

carry away a rather blurred impression. The reduction in scale is too enormous. It might have been wiser to leave out altogether the section on Islamic Tradition, since few distinctive features can emerge from the compression of this subject into thirty-six pages. But the sketch of Muhammad and the selection of Islamic texts do offer vivid pictures to the imagination.

The wars and wives of Muhammad have often been held against him by Christian apologists who have compared him with our Lord. The comparison is not really fair. The Prophet is a thoroughly 'Old Testament' figure, his wars and wives reminiscent of David, and his prophetic experiences of a man like Elias. His character, like David's, seems to have deteriorated somewhat with success and old age, but his personal religion had the grand simplicity of both these Hebrew prototypes.

A quotation from the Qur'an and a reported saying of Muhammad's seem to put the essential difference between Islam and Christianity in a nutshell. The Prophet said, 'There is no new born child but belongs naturally to Islam. It is the parents who make it a Jew or a Christian or a Magian.' And the Qur'an says, 'Turn towards the natural religion in which God created men. God's creation cannot be changed. That is the unalterable religion.' Christianity claims to be a fulfilment and a supernatural religion; Islam to be the natural religion, a primitive reform.

The book on John the Baptist is scarcely in the same class. It rambles from the Essenes to Christian monasticism, the Jewish Karaites and Mandaeism, using the Baptist as a sort of symbolic peg, to which to tie these various reflections with the most tenuous of historical threads.

Both volumes are adorned with the excellent illustrations characteristic of this series. The calligraphic Arabic compositions of certain sacred texts are marvellous feats of ingenuity. It is interesting to observe that the contemporary Muslim holy picture, though not quite so hideously sentimental as its Catholic counterpart, is subject to similar debasing influences.

E.H.

**ALL FOR THE KING'S DELIGHT.** A Treatise on Religious Chastity, principally for Religious Sisters. By Ferdinand Valentine, O.P. (B. O. and W.; 21s.)

The title of this book is taken from the 44th Psalm: 'Thy beauty now is all for the king's delight; he is thy lord, and worship belongs to him.' And this is a fitting summary of the valuable study given us here. It cannot be too warmly recommended to the sisters for whom it is written. It will also serve all who are in any way involved in the

instruction and direction of such sisters. But the book has an interest and a value far beyond the immediate scope of its subject matter. It will have a use for a much wider class of readers, namely that growing number of students of the life of the spirit who will only be satisfied with the scientific and orderly approach of theology. For Fr Valentine shows quite clearly here that the theological approach is the orderly approach of life itself. St Thomas Aquinas was not merely conforming with the scholastic conventional mode of speaking of his time, but really meant it, when he said in the prologue of the *Summa Theologica*, that he was writing milk for babes, in such a way as to befit the instruction of beginners. And the solution to the problem of living a dedicated life of chastity, in our age when everywhere that virtue is the object of diabolical attack, is worked out in this treatise according to the principles of the movement of man towards God, the second part of theology. And the burden of the teaching of this volume is that the solution of the whole moral problem of our age can only be found when studied in this theological context. So just as for St Thomas there was no hard and fast division between dogma and morals, as between two subjects studied in splendid isolation, so in life there can be no hard and fast division between the mystery of the residence of the blessed Trinity in man's soul by grace, and the day-to-day struggle to live a chaste life. Indeed, such a life is pointless and frustrating without the continued effort to know, love, and serve God which is the only reason for our existence.

But this book gives us not only the objective application of theological principles to a moral problem, but also a sympathetic understanding of that problem from the subjective viewpoint of the religious sisters themselves. And the author has placed at our disposal the fruits of a lifetime of study, and experience as a retreat master over the last thirty years. Valuable suggestions are put forward and actual experiments are cited as to how to deal with the type of girl seeking admission to religious life. Running all through this treatise is the fundamental wisdom of the classical article of St Thomas on teaching, where he shows that teaching is neither a ramming in of mere information, nor yet a drawing out of innate ideas, but rather a nurturing of the vital principle of intelligence within the pupil. In the case of chastity the religious sister must be made to see that she has in her body a pearl of great price, which, caught up and dedicated in the religious habit, is thus raised together with the spotless virginity of the Mother of God, to become the instrument of the spiritual regeneration not only of her own but also of all those souls for whom she works. And just as the influence of the sacred virginity of our Lady is magnetic to draw all men towards her Son, so the influence of our religious sisters, who in a

special way share in this glory of Mary, has ever been, in the history of the Church, one of the chief ways of drawing souls to God. This apostolic aspect of chastity has been dealt with fully by Fr Valentine in a previous volume, *The Apostolate of Chastity*. In this present treatise he is concerned to help the young sister to keep faithful to her virginity in our present age when that state has been almost totally discredited. The traditional teaching of the Church, for example, that smallness of matter does not lessen guilt of mortal sin in the matter of chastity is openly laughed at as pious scrupulosity by our modern propaganda. Whereas it is a common-place of traditional Christian behaviour that such virtues as modesty and gentleness of speech and deportment are essential for the preservation of virtue, nowadays all this refinement and delicacy have been removed in the name of the realism forced upon our youth by the aftermath of two world wars. But in face of the collapse of morality, an even stronger build-up of the outer defences of chastity is necessary. So, much of what Fr Valentine has to say in this treatise is not directly concerned with chastity. In the opinion of the present reviewer he has succeeded in vindicating the traditional teaching of the Church in this lucid and most helpful book.

MATTHEW RIGNEY, O.P.

EVELYN UNDERHILL. By Margaret Cropper. (Longmans; 25s.)

A friend who read this book before me was surprised to discover that Evelyn Underhill was married, and it is true that the reading public during her lifetime created an artificial *persona*, the mask of mystic and recluse through which the oracle that was Evelyn Underhill seemed to speak. This biography, which is written with great affection and frankness by one who knew her personally during her lifetime, not only fills up this sort of gap in our knowledge but does a little to solve the puzzle that she will always be. Evelyn Underhill, besides directing retreats and writing books and letters of spiritual direction, lived a full and normal life happily married to the sweetheart of her childhood and enjoying the society of numerous friends, among whom were counted novelists and writers such as Sylvia Townsend Warner, Laurence Housman and Arthur Symons. Yet even here there are, as there must be in anyone's biography, unanswered questions. How much did she regret the childlessness of her marriage? Was it perhaps a cross accepted with greater fortitude than we might imagine?

We shall never know and we should not pry, but it is part of the enigma that she will always remain. She is best known as the woman who helped those who could not relate religious experience to any institutional Church, and in a measure this is the pattern of her own religious life. Shortly before her marriage she spent a week with the