

which it obviously had the gifts to make but not the leisure to produce. This is sympathetic and generous, but the account given of the contribution actually made is scarcely adequate even by the standards of other parts of the book. For the rest, *Religion in Britain since 1900* is an excellently constructed atlas or guide book of events; it is not much more.

HENRY ST JOHN, O.P.

THE ASCENT OF MOUNT SION. By Bernardino of Laredo. Translated, with introduction and notes, by E. Allison Peers. (Faber; 21s.)

At a time when pseudo-mysticism is all the fashion, when materialism itself has developed a 'mystique' and when the term 'mysticism' is so often interpreted as synonymous with emotion, it is refreshing to turn to the pre-Tridentine spiritual writers who, when they wrote of mysticism, viewed it against the background of a sound theological system in which it had its allotted place.

*The Ascent of Mount Sion* forms the third part of a treatise on the spiritual life written by a Franciscan lay-brother who before he became a friar had been a doctor and who had earlier written two medical treatises. Born in 1482, Bernardino of Laredo lived the greater part of his life in Seville, where he died in 1540. According to Professor Peers, in philosophy and theology he was largely self-taught (Introduction, p. 14). *The Ascent*, with Osuna's *Abecedario* and Alonso de Madrid's *Arte de Servis a Dios*, was the book which most profoundly influenced St Teresa.

Laredo's teaching is in many respects similar to that of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, and he lays great stress on 'quiet contemplation', though he is careful to point out in several places that the duties of one's state of life must come before all. The book is not a systematic treatise and it is not always clear whether Laredo is referring to what is technically known as 'the prayer of quiet' or not. There are passages in the book of great lyrical beauty and it contains much that will be new to those who are familiar only with the English mystics. Laredo's teaching that one may begin the ways of contemplation by trying to find God in creatures, even in so tiny a creature as the ant, for instance, is beyond the reach of no one.

The translation is of the high quality one has come to associate with the name of Professor Peers. One small point: 'our very great Lady' and 'our great Lady' (pp. 73, 115), might surely be rendered by 'our Most Blessed Lady' or some such more usual phrase without doing too much violence to the Spanish original.

K.P.

GUILT. By Caryl Houselander. (Sheed and Ward; 18s.)

The word *guilt*, together with its derivatives, has a variety of inter-related but quite different meanings. It can mean plain wrong-doing; or it can be applied to states and dispositions arising from wrong-

doing. Or it can mean judgment, divine or human, on wrong-doing, or (as generally in psychology) any *sense* of wrong-doing—as such it need not be itself wrong, or anything but perfectly true, realistic and healthy, however emotional or feeling-toned. Or it can also mean various neurotic and obsessive diseases, sometimes of the most painful and paralysing description, alienating the sufferer from reality and inhibiting his life and activity.

Miss Houselander's fluent pen has not paused to distinguish and define these different senses, nor has her active mind stopped to consider that the descriptions, causes and cures of one sort of guilt are not the same as those of another. We do not know whether she has paused to consider that her title (and lurid wrapper) will particularly attract precisely the guilt-obsessed, seeking eagerly for any and every prospect of relief from their agony. They will find little in her book to help them; much in her incessant preaching, moralising and cheerful recommendations to add material to their self-reproaches and despair.

Other readers will find a bewildering bundle of truths, half-truths, and verbose rhetoric which at times (as when St John the Baptist is called a psychiatrist) borders on plain nonsense. Her theology and religious sentiments are sound and edifying enough, though sometimes irritatingly smug in their presentation; but her fast-and-loose use of technical psychological language (beginning with her own invention, *ego-neurosis*, on the first page) can only add further confusion. There can be no stopping the widespread eagerness of anybody and everybody to set themselves up as physicians of other people's souls (bodily disease is too intractable to excite such inexpert enthusiasm), but the precaution of consulting a psychological dictionary is to be recommended before wrapping the bitter pill of religion in the sugar-coating of psychological jargon. The book concludes with some gossipy items about worthies ranging from the Monster of Düsseldorf to Hans Andersen, from Kafka to St Thérèse of Lisieux, all employed to point some estimable moral, but offered as 'illustrations' of something undefined.

To the *Imprimatur* of the Archbishop of Boston is added a note to the effect that it is an 'ecclesiastical declaration that a publication is free of doctrinal or moral error, not a statement of the positive worth, nor an implication that the contents have the Archbishop's approval or recommendation'. This, of course, is true of all *imprimaturs*; but it is unusual to add a note to say so. We should deplore any extension of ecclesiastical censorship which would restrict freedom of expression and publication beyond this necessary limit. But that very fact lays all the heavier responsibilities on authors and publishers who would treat of psychopathological matters, especially in doctrinaire fashion.

Careless writing by amateurs on these subjects, particularly when bolstered up with highly emotive religious language, can add untold misery to suffering souls, as well as considerable burdens to the task of their authorised pastors and physicians. Miss Houselander's book may certainly bring light and relief to some; we wish she had been more considerate for others into whose hands it could be expected to come.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

BEYOND EAST AND WEST. By John C. H. Wu. (Sheed and Ward; 21s.)

Admirers of the saintly abbot Dom Lou Tseng-Tsiang will meet in Dr Wu another distinguished convert to Catholicism and the representative of a rather different, though equally authentic, China. Born on the seventeenth day of the Second Moon in the year of *chi-hai* (1899), and in the city of Ningpo, Dr Wu describes himself as coming of a people who are of the earth, earthy; for 'the Ningponese are not a refined people, but they are warmhearted and honest, full of vitality, and the spirit of adventure. They take to business and industry more than to arts and letters', and their humour expresses itself in 'practical jokes rather than subtle stories'. If one looked for a symbol of this spirit one could perhaps find it, not in the dignified bearing of the official Confucian gentlemen, but in the more iconoclastic atmosphere suggested by the little brush-work figures of the laughing Chan-sect boys, Han-Shan and Shih-Tê.

Not that the Confucian sobriety is absent in Dr Wu. At six he began his studies under a Confucian tutor and later, coming across the Master's sentence, 'I was bent upon learning at fifteen years of age', he wrote in the margin, 'I am bent upon learning at twelve'. His early education was that of the Old China, the studious yet joyous uprightness of Confucius, the moral idealism of Mencius. It was, then, appropriate enough that he should give his heart to law, and by 1920 he was a post-graduate student in the Michigan Law School—the same year in which he began an important friendship with the then aged Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. As the Chinese would courteously say, 'if you do not know what happened next, you must read the following chapters'; how his public career led him to do distinguished work for the establishment of equity in the legal administration of his own country, and how in 1934 he joined the Legislature at the time of the drafting of the Constitution.

All this successful public work was the façade behind which moral instability and insatiable longings for something more profoundly satisfying remained insoluble problems. Dr Wu's story is of hunting and being hunted, and especially of the mysterious pull of the three ancient religions of China, 'pedagogues to lead men to Christ', which brought him finally to the Catholic Church in the winter of 1937. The