

Blackfriars

Von Hügel insisted, 'is *adoration*, sense of God, of a God infinitely more than a mere assuager of all men's wants.' And he saw, too, and insisted on, the connexion of humility with religion, both indeed being based on this *reverence* for God and His goodness.

We might say many things in praise of Mrs. Greene's book, but it is surely sufficient to say this, that she does remind us of the things that are fundamental. 'Superior' souls, for instance, are apt to look down on the prayer of petition (St. Augustine reminds us that the Pharisee in the Temple asked nothing of God in *his* prayer). 'I find,' says Mrs. Greene (p. 11) 'so many good people make these askings all their worship; so many people live their lives of faith and live entirely by these askings (it is the way their sense of dependence issues), so I am pulled up in my criticisms. Prayer in itself means asking; it is dependence, supplication, the speech of the creature to the Creator, God. It is an attitude, an utter dependence on Him who is beyond ourselves, a worshipful recognition that God is God.' Again (p. 17): '*Do not criticize*; perhaps this is the most delicate and difficult of all things to learn . . . not to criticize, not to feel superior, *not to make comparisons*. How important all this is! We must dismiss all thought of self, we must fix our eyes elsewhere, and prize what is precious wherever it comes.'

We repeat, the book is to be valued for its insistence on the virtue of religion, and what that virtue issues in. One the other hand, we regret that Mrs. Greene should speak disparagingly of theology, as she does occasionally in her book. What is best in her book is nearest to theology, for theology is nothing but the organised knowledge of *God as God*. And had it had the advantage of revision by a theologian, it might have been pruned of the inaccuracies that are to be found here and there.

L. W.

RAMON LULL. By E. Allison Peers, M.A. (S.P.C.K.; 18/-).

There are three stages in the making of a work of history—the collection of all the pertinent material, the ordering of that material, and finally, the representation as a unity, of the person or period with which it deals. Only at the last stage is the past palatable to the present because only then does it come to life—with a more than contemporary vitality, its inner motives and principles being revealed.

It is thus a criticism to point out that this book has stopped, more or less, at the second stage. Chronological difficulties are

Book Reviews

settled, synopses of Lull's writing given, and there is an historical and geographical background. It is to be regretted that Lull himself is not allowed to stand out, rightly proportioned, self-explanatory. Enthusiasm expressed in generalities is not infectious. Erudition of itself cannot vivify. And that a man's secret lies in his personality is not a revelation. It is precisely *that* which we need to penetrate. Ramon Lull's outward aspects are well known—his tenacious energy for the conversion of the East; his realisation that the East must first be understood; his probable martyrdom. But these attractions are balanced by radical defects—the meaningless meanderings of his philosophy; the didacticism which stains his art; his puritanism, and the wildness of his practical schemes. In spite of this he drew disciples and still has them.

Consider Blake—in art and thought a far profounder genius, but of Lull's type. A nature capable of diverse developments, he needed sympathetic training for each activity to have its differentiated work in a rich and harmonious person. In Blake, however, and much more so in Lull, the various activities tend to mingle and lose their efficacy through lack of definition. Theology becomes philosophy and *vice versa*; a novel must be a catechism as well. Both, it may be noted, were solitaires. Lull underwent a catastrophic conversion and acquired knowledge late and at a furious speed. Blake grew up out of touch with tradition, self-educated. They were, perhaps, dominated by an ideal of human personality which, aiming at the unicellular simplicity of an amoeba, suppressed all content save one fixed idea. They feared diversity, but it broke out. So it was disowned by identifying it with the one idea. If art looked like philosophy it could be kept. Such failure in true development is, we suggest, the root of the perplexities in Lull's career.

Thus his philosophy is not a curio but a symptom. Professor Peers schedules it indifferently with the other 'has-beens' of mediaeval thought. A better acquaintance with that thought would have led him not only to a truer understanding of Lull's nature, but also to a revision of the judgment that Dominican opposition to his writings sprang from the traditional jealousy between that Order and the Franciscans. No one, we hope, is concerned to defend an Inquisitor like Eymeric. It is the principles of the attack that matter. St. Thomas had achieved a synthesis in which the supremacy of faith and the autonomy of reason in its own sphere, both have their place. Lull's system 'proved' the faith by a fantastic kind of mathematics.

Blackfriars

It was a menace to freedom of thought and religion. It lowered religion to philosophy and limited reason to apologetics. Of such defenders of the faith St. Thomas had already spoken : ' *Cum enim aliquis ad probandam fidem inducit rationes quae non sunt cogentes, cedit in irrisionem infidelium. Credunt enim quod huiusmodi rationibus innitatur et eas credamus.*' (1a. Q. 22. art 1). The fact that Lull's system was possible, and, indeed, widespread, is an indication that, contrary to an accepted opinion, the Middle Ages afford little evidence of any real unity of thought.

A.M.

MARIE DE L'INCARNATION : ECRITS SPIRITUELS ET HISTORIQUES.
Réédités par Dom Albert Jamet. (Tome I. Paris : Desclée, de Brouwer et Cie. 1929).

It is probable that very few English readers know anything about the French Ursuline nun who goes by the name of Marie de l'Incarnation, and yet she deserves to be known. Her life was lived in the seventeenth century, half in France and half in Canada. At Tours in 1620, as a young widow with an infant son, she was visited by a divine ecstasy which changed the course of her life. Other mystical experiences followed. to be succeeded by a permanent state, wherein, without any of the 'psycho-physical' concomitants usual in such cases, she seems to have enjoyed an almost continual sense of God and a union so intimate and so profound that the most distracting employments could not interrupt or impair it. In 1631 she became an Ursuline at Tours; in 1639 she founded an Ursuline convent at Quebec. In Canada she spent the remainder of her life, exercising from her cloister an untiring apostolate. She has been called the Teresa of Canada and the Teresa of France. She was just such another as the great saint of Avila : a woman of supreme capacity and courage, of exceptional prudence and common sense, and of the highest mystical gifts. Nor is she interesting only as a mystic; for her life and writings illustrate also the secular history of Canada when it was still La Nouvelle France. That life and those writings were first given to the world by her son, Dom Claude Martin, a distinguished Benedictine of the Congregation of St. Maur. The Benedictines of Solesmes are now undertaking a new and critical edition of the whole material, and the volume here noticed is the first of the seven in which it is proposed to achieve this task. The work is in capable hands, and it is sufficient to say that this volume augurs well for the whole enterprise.

J.M.