

results could never conflict with the *de fide* teaching of the Church. No doubt he accepted much as assured which has since proved to be not so; perhaps he adopted, in hardly conscious tension between faith and intellectual formulation, positions which in ultimate analysis would have been hard to reconcile with defined dogma. It seems probable that during the terrible years he was tempted to win greater freedom for himself by abandoning his obedience to here-and-now ecclesiastical authority, and during that period he not seldom spoke and judged harshly. He was saved from disaster firstly by his profound reliance on prayer and sacramental grace to which he was notably faithful throughout his life, and secondly by his study of mysticism (his first considerable book, *The Mystical Element of Religion*, was published in 1908) which preserved his sense of God's transcendence and prevented his falling a victim to the immanentism which so conditioned the outlook of Loisy and others of his modernist friends. In later life, under the influence in particular of the German Lutheran philosopher Troeltsch, this realisation of God's transcendence deepened and became a marked element in his thought.

The sharp dualism which some have detected between von Hügel's Catholic faith and his critical thought is, in the opinion of his biographer, only apparent. His mind did not work as the majority of men's; he himself describes it as 'seeing truths, realities as *intensely luminous centres* with a semi-illuminated outer margin, then another and another till all shades off into utter darkness. Such minds are not in the least perturbed by even having to stammer and stumble.' He did stammer and stumble at times in areas of thought where the ordinary discipline of the Church, as distinct from its final voice, had demarcated truth from error more clearly than he could honestly see it, but the *luminous centre*, fed by prayer, held him true and faithful. It was the realisation of this that led his diocesan Cardinal Bourne, a man not naturally sympathetic to his intellectual outlook, to say of him: 'I have never got him into trouble and I never will'.

HENRY ST JOHN, O.P.

THE POEMS OF ST JOHN OF THE CROSS. Translated by Roy Campbell.
(The Harvill Press; 12s. 6d.)

As the late Aubrey Bell once wrote, 'one is always inclined to tear up translations of the Ecstatic Doctor: they seem so vain and unprofitable'. He meant one's own, but it is not untrue of other people's. It is therefore a great advance if one only does not wish to tear up Roy Campbell's versions of the Poems; but one is far from merely that. The great difficulty with those poems of St John of the Cross which are the basis of the prose works (the first three stanzas of *Noche*,

Adonde, Llama) is that one must not only get some kind of aesthetic equivalent to the original considered as literature, but also (if there is any difference) to the original's precise meaning, since such responsible theological interpretations are to hang on them. It was this that made Professor Peers give two versions of these particular poems, one merely rhythmical, the other in rhyme-scheme and metre. Considered as poetry, Mr Campbell's translation is the best so far. It is authentically felt poetry. Its rendering of its experience is not flawless, but it is in the main free from the sentimental diction of earlier translators, and from the false-romantic lapses to which even Bell sometimes succumbed. Perhaps only Arthur Symons succeeded in rendering St John of the Cross in his translations of the two most famous short lyrics into a *homogeneous* poetic idiom—though whether the diction and cadence of the Yellow Book period were the most adequate for interpreting the sixteenth-century Spanish mystics is open to question. Bell was yet not too far from the still living tradition of the past for his translations to sound false. The change that has come over English poetic sensibility in the last forty years makes it impossible to translate any longer in the idiom of a past age. Hence the fascination of this new attempt. Mr Campbell's diction is not indeed uniformly mid-twentieth century—*there where no other presence might appear; I went abroad; guerdon; so daintily in love you make me fall* (which is mixing our drinks with a vengeance), but he can combine with moving and sincere effect the religious-lofty with the direct-modern:

*Out of the love immense and bright
That from the two had thus begun,
Words of ineffable delight
The Father spoke unto the son.*

*The man who loves you, O my son,
To him Myself I will belong.
The love that in Yourself I won
I'll plant in him and root it strong,
Because he loved the very one
I loved so deeply and so long.*

Unfortunately, as precise renderings in the case of the poems which demand precision for their extra-poetical uses, Mr Campbell does little better than his predecessors who have attempted to combine meaning with form. David Lewis's rugged lines still hold the field, and if they lack form, at least they render the imagery of St John and only the imagery of St John. Mr Campbell, for example, gives us *Upon a gloomy night* which certainly prejudices the theological issue, and *O venture of*

delight! where Peers has *Oh happy chance* (non-metrical) and *O moment of delight!* (metrical) but *Oh dichosa ventura!* has so far been most accurately translated (by Lewis) as *O, happy lot!* Since 'lot', like the Spanish *ventura*, allows better for providence, predestination and grace, not to mention the active disposition of the soul, than 'chance', while 'venture' gives too much to the human will.

Fr D'Arcy, in a learned and most interesting preface, singles out for commendation Mr Campbell's version of:

*Vuélvete, paloma,
Que el ciervo vulnerado
Por el otero asoma,
Al aire de tu vuelo, y fresco toma.*

on the ground that Mr Campbell makes the images used stand out in their amazing clarity.

Here are successive translations:—

*Return, my Dove!
The wounded hart
Looms on the hill
In the air of thy flight and is refreshed.*
(Lewis.)

