

this purpose—these works may flower from a priest's life once he is a saint, but to hold them up as an example for any priest just beginning to climb towards sanctity is to underestimate his humility. This *Life* would be useful for research students (if the subject interested them) but its style is not best suited to a popular *Life*.

The contrary may be said of M. le chanoine Leclercq's *Saint François de Sales*. This is a delightful study that gives no real details of the life of the saint but sets him in place in relation to other saints before and since and with the ordinary people of his day and our own. Sanctity is shown as almost an 'ordinary' attainment and in one very inspiring passage the author maintains that it is difficult to distinguish between the supernatural courtesy of the saint and the 'noblesse oblige' of his times. In fact, there seems very little of the extraordinary in this life: his principles are quite normal and entirely inspiring, his ascetical doctrine quite unheroic. One feels that one could very easily imitate him and one would be well on the way to sanctity before one began to realise the cost and then one would be too far advanced on the road to turn back. Only two men have been made Doctors of the Church because of their ascetical teaching, Saint John of the Cross and Saint Francis de Sales and Saint John is the master of the extraordinary (and cloistered?) sanctity and Saint Francis the master of ordinary perfection. Here is the picture of a man one wants instinctively to imitate—it is a pleasant, easy book to read, full of the most interesting incidental information about many things, and after reading it, one will know very little of what the Saint did but one will know the man and like him. Curiously enough, the Abbé Trochu tells us in his *life of the Curé d'Ars*, while Saint Francis disagreed on principle with dancing, he would never force his opinions on others.

TERENCE TANNER

MYSTIQUE DE SAINTE CATHERINE DE SIENNE. Extraits de ses lettres présentés par le Père Bézine, O.P. (Editions de Sapience, 1947; 150frs.)

A return to the sources of the spiritual life is one of the healthiest signs of the modern spiritual revival and few writers will provide a sounder foundation than St Catherine of Siena. Père Bézine has condensed the pith of her letters into a single volume, prefaced by a practical and valuable introduction and so arranged as to form a coherent guide to the way of perfection. Religious and laity alike will read it with profit and it could serve as an excellent companion and antidote to some naturalistic studies of the saint.

One would wish that it could also serve as an antidote to so much loose and wishful thinking about mysticism and the spiritual life. St Catherine's doctrine is profoundly theological, 'c'est la théologie thomiste pensée et expérimentée par une mystique' (p. 15), yet as simple as the Gospels themselves. It provides milk for babes, yet meat strong enough for those who like herself may have reached

the heights of the mystic way. It is as spiritual yet as practical and practicable as anyone could wish. A similar volume in English would fill a great need.

It is a pity the print of the text is poor and that of the introduction so small as to deter any reader whose eyesight is not of the best.

S. M. ALBERT, O.P.

DE LA SALLE. By W. J. Battersby. (Longmans; 12s. 6d.)

It is with St John Baptist De La Salle as an educational reformer and pioneer, rather than as a saint, that this book deals. English writers on education have hitherto largely neglected the importance of De La Salle's work and influence, yet the Order which he founded is now the largest teaching order in the world. He was the first to organise the education of poor children in an efficient manner, realising as he did the need for a supply of trained teachers. The author fully vindicates the saint's claim to be the founder of the first teachers' training establishment. He was also the pioneer in France of vernacular instruction, of milder disciplinary methods, and of that supposedly modern institution, school meals.

Poverty, humility and determination were the qualities which, in spite of early difficulties—the opposition of ecclesiastical superiors and of vested interests, such as the Writing Masters' guild—ensured the ultimate success of the Brothers of the Christian Schools; and the author makes an interesting comparison between Mme de Maintenon's richly endowed academy at St-Cyr and the humble beginnings of De La Salle's Order. For the saint's historical background is emphasised throughout the book: his lifetime coincided with the Grand Siècle of Louis XIV, with its triumphs, military and literary, and its swarms of starving poor. It was in the service of the latter that De La Salle renounced wealth and position, devoting his fortune to their spiritual and material welfare.

This book cannot fail to be of interest to all students of education as well as to a wider public who will find therein a fascinating account of a great personality in a great age.

Mr A. C. F. Beales has contributed an eloquent Foreword in which he shows how far in advance of educational reformers in this country St John Baptist De La Salle was.

S. A. H. WEETMAN.

SAINTS AND THEIR EMBLEMS IN ENGLISH CHURCHES. By R. L. P. Milburn. (Oxford University Press; 12s. 6d.)

Mr Milburn gives brief biographies of some hundred-and-fifty saints with notes on their representations in medieval carvings and windows in England. The vagaries of popular taste—in saints as in other matters—is unaccountable, so that Gildard and Uncumber earn places while others more authentic remain outside or are said to lack pictorial record. A useful introduction expounds the idea