

Book Reviews

A NOBLEMAN OF ITALY (St. Aloysius Gonzaga). By the Rev. A. Koch, S.J. Translated from the German by the Rev. D. Donnelly, S.J. Pp. 166. (London: Sands & Co., 1929; 3/6 net.)

Another life of St. Aloysius, as the inspiring patron of ideal youth. The Saint's life is presented as a drama of enthusiastic devotion, and the book, in accord with this theme, is written at a high pitch and in a strain of lyricism which is very well maintained. The translator has done his difficult work very competently.

J.M.

THE CHILD'S RELIGION. A study of the development of the Religious Sentiment. By Pierre Bovet, Directeur de l'Institut Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Translated by George H. Green, M.A., Ph.D., B.Sc. (J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd.; 6/-.)

Evident throughout this book, besides the erudition to be expected from the Professor of Education in the University of Geneva, are a genuine interest in the mental and spiritual welfare of the young and an honest endeavour to minister to their most vital needs. But we are sensible of an atmosphere of vagueness and uncertainty.

Chapter VIII (entitled, somewhat heavily, 'Pedagogical Comments') contains much of the garnered wisdom that long, patient, loving dealing with children brings. 'It is hopeless in this domain as in any other,' we read, 'to attempt to give others what you do not possess yourself: religious teaching can be given only by religious people.'

The antidote against the evil of the 'distorted images of the divinity which may be traced in the minds of children' is surely not to defer religious instruction until children are in their teens (as Rousseau seems to suggest, p. 91), but to train them from babyhood to know and love Our Father Who is in Heaven. The 'grasp' of children on spiritual things is a perpetual joy and wonder to all whose high privilege it is to instruct them.

About the child's sixth or seventh year, M. Bovet considers, comes his first religious crisis, when he discovers his parents are not, as he had imagined them to be, omnipotent and omniscient. He then transfers 'to a more remote being the wonderful attributes with which in the first place he endowed his parents' (p. 46). 'The evidence of revivalists' (p. 100) 'goes to show that children are readily accessible to a sense