

BLACKFRIARS

ductory and exegetical, which clear the way very skilfully to a first effective acquaintanceship with the text; leaving it to fuller commentaries to deal with the questions which that encounter will in turn provoke.

Textual Criticism may be the least attractive of all the pursuits of Scriptural science; and an ironically humbling task—to spend one's time under the table picking up the crumbs of Revelation, or sweeping the house with a broom looking for the lost groat. But it is a strict obligation on us. And not only on the experts who have to do the work, but on all Christian students, who must know how to use the expert findings. Still the subject can be very fascinating if properly handled; and so it becomes in the pages of M. Léon Vaganay's *AN INTRODUCTION TO THE TEXTUAL CRITICISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT*⁴ a very excellent work of translation recently published. One has seen it praised as a textbook most useful for the Scripture professor whose own knowledge of the subject is somewhat limited. But better than that, surely, it provides such a one with an excuse for not treating of the subject at all. For greater thoroughness it would be well to couple with this book such a work as F. G. Kenyon's *The Text of The Greek Bible*, and to move forward then to the use of some masterwork such as Lagrange's *La Critique Rationnelle*.

RICHARD KEHOE, O.P.

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REALIZATION. A Philosophy of Poetry. By Hugh McCarron, S.J. (Sheed & Ward; 5/-.)

This is an agreeably astringent book. With no half-apologetic backward glances at the more grimly functional of our younger poets does Father McCarron embark on a defeatist defence of poetry; in an essay deliberately positive and with a fine forthrightness he proclaims poetry to be not merely convenient but necessary to life. Not a decorous accessory, but action, emotion, the very thing itself. Even more surprisingly, Fr. McCarron can tell us why, and though the explanation may click into place just too easily to avoid slickness, yet one is grateful for so unaccustomed a quality as certitude. The sacraments, he says, are the substance of which poetry is the shadow. They act, they symbolize, they unite creation to the creator.

During his uncompromising advance to this conclusion a dozen trails are started with clamour for pursuit, but, inexorably firm, the author guides one past, stifling opposition by the use of a style whose angularity demands a concentration on the reader's part as athletic as it is unsleeping. Thought so lucid, one cannot help feeling, is worthy of a more elegant vessel. But one way

⁴ Translated by Rev. B. V. Miller, D.D. (Sands & Co. Ltd., 3/6.)

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and other, this is a book to keep and read, one whose originality offers an unflinching stimulus to new angles of approach to poetry.

M. A. B.

CRITICA DELL' IDEALISMO. By Carmelo Ottaviano. (Collezione di Studi Filosofici, Serie Teoretica, No. 8. (Alfredo, Napoli; L.12.)

"Who will not feel the infinite joy of re-found liberty, and the fascination of an unknown that still remains to be attempted and conquered" if realism can triumph over subjective idealism and solipsism? For in these theories is denied, logically, "every possibility of progress and improvement . . . the ideal of achievement becomes an empty name, the reality of the present moment is the *ne plus extra* of human activity and imprisons man for ever in the imperfections and miseries of the snow . . . and the present act itself is the measure and criterion of every value"; for except the *attuale pensato e sperimentato* nothing exists. St. Thomas's arguments against subjective idealism rest on the absurdity of its consequences (I. lxxxv. 2); but, as Professor Ottaviano remarks, the modern exponent of it or of solipsism would have no difficulty in accepting them; and he therefore sets out to argue against it solely from the *principio di immanenza nella sua struttura interiore* in order to demonstrate its self-contradiction and indemonstrability. He here assembles eleven arguments to this end; and the book will thus form a valuable summary of possible lines of approach to the problem. There is interesting incidental discussion of the thought of Berkeley (in which, however, one would have welcomed a statement at least of the possibility of an objective-idealist interpretation), of Hume, Kant, and the modern Italian idealists.

G. V.

REVERIES OF A HERMIT. By Frederick J. Kinsman. (Longmans, New York; \$2.25.)

How can the Body of Christ widen its visible borders, vitally, organically, according to the mind of Christ? How, at the same time, can it avoid every appearance of partisan polemic and secular ambition? This book approaches the matter in two stages. First, by a sympathetic and masterly inspection of three historic scenes—Agnostic, Protestant, and Catholic. Secondly, by outlining the characteristic bearing of three Saints to three such environments, respectively: St. Paul and Hellenism; St. John in the face of threatening schism; St. Cyril of Alexandria before the Council of Ephesus, with a weakening faith and a drooping love within the Church.

The idea is well conceived and vividly developed, and the scholarly clarity of exposition is in no way vitiated by a sprink-

ling of amusing anecdotes and happy reminiscences. The printer's error in the quotation of Luke ix, 55, on p. 172, is not a happy one, however. N. D.

THE SAINTS AND SOCIAL WORK. By Mary Elizabeth Walsh, Ph.D., (Silver Spring, Maryland: The Preservation of the Faith; \$2.—.)

There is a tendency to be impatient with the social work of religious congregations and to insist that it should be undertaken only by those who have finished a course in Economics, Social Philosophy and Social Psychology. That this cannot be the Catholic attitude is the contention of Miss Walsh. She has selected twenty-five saints and shows that to them social work simply meant charity as exercised in the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. The splendid results of the social work of those saints suggests that, however useful or even necessary an intellectual training may be, such work will lack that indispensable sympathy and heroic unselfishness which can be the fruit only of Christian charity. It is a book that social workers will do well to read before setting out on their responsible task. B. P.

SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA. By Nello Vian. Edited and revised by Henry Louis Hughes, with an Introduction by the Very Rev. Father Dunstan, O.S.F.C. (Burns Oates; 3/6.)

In this delightfully written book we are told how the young Portuguese nobleman became first an Augustinian Canon and a great scholar, how he offered his talents to St. Francis of Assisi who straightway made him the community's cook, and how his humility reacted to this snub. At the voice of obedience he emerged from his obscurity and was appointed the first theological teacher to the Franciscans by St. Francis in a letter playfully styling him "My Bishop." The author has succeeded in giving us a glimpse of a far stronger and more arresting personality than that conveyed to the general Catholic public "by the rosy-cheeked figure reproduced in hundreds of plaster statues." W. G.

LA RELIGION ET LA JEUNESSE. Par Mgr. Tihamer Toth, traduit du Hongrois par la Comtesse de Mariassy. (Editions Salvator, Mulhouse; 15 frs.)

Beginning with the legend of St. Christopher and ending with the antithesis between Communism and Christianity, this book is written as a spiritual *vade mecum* for intellectually adolescent Catholics. The obvious nature of the sentiment and the constant recognition of the youth of the readers for which the book is intended veil but do not entirely obscure the many merits of its sixty-three discourses. It is to be feared, however, that those in this country young enough to be impressed by the somewhat facile argument would not understand the French, and it is not, on the whole, a book one would recommend for translation into English.

C. B.

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Messrs. Burns, Oates & Washbourne have given us two books which strangely enough have come to us from New York. One is entitled **THINK AND PRAY**, written by Fr. Joseph M. Sorley, Paulist (5/-). The other is **THE LAST WORDS FROM THE CROSS**, being sermons preached in New York by Fr. Edwin Essex, O.P., (1/-). Devout souls will find in one the deep truths that are revealed by "the Word of the Cross"; and find in the other simple forms for changing these truths into prayers. The little books are sure of a welcome. V. McN.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- BURNS OATES:** *Man and Eternity: Cambridge Summer School Lectures 1936* (7/6); *The Scale of the Cloister*, Guy II, Prior of the Grand Chartreuse, tr. B. S. James (1/-); *The Franciscan Vision (Itinerarium Mentis in Deum)*, St. Bonaventure, tr. Fr. James, O.M.Cap. (2/6); *The Three Greatest Prayers*, St. Thomas Aquinas, tr. Laurence Shapcote, O.P., introd. Thomas Gilby, O.P. (2/6); *The Commandments of God*, St. Thomas Aquinas, tr. L. Shapcote, O.P., introd. T. Gilby, O.P. (2/6); *Watch and Pray*, Hubert van Zeller, O.S.B. (5/-); *Comfort in Ordeals*, J. P. de Caussade, S.J. (5/-); *Giants and Things*, Cubitt Lucey, illus. Jean Cumming (3/6); *Damien the Leper*, John V. Farrow (7/6); *Spiritual Life and Progress (De exterioris et interioris hominis compositione)*, David of Augsburg, tr. Dominic Devas, O.F.M. (2 vols. 6/- each); *St. Bernadette and the Apparitions at Lourdes*, J. I. Lane (1/-).
- CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS:** *The Early Dominicans*, R. F. Bennett, ed. G. G. Coulton (10/6).
- DESCLEE DE BROUWER (Paris):** *Le travail et l'Homme*, Etienne Borne et François Henry (15 frs.).
- EDITION UNIVERSELLE (Brussels):** *Morale et Corps mystique*, Emile Mersch, S.J. (25 B.fr.).
- FABER & FABER:** *Revelation*, (symposium), ed. J. Baillie and H. Martin (7/6).
- HERDER (Freiburg i.B.):** *Elementa Philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae*, Josephus Gredt, O.S.B. 7a. editio recognita, Vol. II: *Metaphysica, Ethica* (RM. 6.40.; linen RM. 8.—).
- LONGMANS:** *The Reformation, the Mass and the Priesthood*, Vol. II. *Rome and the Revolted Church*, Ernest Messenger (30/-); *Red Terror in Madrid*, Luis de Fonteriz (2/6).
- MARETTI (Turin):** *Acta Secundi Congressus Thomistici internationalis Romae a die 23 and 28 Novembris 1936 celebrati* (L.25).
- PENSEE CATHOLIQUE (Liège):** *Quaestiones de Embryologia et de Sterilisatione*, Series altera, B. H. Merkelbach, O.P. (pp. 110, n.p.).
- SHEED & WARD:** *The Torch-Bearers*, Alfred Noyes (7/6); *Meditations on the Gospels*, Rt. Rev. Ottaker Prohászka, Bishop of Székesfehérvár, tr. M. de Pál (3 vols. 7/6 each); *Men and Tendencies*, E. I. Watkin (10/6); *What can we do?* Barbara Wall (1/-).
- SIMPKIN MARSHALL:** *The Credibility of the Christian Faith*, H. S. Shelton (8/6).
- S.C.M. PRESS:** *Christendom and Islam, Their Contacts and Cultures down the Centuries*, W. Wilson Cash (5/-); *The Church's Attitude to Peace and War* (1/-).
- WALKER (Hinckley):** *Things I might have heard . . .*, Fr. Martin Dempsey (1/6).

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