

REVIEWS

PHILOSOPHY

SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS AND HIS WORK. By A. D. Sertillanges, O.P. Translated by Godfrey Anstruther, O.P. (Burns, Oates and Washbourne, Ltd.; pp. 150; 5/-.)

The one privilege which Aquinas craved from his contemporaries was that of being allowed to tell them the truth. The way in which he fulfilled his very honest purpose is brilliantly re-told by Père Sertillanges, with an understanding and an economy which it would be difficult to surpass. St. Thomas's allegiance was primarily to the truth. Consequently, and despite the disapproval of the reactionaries—'mere brutes,' as Albertus Magnus so appositely called them—his work is that of 'a pagan as well as a Christian' to change, slightly, the challenging phrase of Péguy. Père Sertillanges is in his element when writing—in the last two chapters—of Thomism and the modern world. Thomism is, essentially, metaphysics: therefore, complete and unchangeable. What we need is a metamorphosis; a philosophy in substance St. Thomas in its expression; Santayana. And this will be a real advance, since 'poetry is philosophy, but something more.' It will be a difficult task, for we too have our 'mere brutes,' imprisoned behind the walls of their system and muttering to themselves in a strange tongue. Sertillanges thinks that it will not require the intervention of a Divine Person. No! But it will require another man with the native capacity, fearlessness and originality and, not least, the sanctity of Aquinas. Everybody interested in the re-statement of philosophy ought to read this book.

Fr. Anstruther deserves great praise. His work is as excellent as it must have been extraordinarily difficult.

I.C.

S. AUGUSTIN ET LE NÉO-PLATONISME CHRÉTIEN. By Régis Jolivet. (Denoël et Steele; 15 fr.)

Recent literature on St. Augustine has tended to become either picturesque and romantic (Louis Bertrand and Papini) or strictly technical. This work of M. Jolivet is to be welcomed as a balanced account of Augustine's life written calmly but in a lucid and attractive style, by one who is himself an accredited philosopher and historian of philosophy. The advantage of the latter fact is that the philosophical problems with which Augustine was engaged obtain a realist and not merely acade-