

the answer to human problems; she gives strength, courage, wisdom and many other qualities to face them. She has been very honourably served by her translator, Alexander Dru.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

SAINT TERESA OF AVILA. By Marcelle Auclair. (Burns Oates; 30s.)

ST TERESA OF JESUS. By E. Allison Peers. (Faber and Faber; 25s.)

Yet another life of St Teresa makes the reader wonder whether anything new can be said. In many ways, that published in 1882 'par une Carmélite de Caen' has not been surpassed, and, after all, no one can tell us much more than is in the writings of the saint herself. The value of each successive life must depend on the interest of the point of view of the biographer and on the soundness of the criteria by which the incidents and the aspects of the saint's character are selected. Mme Auclair gives us a biography distinctly feminine, perhaps French and certainly modern. On all these three counts, her work fulfils the requirements of interest and soundness. One scrutinises jealously to see whether any vital aspects are omitted: no, unco' guid Sister Alberta receives her snub (and with her all the would-be mystics of our own day), and there is no nonsense about rationalisation, in fact, we are given a new wonder (p. 365), gathered by Mme Auclair from the oral tradition of one of the Spanish convents. For good measure, it concerns a miraculous image; there is much to be said for diminishing the sometimes morbid contemporary stress on 'mysticism' with a nice barrage of miraculous images that only simple faith can get through. All the same, a little more rationalisation might have been acceptable: we are still given the escape of St John from the house of the Calced in Toledo with all the apparatus of the preternatural light, voice and miraculous lifting over a wall (p. 341), although the late Padre Crisógono's *Vida* (published with the Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos edition of the works of the saint) cleared away all this hagiographical fantasy in 1950 (and gave us instead first-class evidence for St John's very high I.Q.), unfortunately not in time for Mme Auclair's biography (originally published in the same year) to incorporate it. Nevertheless, it is a book of great charm and interest, and well worth adding to the long list of twentieth-century works on St Teresa. The photographs are of startling originality and beauty.

*St Teresa of Jesus* is the first of the late Professor Peers' posthumous writings to be published. It contains nine pieces (new or reprinted) on Spanish mysticism (three on St Teresa, two on St John); one is a study of the style of St Teresa; another, with great skill, presents the English reader with a survey of recent Spanish research on St John (and includes an account of Padre Crisógono's work on the life mentioned above). The author again takes up the question of the alleged mysticism of Luis de

León's poetry, and seems less insistent here than in *Studies of the Spanish Mystics*. There are, in addition, two essays on Cervantes and a sketch of the late Dom Edmund Gurdon. The collection makes an interesting and informative book.

EDWARD SARMIENTO

EXISTENTIALISM FROM WITHIN. By E. L. Allen. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 18s.)

In spite of its unfortunate title, Dr Allen's book is perhaps the most respectable of the many recent contributions to the secondary literature of Existentialism in this country. The analysis and criticism of the chief representatives of the movement, Heidegger, Sartre, Jaspers, Marcel, is presented as a developing sequence, the 'journey' as a 'pilgrimage', from 'atheist humanism to faith in God' (p. 180). The emphasis on this theme of personal salvation has not allowed Dr Allen (as he acknowledges) to do full justice to Heidegger, surely the most important of the four philosophers; and it is surprising to see the writer pay such serious attention to Jaspers, without, however, making the generalities of this philosopher less insipid.

Yet a more radical criticism of Dr Allen's book is that it remains a study—precisely from *without*—of four Existentialist philosophers and is not itself an essay in Existentialist philosophy. The characteristic seriousness of the writers of this movement, variously registered as *Angst*, fidelity, commitment, engagement and so on, is an effort of personal and moral exploration and not in principle (or even sometimes in fact) an intellectual seriousness: consequently the summary exposition, however sympathetic, of 'doctrines' inevitably lacks the proper vitality, the sense of growth, of the original writings. If, like Dr Allen, one is not concerned to evaluate philosophical investigations from a standpoint itself claiming at least the possibility of total intellectual illumination, but only to be more or less illuminatingly immersed in mystery, then one has the very heavy responsibility of profoundly engaging the reader in this mystery; and it cannot be allowed that Dr Allen has satisfactorily acquitted himself of this responsibility. It should be noted here that if Dr Allen can write, 'The evidence available in the Gospels seems to me to put beyond doubt that Jesus thought of himself as a man dependent on God' (p. 142), his claim to offer a *Christian* approach to Existentialism is at least questionable.

C.E.

CHRISTIANITY. By S. C. Carpenter, D.D. (Penguin Books; 2s.)

In one hundred and eighty pages, Dr Carpenter, formerly Dean of Exeter, has attempted to describe 'Christianity'. It is not surprising that, in spite of much that is good in the book and of a temper markedly