

case of the thirteenth-century hysteric-ecstatic Elizabeth of Herkenrode is valuable (especially when, later in this book, we observe its similarities to that of Teresa Higginson), it is already well reported, and one might have hoped from him for a deeper consideration of some of its peculiar features.

But one must not be ungrateful. No one knew better than he how to strip a topic of its alluring irrelevancies, to refuse to be diverted by minor issues, to find out facts and pronounce upon nothing but them. Another reviewer, writing recently of him, has reminded us of the dictum, 'C'est toujours le devoir des pieux de ne pas scandaliser les savants'. In this work Thurston has drawn for us a comforting portrait of himself as the savant who is unshockable in his learning, unwavering in his piety.

ERIC COLLEDGE

PROGRESS IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE. By Bernard J. Kelly, C.S.SP., D.D. (Clonmore and Reynolds; 9s. 6d.)

The author of this book is one of the Holy Ghost Fathers. It is so patently written under the inspiration of the Spirit, that this reviewer has no choice but to allow him to speak for himself, by devoting her allotted space to a series of extracts which will summarise the theme of the whole.

'If we but judge according to the idea of religious and the religious life which exists in the mind of God, the normal thing is that religious should make progress with their years of profession, and that, granted the graces which God offers to those whom he favours with a religious vocation, it is, in a very true sense, easier to make progress than not to make it'. (p. 9.) (All the italics in this review are ours.)

'Many people have a false idea of holiness, and consequently a false notion of what it means to advance in it.' (p. 10.)

'To understand how it is that greater holiness is always possible for the religious, it is necessary to consider first of all that *the religious vocation is a call to growth in perfection, and that this call persists all the years of a person's religious life.*' (p. 11.)

'At no time of his life does God demand of a religious that he should be perfect. On the contrary, by the very fact of calling him to strive after perfection, God declares most unequivocally that he knows that the religious has not perfection as yet, and will be imperfect right up to the end. The one essential thing God asks of a religious is that he strive, that he try. A good religious, a successful religious, a religious after God's own heart, is one who is imperfect and is trying to become less so. The only kind of imperfection which meets with God's disapproval, is that of the religious who is imperfect and who is satisfied to remain imperfect.' (p. 12.)

'We need never fear our failures: for the religious, as for the Christian,

*danger lies in success. Provided that as mature religious we have the humility to keep on struggling at what looks to us very like the beginning of religious life, there is no doubt that we are making progress and very great progress indeed.*' (p. 19.)

All these quotations are taken from the first chapter. Those who whom this book is intended will need no further encouragement to buy it and finish it for themselves. Fr Kelly has addressed himself primarily to active religious who are also priests, but almost everything he has to say can be applied to all religious without exception. It can also be made their own by all those lay-folk who are eager to grow in the love of God, and who are humble enough to accept and bow to the fact that the religious life must *always* remain the 'school of perfection and of the Lord's service'. But enrolled there as day-scholars, as all God's children must needs be, this book will be their *vade mecum*, a sure and safe guide leading them even to the end of the journey and the topmost peaks of the mountain and the hill. To which may God, in his loving-kindness, bring each one of us.

S. M. ALBERT, O.P.

ESQUISSES DU MYSTÈRE DE L'EGLISE. By Yves M.-J. Congar, O.P. Cerf; Collection Unam Sanctam 8; n.p.)

Since this is a re-edition of a book first published in 1940, a reviewer may be content with some general remarks, entirely of welcome. There is this difference, that the original two appendical chapters written for the Möhler centenary in 1938 have been replaced by a more recent study: *Le Saint-Esprit et le Corps apostolique, réalisateurs de l'œuvre du Christ*. The other four essays are entitled: *L'Eglise et son unité, L'idée de l'Eglise chez saint-Thomas d'Aquin, Le Corps Mystique du Christ, Vie de l'Eglise et conscience de la Catholicité*. All were written for different purposes in the first place but combine excellently in a single volume, in which the Thomist idea of the Church can be taken as basic. No one well acquainted with the *Ila* and *Illa Pars* of the *Summa* will find anything materially new here; the originality consists in re-thinking St Thomas's treatment of the Return to God as an ecclesiology. To do so, of course, to escape from that welter of apologetic treatises that has been assembled in the last four hundred years to meet special needs of this and that day, and which confronts the dismayed student in so many text-books. These treatises have their place, indeed, but it is not usually the place of the occasional to structuralise the permanent, and since the Church is as permanent as any visible feature of Christianity—*quia haec Ecclesia incoepit a tempore Abael et durabit usque ad finem seculi*, in the words of St Thomas,—therefore a properly proportioned theology of the Church must be most closely linked to the fundamental and essential feature of Christian life. Père Congar's