

CONVERSATION WITH CHRIST. An Introduction to Mental Prayer. By Peter-Thomas Rohrbach, O.C.D. (Geoffrey Chapman; 12s. 6d.)

Reviewers in this country have already welcomed this introduction to the craft of prayer from the pen of an American disciple of St Teresa of Avila. Perhaps now the praise may be taken for granted and the book may receive a more critical appreciation.

No major criticism needs to be made of the practical sections which are the fruit of experience of a good director of souls. However, a theologically minded reader will feel less happy about the doctrinal framework. He will hardly help wishing that spiritual guides should not only be soaked in spiritual literature but also that they should keep in their consciousness established theological truths relevant to their subject. When a writer deals with the relationship between God and creatures, he does well to recall to his mind that creatures have a real relation to their Creator but not vice versa; otherwise his words will seem naive and unplausible. So in this book the concept of 'conversation', which implies certain equality, slides over into equivocity on occasions. This fate befalls it because it became the corner-stone of an edifice. In St Teresa's writing it is preserved from such a fall because for her it is not a key-definition on which everything depends.

A student of St Thomas's *Summa* will notice that in this volume his Master is referred to twice without being completely understood. If he has already his own way of making meditation, he will lay aside this popularization of 'Teresian mediation' with the feeling that the application of the 'circumstances' of *S.T.* I-II, 7, 1 to the Gospel will not help him very much. However, that is no reason why others should not profit from it. After all, prayer is the most individual of all human activities.

C.V.