

delivered them, and no more. As is usual in such conferences the findings are reflective and inconclusive. They are therefore a stimulus for further consideration for those who are professionally interested in the subject, or for those who by reason of their office are responsible for the moulding of religious life in the contemporary world. It would not appear to be useful to plunge novices and junior religious into this cauldron of discussion about matters which are at the very basis of their formation. It should be unequivocally stated that obedience is an obligation in religious life even when the vow is not directly engaged. If, as asserted by Father Bergh, S.J., obedience to the constitutions and the rule does not as such fall under the exercise of *dominative power*, what is the meaning of obedience *secundum regulam*? There is need of emphasis on obedience to a person, within the margin of a rule, though not to a book of rules as such. Also it is hard to see how it is possible to have a voluntary transgression without specific motive, and why such a transgression is a *positive imperfection*. The fact is that an act of this kind is either meritorious or a sin.

The account given of the attitude to penalties in the Dominican Order is inadequate.

Perhaps it is unavoidable that the psychology of women should be in the forefront. The psychology of nuns is another matter. The contribution by A. M. Henry, O.P., on 'The Obedience of Women', is enlightened and may be read with great profit by subjects and superiors.

Genuine obedience does not exclude the possibility of frank discussion. And P. François de Sainte-Marie, O.C.D., considers this a desirable practice, and a way to abolish 'that currying of approval by which many religious succeed in getting their own way . . . under the impression all the time that they are enjoying the blessings of obedience'.

It is to be devoutly hoped that this book will shed light where it is needed most. But we feel that in many cases no improvement can be achieved on the lines suggested except by strong measures from those who have the duty to command and therefore the right to be obeyed.

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

THE SIGN OF JONAS. By Thomas Merton. (Hollis and Carter; 18s.)

Words and deeds, the thought and the act, make an odd counterpoint, and one can never tell which line will carry the melody. All that any life worth the name, lived honestly under God, will always show, is an endless capacity for change and development. The themes that seemed most significant fall out, and others whose presence was almost unsuspected come to the fore. Meanwhile, as the Abbé de Tourville used to say, a good state of soul can go hand in hand with a feeling of deep inward disharmony.

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The interest of *The Sign of Jonas* is not that it is a finished book, or even perhaps an eminently publishable one, but that it is a true enough account of someone in this painful condition. Indeed to many of those who recall some of the noisier pages of *Elected Silence* it may possibly seem like the portrait of a man eating his own hat. It is a journal of five years search for that silence which it was easier to choose than find, and of the gradual discovery of it in unexpected places. In the process it shows how strong a line in internal criticism the mere business of living can develop. 'Rilke's notebooks have so much power in them that they make me wonder why no one writes like that in monasteries. . . . It is a common failing of monks to lose themselves in a collective professional personality. . . . We cling to our eccentricities and selfishness, but we do so in a way that is no longer interesting because it is after all mechanical and vulgar.' The implied contrast here between the common and the commonplace, between real solitude and merely deliberate isolation is what this diary explores, and it might almost be summed up in the sentence which has perhaps deeper implications for the future than would at first appear: 'the Rule and the common life untie all the knots and worry and trouble and unquiet that gather in your head when you are living on your own'.

ÆLFRED SQUIRE, O.P.

ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE SINCE THE REGENCY. By H. S. Goodhart-Rendel. (Constable; 25s.)

Some years ago the writer of this book delivered a paper to the R.I.B.A. about what he described as 'the rogue architects' of the Victorian era. By which he meant drawing a parallel with 'rogue elephants'—the architects who worked apart from the main herd. The phrase is most apt to describe an architectural phenomenon which happens repeatedly in our civilisation and it would not perhaps be far off the mark to describe Mr Goodhart-Rendel himself as a 'rogue architect' of the twentieth century—or at least as a rogue writer on architecture. For where everyone else in the field has been pointing out the inability of the traditional idea of architecture to cope with our situation in building, he alone among the gifted has held to that idea and has dared to apply its tests to what has been going on.

This position of the writer's, his well-tryed, clear-cut philosophy of architecture equip him so well to prod the excessively soft belly of what we have come to call 'the Contemporary Movement'. He is thus not unlike a solitary Thomist in a room full of Existentialists: and if his approach to the subjects at issue prevents him from coming to grips with the difficulties people feel, it at least enables him to score many telling points. His book therefore seems likely to take its place at the side of Scott's *Architecture of Humanism* as an enduring piece of devil's advocacy. This is