

## REVIEWS

THE SECRET OF HOLINESS. By Father James, O.F.M.CAP. (Mercier Press; 15s.)

The value of Father James's writing lies in his positive and open-handed approach to the question. Holiness is set up not as a code of behaviour or collection of rules of thumb, but as an ideal to be aimed at. And its achievement will turn a man into a man, and something more: not only the natural instincts but the supernatural ambitions can be realised. The treatment is at once humanist and God-centred. Despite a carefully reasoned start with an examination of the Gospel sources, this is no dry treatise of fundamentals. St Thomas is quoted, saying that a thing is perfect in so far as it returns to its source: and so we are to see human perfection as it is shown to us by our Lord and the saints who took him as their ideal. Although Father James is setting out a straightforward treatise on the mission of our Lord and the pattern of Redemption, his thought moves alertly enough to keep our interest by constantly linking up with what we might easily mistake for simplified matters. So the meaning of the Incarnation is illustrated by a passage discussing the character of our Lord. Christ was so truly man that he had a character in the same way that we find a character in the friend we know: his character is revealed in the Gospels and an examination of it will show us his divinity. This is no unnecessary consideration. 'Sometimes a sharp contrast is thrown between life considered as an art and life considered as a duty. The contrast is superficial.' In such ways the thought is kept alive, and we read of the interpenetration of the natural and supernatural (a very important thing that affects much of human behaviour) of the popularity of holiness and of the repentance that learns goodness out of past sins. In such ways Father James keeps us alert on a vital subject.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

WALLS ARE CRUMBLING. By John M. Oesterreicher. With an introduction by Jacques Maritain. (The Devin-Adair Co., N.Y.; \$5.)

'A true Jew is a Christian unborn', declares Fr Oesterreicher (p. 274). In *Walls are Crumbling* we meet seven Jewish seekers after truth, all of our age and times, who each in their individual ways found and drank from the Fount and Source of all truth, Jesus Christ. The profound learning and scholarship of the author have here bestowed a valuable contribution upon the world of Catholic thought in making known the works of these seven philosophers to English-speaking readers. This is a book which gives the lie to the old tag which attaches to the Jews the stigma