

REVIEWS

precocious by a vivid realisation of the things of heaven, but rather more lovable and more typically a child. Holiness did not prevent her from encouraging her little brother and sister to indulge in protracted sniffs at a pungent cheese as a mortification.

The description of Anne's last days and brave death at the age of eleven is well worth reading even for itself : but altogether the book is a very pleasing account of a little girl who would have been remarkable in any case, but who in her loyal response to the urgings of grace was made quite fascinating.

P.H.K.

SELF-ABANDONMENT TO DIVINE PROVIDENCE. By Father J. P. de Caussade, S.J. A new translation by Algar Thorold. With an Introduction by Dom David Knowles, monk of Downside. (Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1933; 5/-.)

A thoroughly beneficent piece of spiritual instruction, excellently translated and with a masterly introduction. If such spiritual books, offering us a simple method of attaining perfection—'sanctity without tears'—often raise false hopes; and if their authors, in the claims which they make for their own special method, often assume the very style and language of the vendors of patent medicines : no such complaints can justly be made against a book which asks of us nothing but that very simple and very fundamental thing, a genuine acceptance of the Will of God. Father de Caussade has unction and persuasiveness; his book ought to do a world of good.

Dom David Knowles, in the Introduction, connects the teaching of the author with the teaching of the Salesian and Carmelite schools. We should like to suggest as a possibility a further source in the book of that Capuchin writer, Fr. Benet Fitch, whom Bremond regards as of first rate importance in the history of French mysticism. The very title of his book is suggestive : *The Rule of Perfection, containing a brief and perspicuous abridgement of all the whole spirituall life, reduced to this only point of the Will of God.* And nothing could be happier than his motto from the twenty-ninth psalm : *Vita in voluntate eius.*

J.M.

IS CHRISTIANITY TRUE? A Discussion between Arnold Lunn and C. E. M. Joad. (London : Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1933; pp. 368; 7/6.)

Hard and good-tempered controversy between a rationalist and a mystic—a distinction here only of emphasis, for elsewhere Mr. Joad is also a philosopher. Most of the country has been fought over before, but never with such exciting move and

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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