

Fr Vincent McNabb, O.P. A dedication is made to the Dominican Nuns of St Dominic's Priory, Carisbrooke.

This little book may be read with profit, and would serve as an examination of conscience both for superiors and subjects at time of retreat, and indeed at other times. AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

EXILE ENDS IN GLORY. By Thomas Merton. (Clonmore and Reynolds; 16s.)

Almost certainly this recent work of Thomas Merton will be acclaimed as another important addition to the spiritual writings of these days. It would be agreeable to join in these anticipated acclamations. Unfortunately, there are some disquieting features in this biography of a Trappistine whose spiritual odyssey begins in France and ends in Japan. The most disquieting feature is not so much the sentimental style, which, after all, appeals to many people; it is, rather, his implied assumption amounting almost to a spiritual arrogance that the Cistercian way is the only way. He insists on presenting the Cistercian life in a highly dramatic, one could even venture to say melodramatic, way. It may seem over-bold to assert that he is naïve about his own particular type of monasticism. But can he really expect his readers, some of whom perhaps have visited Cistercian abbeys, to believe that they are so completely cut off from what he calls in one place 'the hostile world'?

These three words are significant in any study of Thomas Merton, and in this biography, certainly, he shows no sympathy for the people whom God has called to achieve their sanctification in 'the hostile world'. Indeed, his own words could be taken to mean that the motive of a Cistercian vocation is a flight from responsibility, 'from all the cares and burdens that make people unhappy'. We are further told that the Cistercian is joyful 'because he is free from the crushing anxieties that are bred of selfishness and passion'.

One of the last paragraphs of this very detailed and eulogistic biography is a panegyric of deceased Cistercians 'who preferred to die to the world before they lived to its futility and wickedness'. What message of encouragement in the spiritual struggle can those whose vocation it is to live in the world of crushing anxieties derive from such a work as this? Is it not time that the good news penetrated the silence of Thomas Merton's ivory tower that there are millions of good people, and presumably many saints, in this world of 'futility and wickedness'?

K.M.

F. D. MAURICE AND THE CONFLICTS OF MODERN THEOLOGY. By A. M. Ramsey. The Maurice Lectures 1948. (Cambridge University Press; 10s. 6d.)

Frederick Denison Maurice markedly influenced the development of

Anglican theology; for long it was an almost hidden influence, but within the last three decades it has come to a late fruition. He was a prophet in that he emphasised certain aspects of theological thinking little recognised in his own day, but since seen to be fundamental.

Much of his thought was within the Catholic tradition, and he was deeply orthodox on the central doctrines of the creed; but his language was often prophetic and he spoke with a prophet's obscurity and disregard for perspective, and this led to his being considered dangerous by many of his contemporaries.

Professor Ramsey does not attempt a systematic account of Maurice's teaching, but he traces the theological conflicts with which Maurice was confronted, and relates them to the chief theological tendencies of the nineteenth century and their extension beyond his lifetime into the present. Notable among Maurice's contributions to theology are his setting forth of the continuity between the Church of Christ and the ancient People of God, and his discussions on the nature of Revelation and the relation between the mighty acts of the Living God in history and the propositions in which they have been formulated. His teaching on the Atonement, admirably set out by Professor Ramsey, foreshadows some of the latest developments of Catholic theology under the influence of the Liturgical movement. Maurice's approach to Scripture is pre-critical, but in contact with the somewhat rudimentary criticism of Colenso he anticipates in some measure a biblical theology which has come into prominence only in recent years, and his views in regard to the place of biblical images in the process of revelation show considerable affinity with much modern thought in that field.

The reason why Maurice was no Tractarian is also an explanation of his influence today. 'Both the Tractarians and Maurice', writes Professor Ramsey, 'believed in a divine Society with divinely ordered marks of its Catholic and Apostolic character. The Tractarians dwelt upon it as a supernatural system standing over against heretical forms of Christianity, and contemporary movements without. Maurice was at pains to show how it related to the half-truths and broken lights of both, and offers the reality of which they were parodies and distorted witnesses.' Both these emphases enshrine a truth; and both can be held together in balanced tension by Catholics, but only where the second is present and realised will the developments of non-Catholic theology be matters of interest and concern among Catholics.

HENRY ST JOHN, O.P.

ANNALES GANDENSIS. Edited by Hilda Johnstone. (Nelson's Medieval Classics; 15s.)

Thirteen years (1297-1310) of Flemish history are covered by this