

(page 140). Much more important, I am inclined to think that Miss Kirchberger misplaces Richard's influence among the schools that follow him, that she under-estimates his influence on the Rolle circle and over-estimates it on the 'Cloud of Unknowing'. Above all, much more might have been made in the introduction of the close relation between Richard's teaching on Contemplation and ecstasy and that of St Thomas. Among medieval schools of mysticism, the Thomists were the heirs of the Victorines just as the Franciscans were the heirs of the Cistercians.

But these are only minor criticisms of a book that should be in every library that has a section on Christian Spirituality.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

THE SILENT LIFE. By Thomas Merton. (Burns Oates; 16s.)

A popular book on the monastic orders has long been needed, and Fr Merton has provided it. This short work of 134 pages (and 16 plates) examines monastic life in general, then its cenobitical form as realized by Benedictines and Cistercians, and its eremitical form as lived by Carthusians and Camaldolese monks. One welcome feature is the frequent citations of the older monastic spiritual writers, another is the author's deep sympathy, absent from his earlier books, with forms of monastic life other than his own. In spite of too much emphasis on the scholarly work of the Solesmes Congregation and the attribution to Dom Gueranger of a passage from Dom Delatte, the section on Solesmes is most welcome, especially for its emphasis on its doctrinal influence on all the monastic orders of today. The interesting section on the Camaldolese hermits emphasizes the ecclesiastical character of the solitary life.

A few minor criticisms might be made. It seems a pity that in this English edition of the work there is no account of the Benedictine monasteries of this country: the Anglo-Benedictine Congregation is scarcely mentioned, while the author seems to think that those of the Subiaco Congregation reproduce almost exactly the observance and spirit of La Pierre-qui-Vire. There are misprints on pp. 63, 71 and 128: the last is the most important because a negative has dropped out. This sentence should read: 'The God he is approaching is a mere object *unable* to be contained within the limits of a concept.' And why was *In tabernaculo Altissimi* translated as *In the highest tabernacle*? But these are small blemishes in a book, not the least of whose merits is to stress both that the monastic life is ultimately for God alone (not to be justified by utilitarian considerations), and that it is best understood in function of the Mystical Body as a whole. Both considerations are necessary if the nature of and the present-day need for the cloistered life are to be properly understood.

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