

## Book Reviews

**A NOBLEMAN OF ITALY (St. Aloysius Gonzaga).** By the Rev. A. Koch, S.J. Translated from the German by the Rev. D. Donnelly, S.J. Pp. 166. (London: Sands & Co., 1929; 3/6 net.)

Another life of St. Aloysius, as the inspiring patron of ideal youth. The Saint's life is presented as a drama of enthusiastic devotion, and the book, in accord with this theme, is written at a high pitch and in a strain of lyricism which is very well maintained. The translator has done his difficult work very competently.

J.M.

**THE CHILD'S RELIGION.** A study of the development of the Religious Sentiment. By Pierre Bovet, Directeur de l'Institut Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Translated by George H. Green, M.A., Ph.D., B.Sc. (J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd.; 6/-.)

Evident throughout this book, besides the erudition to be expected from the Professor of Education in the University of Geneva, are a genuine interest in the mental and spiritual welfare of the young and an honest endeavour to minister to their most vital needs. But we are sensible of an atmosphere of vagueness and uncertainty.

Chapter VIII (entitled, somewhat heavily, 'Pedagogical Comments') contains much of the garnered wisdom that long, patient, loving dealing with children brings. 'It is hopeless in this domain as in any other,' we read, 'to attempt to give others what you do not possess yourself: religious teaching can be given only by religious people.'

The antidote against the evil of the 'distorted images of the divinity which may be traced in the minds of children' is surely not to defer religious instruction until children are in their teens (as Rousseau seems to suggest, p. 91), but to train them from babyhood to know and love Our Father Who is in Heaven. The 'grasp' of children on spiritual things is a perpetual joy and wonder to all whose high privilege it is to instruct them.

About the child's sixth or seventh year, M. Bovet considers, comes his first religious crisis, when he discovers his parents are not, as he had imagined them to be, omnipotent and omniscient. He then transfers 'to a more remote being the wonderful attributes with which in the first place he endowed his parents' (p. 46). 'The evidence of revivalists' (p. 100) 'goes to show that children are readily accessible to a sense

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of sin.' What is this 'crisis' but the attaining of the use of reason which the Catholic Church recognises and at which she admits the child to First Confession?

M. Bovet is a Protestant, he tells us himself. For him the word 'Church' has, as 'historical' connotation, 'the society of disciples of Jesus Christ working for the coming of the Kingdom of God' (p. 182) or, translated into 'terms of ideas': 'a society looking towards an absolute or transcendent goal.' And his idea of spiritual unity is not ours. He considers 'equivocal and pernicious' the idea that spiritual unity depends on community of *belief* (p. 175). He prefers to define spiritual unity as 'a communion of souls tending to the same goal' (p. 178).

In a nebulous creed such as that, of course, 'injustice, unbelief, impurity, drunkenness, lying, usury, and oppression' may seem 'foes more dangerous than any heretics' (p. 180). For if you have no unity of belief what can the truth mean to you, and how can you call any denial a heresy?

It is, to say the least of it, a strange reading of history that classes Innocent III and Boniface VIII with the Pharaohs, the Roman Emperors and other 'Kings who claim divine right,' and towards whom sentiments of veneration 'develop naturally into dogmas of worship'! (pp. 49-50).

T.L.

THE CAPUCHINS. By Father Cuthbert, O.S.F.C. (London: Sheed & Ward; two vols.; 15/-.)

Father Cuthbert makes it clear that the Capuchin reform was not the outcome of a desire to defend the Church against the Protestant revolt of the sixteenth century, though, in common with other splendid movements of the period, its development was accelerated and its growth strengthened by the great menace. Actually it was the result of one of those continuous medieval strivings amongst the great Franciscan family to return to the manner of life of their Founder.

Early in the history of the Order efforts had been made to recapture the spirit of the Poor Man of Assisi, some of them so misdirected as to end in disobedience and apostasy. Thus we see many of the Spirituals ranging themselves on the side of the excommunicated Emperor Louis of Bavaria in his struggle with Pope John XXII. A more successful movement was made in the fifteenth century, when the Observant Franciscans received permission from the Holy See to separate from the Conventuals, and live without revenues. So happy