

THE MYSTICISM OF SIMONE WEIL. By Marie-Magdaleine Davy. (Rockliff; 5s. 6d.)

Those of us who felt grateful at seeing the names of Mounier, Guitton and Simone Weil on the Rockliff list are likely to feel less happy after reading the present work. It is not that the translation is inadequate—though there are occasional lapses (e.g. p. 44, p. 64) and one horrid paragraph (p. 83). Nor is it that M-M. Davy is sometimes too casual in her references; for instance, she seems to confuse a twentieth-century Jesuit palaeontologist (de Chardin) with a seventeenth-century Dominican (Chardon, p. 40), finds 'totalitarianism' in the letters of Gregory VI (?) and expects her readers to pick up an allusion to 'Krishnamurti' (p. 65) whilst not crediting them with any closer knowledge of St Thomas than she herself enjoys (p. 60-61 *inter alia*). We could take all this in our stride (faltering, perhaps, at the statement, 'it is doubtful whether anything more significant has ever been written on the subject of spiritual rebirth'!—p. 47), but we cannot help being depressed at the news that M-M. Davy has been lecturing in this fashion to circles throughout Europe on 'the mysticism of Simone Weil'.

Most people, we hope, will feel unhappy at the news that Simone Weil's 'mysticism' is becoming fashionable (as if Europe's imports from California did not represent a sufficiently unfavourable balance already); one had dreaded this happening as fervently as Kierkegaard dreaded lest the dons might get hold of him. At the same time, for the sake of those inclined to follow the fashion, and in order to kill the unworthy suspicion that the Dominicans are trying to 'claim' (*sic!*) Simone Weil, may we say that almost every other page in this book contains a statement which either explicitly or implicitly contradicts Christian teaching.

DONALD NICHOLL

THE ORIGINS OF THE AUSTIN CANONS AND THEIR INTRODUCTION INTO ENGLAND. By The Rev. J. C. Dickinson. (S.P.C.K., for The Church Historical Society; 20s.)

Before the Reformation the Austin Canons were, in Mr Dickinson's opinion, the largest order in England, although Augustinian houses were in general very much smaller than those of the Benedictines. Today, among the generality of Catholics, the order is either virtually unknown or else confused with a quite distinct body, the Austin Friars. Yet it produced such luminaries of the English Church as St Waltheof, St Thomas of Canterbury, St Gilbert of Sempringham, St John of Bridlington, and the Venerable Walter Hilton. Its houses were found in every part of the country, from the extreme west (Launceston,