

BLACKFRIARS

counter-move in one campaign. It is not sham warfare, both are in earnest, but neither forces a decision. The reader can form his own conclusions; probably most will agree that Mr. Joad is at his best when testing something less than Christianity with his own genuine experience and conviction, for it must be confessed that his moods are sometimes more congenial than the moods that have happened to belong to some Christians. That is to say, his rhetoric is often really impressive. The chief failing of his logic seems to be the fallacy of irrelevant conclusion. On the matter of logic, Mr. Lunn must be judged to prevail, although you may have the feeling occasionally that religious rationalism may be also merely a mood at times, a taste for the Alps. However, Mr. Lunn's chief weakness, and one that is not passed over by his opponent, appears when he is defending a somewhat arbitrary collection of abstractions called Christianity, and not that definite organism called the Church. But usually he is arguing just like a Catholic.

N.W.T.G.

THEONAS. CONVERSATIONS OF A SAGE. By Jacques Maritain. Translated by F. J. Sheed. (Sheed & Ward; pp. 200; 6/-.)

It is a failure of many present day Christian apologists that they speak in a forgotten language and appear to acquire their subject-matter from the mortuaries of thought. If only because it provides an enlightened corrective to their misdirected energy, Jacques Maritain's *Theonas* was well worth translating, and Mr. Sheed has ably performed the task. Maritain does not allow his thought and its expression to be hampered by any merely spatial or temporal boundaries; for him, Thomism is not a philosophic system which was generally accepted in the middle ages, but is the system which co-ordinates truth and which happens, incidentally, to have been first fully elaborated by St. Thomas; but it is not perfect in St. Thomas and must still be further developed: 'living thought has never reached the term of its growth,' it develops, becomes a living being more perfect, more highly evolved—these words are Maritain's. It can be seen then that the Thomism which Maritain teaches is no mere creation of the middle ages which has long been in ruins, but is simply systematised truth which, absolutely speaking, has no more relation to the middle ages than it has to the twentieth century. Consequently no one terminology more than another has any claim to be that which a Thomist might use, and it is no treason to express Thomism in a language that is modern: this Maritain does.

In his choice of subjects for discussion Maritain shows equal enlightenment. Though *Theonas* was written a dozen years ago

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the problems with which it deals are still to a great extent uppermost in the minds of those who think. Humanism, freedom and the philosophy of revolution are certainly present-day problems, though nonsense about the superman and the myth of necessary progress are Wellsian absurdities from which most self-respecting thinkers have by now dissociated themselves. It is not possible here to give any criticism of the conversations in detail. The problems are difficult, the conversations are necessarily short, and in that relative sense, they are incomplete and unsatisfactory. Every reader, however, will be put well on the way to a solution, and, more important, the modern non-Christian will see that at least one Christian thinker is able to forget those problems which are dead and should have been buried centuries ago, and apply himself to the difficulties of his own time.

In these days when the valid claims of humanism are being urged and Christianity is accused of being unable or afraid to recognise them, it seems a pity that Theonas, the mouthpiece of Christian and philosophic wisdom, should be 'rather odd in appearance,' furthermore a misogynist who leaves his wife and retires to the desert to water the tree of Porphyry. Let it be said in his favour, however, that he smokes a pipe and carries in his pocket Claudel's *Grandes Odes* and a *Guide for Gardeners*.

I.C.

INSTITUTIONES IURIS CANONICI (De Processibus). By Matthaeus A. Coronata, O.M.C. (Marietti, Lire 30). DE SUSPENSIONE EX INFORMATA CONSCIENTIA. By Marius Pistocchi. (Marietti, Lire 5). RELIGIOUS MEN AND WOMEN IN CHURCH LAW. By Joseph Creusen, S.J. Translated by Edward F. Garcesche, S.J. (Bruce Publishing Co.; \$3.)

Fr. Coronata's third volume of commentary on the Code of Canon Law gives an orderly exposition of the fourth book of the Codex. The same clarity and completeness which made the first two volumes of this work so useful to the student of canon law are present in this latest addition. Particularly helpful are the many and well-documented notes.

In his *De Suspensione ex Informata conscientia* Fr. Pistocchi deals satisfactorily with a particular section of the fourth book of the Code, which treats of an extraordinary and extra-judicial process. The author after a brief introduction on the history and nature of this process, gives a detailed and careful explanation of each canon.

Fr. Creusen's *Religieux et Religieuses* still remains one of the best commentaries on the part of the canon law which con-