

Gurdon of deep interest. One would like to read that MS. of his which Mr. Coles tells us of and from which he quotes. E. SARMIENTO.

**SPEAKING OF HOW TO PRAY.** By Mary Perkins. (Sheed & Ward; 10s. 6d.).

This book must first be commended for breadth and depth of outlook. Too frequently liturgical publications, unwittingly perhaps, but none the less effectively, narrow the Church's spiritual life to so called 'official' spheres, with the result that it would appear difficult to see how there could be any justification at all for the presence in the Church of what are loosely called popular devotions. When, therefore, the author includes in her survey of the Church's prayer everything from the Sacrifice of Calvary to the wearing of the Miraculous Medal, she is doing a great service to that balance and steadiness of outlook which is so important a part of the equipment of the theologian. In the first part of the book, just under a quarter of its total length, she traces the doctrine of the Mystical Body from the Creation through the Fall and the Atonement to the institution of the Seven Sacraments and the Sacrifice of Calvary. Each of the sacraments is then examined in detail and its impact on life here and now in the twentieth century shown by the study of its ceremonial. Naturally the longest chapter is devoted to the Sacrifice of the Mass, and a good practical chapter follows on how to use the liturgical year, i.e. the proper of the Mass, to deepen and strengthen our understanding of the central Mystery itself. Then it is the last two chapters which command admiration, for in 'Singing to the Lord' (Chapter XVI) we find the Rosary and private prayer at last given their rightful place alongside the Divine Office. That alone is enough to recommend the book apart from the last chapter on sacramentals, with its blessings of aeroplanes and miraculous medals.

It is therefore all the more regrettable that the style in which the book is written (and this is particularly true of the first three quarters) makes reading it unduly laborious, is an obstacle to appreciation. In the first place the excessively cumulative structure of the sentences induces monotony and causes unnecessary repetition, especially as there is little or no variation of sentence structure; in the second place the comparatively valueless adjectives 'beautiful', 'glorious' and 'wonderful', are distressingly overworked and combine to give an impression of shallowness which may or may not be altogether justified. One is forced, therefore, to conclude that while this book is an admirable ground plan, so to say, for a study of the Church's prayer, it has not, despite its almost two hundred and fifty pages, raised the plan above ground level, which means, paradoxically enough, that it has not probed its subject to any great depth.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

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