*Return, O dove,
Since yonder on the height
Appears stricken with love,
The hart that thy wings freshen as they move.*
(Bell.)

*Return thou, dove,
For the wounded hart appears on the hill
At the air of thy flight and takes refreshment.*
(Peers, non-metrical.)

*Return, my love!
See where the stricken hart
Looks from the hill above
What time he hears thy beating wings, my dove!*
(Peers, metrical.)

*Turn, Ring-dove, and alight,
The wounded stag above
The slope is now in sight
Fanned by the wind and freshness of your flight.*
(Campbell.)

There is no question that Lewis gives the plainest account (despite 'looms' which at least contains the inchoative element of *asomar*, vital to the prose commentary, although it introduces the element of 'indistinctness' which that Spanish word does not contain, though it does not come amiss to the prose commentary); which is thought the most poetic will be to some extent a matter of opinion and of the reader's age. Those who prefer Mr Campbell's version, however, and the reviewer is one, will do so on the grounds not of its more clearly conveying the imagery of the original—Lewis does that—but of its better rendering the rhythm and poetic form, and above all, the 'dry' quality of its feeling which both the English language and English sensibility are a little apt to over-sweeten in translating from Spanish (and not, indeed, only St John of the Cross).

One is sorry to note that Mr Campbell in the seventh strophe of the *Noche* has rendered *con su mano serena* as 'With his serene hand', where 'his' refers to God or Christ, and although he prints the second line as *Cuando yo sus cabellos esparcía* on the left-hand page, translates 'While the fresh wind was fluttering his tresses' as if he had adopted the reading *ya*, which has in fact been proposed but, on quite sufficient grounds, rejected. There is no question that the antecedent of *su* is *aire*, and it is the hand of the wind that strikes the bride's neck. Dámaso Alonso understands the syntax thus; Aubrey Bell translated it so (though he adopted *ya* for *yo* in the second line of the strophe, referred to a moment ago). Symons, Peers (both versions), even Lewis have this wrong. Unfortunately the poet gave us no commentary at this place, but Dámaso Alonso most convincingly draws our attention to the meaning of 'air' in the Saint's general symbology: the breath of the Holy Ghost. Surely a theological approach would reach the same conclusion as the purely textual: that the divine action in the soul is pre-eminently the work of the Holy Ghost.

From all the foregoing it follows that it is in the poems where these niceties do not matter that Mr Campbell does best; St John is more within the translator's (any translator's) reach and less the poet in these ballads, but they are touching and illuminating all the same, and Mr Campbell has done Spanish literature a great service in putting these versions within the reach of the non-specialist reader (may one for example draw attention to the extreme beauty of no. VIII?). His book can do much to counteract the effect on the uninstructed of Professor Trend's very odd comparison of St John with Gounod (as against Luis de León with Beethoven) and his still odder statement that St John has little to say as compared with Fray Luis de León. (*The Civilisation of Spain*, p. 120.) The exact reverse is the case. It will be interesting to watch the further influence on Mr Campbell's own work

as a poet of yet another impact upon him of Spain and of Spanish culture in one of its purest and most intense forms.

EDWARD SARMIENTO.

INTRODUCTION TO PAUL CLAUDEL. By Mary Ryan. (Cork University Press; Oxford: B. H. Blackwell; 7s. 6d.)

Professor Mary Ryan has read and pondered every line of lyric verse that Claudel has written, as well as his plays and essays. She has the information needed to make him known to English-speaking readers, and there must be few thoughts and sentiments of his that are not to be found set down somewhere within her pages. Her book is the first general study of the poet to appear in English. Its title, however, is deceptive for it excludes direct consideration of his dramas and essays, confining itself to his life and lyric poetry.

It may be true that, for a comprehensive view of him as a thinker, as distinct from a poet and artist, his lyrical poems suffice; it is nevertheless an incomplete Claudel who is thus presented. This is all the more regrettable since some of his finest lyricism occurs in his plays; he has, for instance, no finer lyric sweep than Anne Vercors's speech at the beginning of the last scene in *L'Annonce faite à Marie*.

In her last chapter the author says:

'We have studied, and we hope we have inclined others to read and re-read, so many poems of Claudel that we know his familiar themes and something of his treatment of them.'

His themes, indeed, we know, but not his treatment. Professor Ryan tells us that she has dwelt less on his form than on his ideas since the readers who do not know French for whom she is writing would not be interested in that aspect of his work. Her method of exposition has been, after a chapter about his life and another devoted to commenting on the difficult *Art poétique*—a work of criticism which no one, in our opinion, has yet succeeded in making perfectly intelligible—to take the chief volumes of his poetry and to describe many of the poems in each one. The poems are presented through a mixture of summary and paraphrase, with liberal quotations in English and references to the favourable opinions of other critics. It is a method which quickly becomes tiresome and palls through its insistence on detail. The magnificence of Claudel slips through the meshes of Professor Ryan's net and she catches only what could have been said in prose. Her book is a repertory of what Claudel thinks and of the subjects that enter into his poems; she never grasps the essence of his art or makes us realise his greatness.

Throughout her study there is little change of emphasis. Everything is bathed in the same rather neutral light, which neither glows nor