extolled human freedom. Lessius saw freedom and human merit as essential elements of the pursuit of happiness in this world and the next.

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Achille Gagliardi, S.J.

Comentario a los Ejercicios espirituales de San Ignacio. Ed. José A. García, S.J., transl. Ramón Gómez Martínez, S.J. Colección “Manresa,” 66. Madrid and Bilbao: Mensajero, Sal Terrae / Pontificia Universidad Comillas, 2018. Pp. 222. Pb, €13.30.

The more one knows about the author of this “Commentary on the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius,” Achille Gagliardi (1537–1607), the more two questions will arise for any reader: first, how far is he faithful to the text of Ignatius, but second, what does his commentary reveal about himself. It should be made clear from the start that in fact this volume contains two works of Gagliardi: in addition to the “Commentary” there is a second work, almost as long as the first and also on the *Exercises*, entitled “On the discernment of spirits.” Both questions can be raised about both works.

Gagliardi was famous in his day for his outstanding sanctity and fame as a spiritual director. However, while professor in Rome, he had led a delegation to Pope Gregory XIII to complain about the way the Jesuit superior general, Everard Mercurian, was running the Society of Jesus—with excessive stress on secular education—and asking for reform. In spite of this, Gagliardi was appointed rector in several North Italian houses and became a close collaborator of St. Charles Borromeo in Milan for fourteen years (1580–94). Here, he became a spiritual guide for the mystic, Isabella Berinzaga (1551[?]-1624). A very unusual lady, she had taken a vow of obedience in the Society and was officially entitled a “spiritual daughter” of the Society. He published her autobiographical accounts of mystical experiences, *Breve compendio di perfezione cristiana*, which had an immense influence (cf. Rob Faesen, “Achille Gagliardi and the Northern Mystics,” in *A Companion to Jesuit Mysticism*, ed. Robert A. Maryks [Leiden: Brill, 2017], 82–111). Gagliardi’s relations with Berinzaga regarding her spiritual teaching aroused suspicion in Rome, and an investigation led to censure and his removal from Milan. But his reputation for holiness was such that he became (1599) superior of the Jesuit house in Venice.

At his death, he had published very little; the two works translated here into Spanish were not in print. Unfortunately, this edition gives no reference to their original publication. In fact, the editor, José A García, edited a Spanish translation (very competently done by Ramón Gómez Martínez, S.J.) of the original Latin edition by the Belgian Jesuit, Constantin van Aken, published in 1882. Thus the “Editor’s Preface” (29) is by Fr. van Aken and not by Fr. García. Although the editor states (35n36) that the second work was written before the first, in the second (on discernment of spirits) Gagliardi (148) refers to remarks he has made in the commentary. It seems more likely that he was working on both works at roughly the same time.

Gagliardi can be rhetorical (as when extolling the need for the examen [63]) but, compared with many later commentators, he is exemplary in the brevity and fidelity with which he expounds the words of Ignatius (an English translation of extracts from his *Commentary* is available in the *Way* 42, no. 2 (2003) and 46, no. 1 (2007), corresponding to pp. 69–77, 40–46 of this edition). He seems to take it for granted that the person giving the Exercises will be dealing one-to-one with an individual, and not with a group. This was the system used by Ignatius himself, but unfortunately was soon smothered by the practice of group “preached” retreats. Gagliardi is not slavish in his approach (thus setting aside Exx. 31 as likely to increase scruples), and he stresses both the need for flexibility (70, 75, 82), and the basic principle, “it is by these divine consolations that God is accustomed to let us understand what he asks of us” (57). He is original in his suggestion (124) that Ignatius’s “Contemplation for attaining love” [Exx. 23off.] can be introduced at the start of the Third Week and this week combined with the Fourth. Illuminating is his account of types of prayer (83), where he lays stress on the practical aspect: less contemplation than preparation for action, “not so much prayer as exercise” (83). Perhaps questionably, his commentary strays outside the strict limits of the retreat and shows that for him the Exercises are intended to teach for life. The editor takes up here observations made by Daniel Gil (*Manresa* 44 [1972]: 273–84 and 45 [1973]: 61–82); Gil had also criticized Gagliardi for his excessive suspicion of consolation, which leads to the second question raised above.

Not surprisingly, Gagliardi, as a child of his time, has recourse to the notion of the Emperor (44) to evoke the majesty of God. But Gagliardi’s own experience of the dangers to which mystical experience can lead may have led him to such great caution when dealing with consolation. His favorite word when dealing with piety is that it should be “solid” (167, 178, 197, 215). But he is aware of what can be ecstasy and rapture (54, 128). His analysis of the dangers of illusion and self-interest when dealing with pleasure in prayer is quite masterly. There is no trace here of the teaching on self-annihilation, which brought

fame, but also censure (from the Jesuit Cardinal Robert Bellarmine) to Isabella. Where he is most revealing is in the final chapter of the work on discernment. The editor questions (203n49) the relevance today of the examples of illusion cited by Gagliardi; but the recent cases of Fr. Thomas Philippe, O.P., and Jean Vanier show clearly that misinterpreted mystical experience can lead to sexual aberration. This is a rare case where the editor's note is less helpful, as in general he provides excellent guidelines for assessing the work of Gagliardi.

In answer to the two questions raised at the start of this review, there is little difficulty in replying positively to the first. Gagliardi in the two works presented here sheds real light on the work of St. Ignatius, with honest respect for the words of Ignatius, but with originality and a wealth of experience. The answer to the second question is not so evident. Although there may be traces of unconscious reaction by Gagliardi to the censures and penalties he had to undergo, they are difficult to find. Rather, the personal picture that emerges is of a very sensitive holiness and kindness: as he remarks at one point, "the spiritual director should avoid allowing someone who is not at fault torturing him or herself with worries, adding affliction to affliction instead of providing a cure" (171). The role of the spiritual director is that of a master teaching someone to write and rejoicing when he sees progress (175).

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