

REVIEWS

VISIONS AND REVELATIONS IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE. By Father Gabriel, O.D.C. (Mercier Press; 8s. 6d.)

Though only a slender volume, this little work is a very important contribution to a subject which is not always treated with the detachment and objectivity it requires. Father Gabriel sets out to determine the place of visions and revelations in the spiritual life in the light of the teaching of St John of the Cross and St Teresa, and to show that both are in agreement, though the mystical doctor approaches the question from the theological, and the foundress of the reformed Carmel from the psychological angle. Both treated visions and revelations with the greatest reserve; St Teresa followed scrupulously the decisions of her director even if they went straight against the orders received in her ecstasies, and St John of the Cross rings the changes on *No Admitir*, i.e., do not take account of visions and other abnormal communications.

Fr Gabriel gives two principal reasons for this attitude: first, because these phenomena which appeal to the senses are apt to impair the direct approach to God in the darkness of faith; and secondly, because the danger of being deceived, whether by the devil, or, more frequently, by one's imagination, is very great indeed. The author warns especially directors against attaching too much importance to the tales of their penitents about their extraordinary spiritual experiences; and gives sound advice on the treatment of such cases. 'Some simple souls', he writes, 'can confuse certain tricks of their imagination with visions, and even excite these still more just by attaching importance to them. On the other hand, sometimes it will be enough to ignore them in order to get rid of them. On this principle, nothing is more reasonable than to let the whole matter drop. Pay no attention to this, my child. Do not busy yourself about it; it is enough to think of God.' (p. 101.)

This little book is warmly to be recommended to all who at one time or another may have to deal with extraordinary spiritual phenomena, as also to the recipients of such favours themselves. They will find in it the traditional teaching set out in clear and readable form as well as much practical advice.

H. C. GRAEF.