

## REVIEWS

would be generally acceptable among those best qualified to judge. His notion of the concept, of the process of abstraction, of the nature of the universal appear to be peculiarly his own; and his depreciation of the natural power of human intelligence, while at the same time maintaining it to be "the faculty of the divine," has against it the whole weight of Thomist tradition, based, it would not be difficult to show, on the text of St. Thomas himself.

Fr. James's translation reads like an original piece of English. If he at times allows himself considerable liberty he is perhaps nowhere unjust to his author; for Père Rousselot, it is evident, did not feel himself bound to any great strictness of terminology, and his translator may surely claim a similar exemption. "A quelle distance sommes-nous du littéralisme, du formalisme, du verbalisme des glossateurs?" For Rousselot the doctrine of St. Thomas was "a kind of 'panaestheticism.'" It was then a not unhappy slip of the pen which caused the words "Toute la noétique de S. Thomas" to be rendered as "The whole poetic system of Aquinas." The Angel of the Schools makes his appeal to the sensibility of the poet and man of letters as well as to the intelligence of the theologian and philosopher.

ÆLFRED GRAHAM, O.S.B.

RENE DESCARTES, LETTRES SUR LA MORALE. Texte présenté, revu et annoté par Jacques Chevalier. (Boivin, Paris; 30 frs.)  
RECHERCHES PHILOSOPHIQUES, IV, 1934-1935. (Boivin, Paris; 65 frs.)

Thanks are due from students of philosophy to Boivin et Cie for the sources they are making easily accessible. Perhaps few of us have had the opportunity before to see these letters of Descartes, or to judge of the wisdom that ripened upon the tree of his philosophy; as M. Chevalier suggests in an admirably sympathetic introduction, it might never have been plucked had not the philosopher come into contact with Elizabeth of Bohemia and Christina of Sweden.

Besides the introduction, M. Chevalier gives a short account of the text, that of Adam and Tannery's *Œuvres* being usually followed after comparing the other texts with the extant manuscript copies of the letters. The correspondence with Princess Elizabeth is given first, followed by what may be considered as the correspondence with the Queen of Sweden, though it consists largely of letters to and from the French diplomat Chanut. This second group of letters is incomplete, but is supplemented by accounts of the subject-matter of the missing letters, based on manuscript notes. There are also valuable explanatory and biographical notes by M. Chevalier at the end, and the spelling of the letters has been brought up to date.

*Recherches Philosophiques* might seem at first sight expensive,

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but it contains 532 pages of royal octavo excellently printed. Nearly three-quarters of this consists of twenty-three articles, grouped according to subject-matter, of which the points of view are so various as to make the collection valuable if for that reason only. No point of view is excluded by the editors. The last quarter of the volume contains analyses of recent books, again arranged by subjects.

The lists of the Comité de Patronage and the editorial committee are impressive, and catholic with a small *c*, including a good proportion of Catholics. Their object is to promote philosophical research, to encourage not polemics but acquaintance. The number of translated articles (for the whole Annual is in French) perhaps indicates the possibility of the editors accepting essays in other languages. In any case this 65 francs buys a greater variety of current foreign opinion than we imagine could otherwise be purchased.

QUENTIN JOHNSTON, O.P.

THE WAY TO GOD. The Broadcast Talks, Second Series, by Rev. C. C. Martindale, Professor C. E. Raven, Rev. G. F. Macleod. (Student Christian Movement Press; 3/6.)

"The League of Nations needs a soul," said Professor Raven in one of the talks here published. "Only as they are agreed in their view of the meaning and character of the good life can they hope to co-operate for its attainment. . . . The response of the Churches to the need for human unity shows itself in the movement for reunion and in the quickening of missionary effort." And this second series of talks is welcome not least for the proof it offers of the possibility of co-operation between the churches and of the untechnical, unsectarian discussion of Christianity as something of universal import and appeal. Fr. Martindale speaks simply and convincingly of Our Lord's life, and of the way He conquered the world; this is followed by Professor Raven's discussion of "His power to unify mankind in the service of the one God; His power to transform individuals as they surrender themselves to Him; His power to overcome social evils and create a coherent and co-operative social order." Finally, Mr. Macleod treats of faith as expressed in life, of the effect the former should have upon the latter, individual and social. For Christian and non-Christian alike there is much to meditate in these pages. The Catholic will of course find points which he would wish to see treated otherwise; he will be sorry that Professor Raven's discussion of Christ's presence and power to-day includes no mention of grace, for him the essence of these truths; and that Mr. Macleod speaks of Christianity as the Great Assumption (and indeed how can it be said that "we believe that God . . . revealed to men the Great Assumption"?—either, surely, we believe that God revealed truth, or we adopt, pragmatically, an