a better title would have been 'The Virtue and Vow of Obedience'. One would have liked to see, early on, a clear definition of the vow and the virtue of obedience in terms of the will. That would have avoided too great a concern with a theory of 'blind obedience'. But one gains the impression that the author is more concerned with the psychiatry of nuns' obedience than with an abstract delineation of the subject.

It is surely necessary clearly to distinguish the subject-matter of the vow and virtue from the motive of action. The vow of obedience does not of its essence require a performance proceeding from a supernatural motive. In this it differs from the virtue. The author maintains that surrender of judgment is the greatest sacrifice of a religious. (p. 67.) St Thomas's view is that a person makes a holocaust of his life by the vow of obedience, 'whereby he offers God his own will by which he makes use of all the powers and habits of the soul'. (II-II. 186, vii, cf. 186, I.) The will is the master-power.

Fr Valentine makes many shrewd observations. Authority wherever possible should be national in character. (p. x.) Religious life in every country must have its own peculiar problems. (p. xi.) Most religious sisters have not the opportunity of acquiring new ideas easily, and the hope is expressed that things may be one day altered. That superiors can command religious sisters to reveal what is in their minds is perhaps an over-statement. From what is written on page 30 it would be a mistake to conclude that the consultative vote in Council is a mere formality. It is suggested that there should be discussions among the sisters on the spiritual life, as a remedy for 'a mental boredom which encourages a pietistic and emotional approach to spiritual things by way of compensation'. (p. 85.) But it is unrealistic to dismiss the problem of overwork in modern religious communities by saying that it 'is largely a state of mind'. (p. 100.)

There is a timely exposition of the obligation in conscience of professional secrecy regarding confidential matters and the contents of letters. And there are useful pages on the freedom given to religious in the choice of confessor and director.

There seems little warrant for superiors of women becoming quasi 'confessors' and directors of their subjects. By appointment or election their authority changes hands. They have not the requisite training for dealing with matters of conscience, and such theology as they possess is little more than a rule-of-thumb handed down by a community tradition.

A useful appendix on Humbert of Romans, O.P., is taken from

Fr Vincent McNabb, O.P. A dedication is made to the Dominican Nuns of St Dominic's Priory, Carisbrooke.

This little book may be read with profit, and would serve as an examination of conscience both for superiors and subjects at time of retreat, and indeed at other times. AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

EXILE ENDS IN GLORY. By Thomas Merton. (Clonmore and Reynolds; 16s.)

Almost certainly this recent work of Thomas Merton will be acclaimed as another important addition to the spiritual writings of these days. It would be agreeable to join in these anticipated acclamations. Unfortunately, there are some disquieting features in this biography of a Trappistine whose spiritual odyssey begins in France and ends in Japan. The most disquieting feature is not so much the sentimental style, which, after all, appeals to many people; it is, rather, his implied assumption amounting almost to a spiritual arrogance that the Cistercian way is the only way. He insists on presenting the Cistercian life in a highly dramatic, one could even venture to say melodramatic, way. It may seem over-bold to assert that he is naïve about his own particular type of monasticism. But can he really expect his readers, some of whom perhaps have visited Cistercian abbeys, to believe that they are so completely cut off from what he calls in one place 'the hostile world'?

These three words are significant in any study of Thomas Merton, and in this biography, certainly, he shows no sympathy for the people whom God has called to achieve their sanctification in 'the hostile world'. Indeed, his own words could be taken to mean that the motive of a Cistercian vocation is a flight from responsibility, 'from all the cares and burdens that make people unhappy'. We are further told that the Cistercian is joyful 'because he is free from the crushing anxieties that are bred of selfishness and passion'.

One of the last paragraphs of this very detailed and eulogistic biography is a panegyric of deceased Cistercians 'who preferred to die to the world before they lived to its futility and wickedness'. What message of encouragement in the spiritual struggle can those whose vocation it is to live in the world of crushing anxieties derive from such a work as this? Is it not time that the good news penetrated the silence of Thomas Merton's ivory tower that there are millions of good people, and presumably many saints, in this world of 'futility and wickedness'?

K.M.

F. D. MAURICE AND THE CONFLICTS OF MODERN THEOLOGY. By A. M. Ramsey. The Maurice Lectures 1948. (Cambridge University Press; 10s. 6d.)

Frederick Denison Maurice markedly influenced the development of