

REVIEWS

THEOLOGY AND RELIGION

PROVIDENCE. By the Rev. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.
Translated by Dom Bede Rose, O.S.B., D.D. (B. Herder,
London; 12/-.)

Père Garrigou-Lagrange's *La Providence et la confiance en Dieu* has been translated with understanding and accuracy. The importance of the subject-matter need not be emphasized; nor could a statement of the principles which underlie God's providential dealings with His creatures be more timely. In a world where the soberest minds are prophesying disaster and the gaze of some even among the children of light has become unsteady, it is well to be reminded that our destinies are in safer keeping than we know. The will of God is infallible in its working; but it is the will of a God who is Love and who respects the freedom of the creatures He has made. Those who are acquainted with the author's work will need no assurance that the problems involved in the juxtaposition of divine omnipotence and human freedom have been neither shirked nor oversimplified. Nevertheless, like St. Thomas himself—who posed no questions for which he lacked the intellectual strength to provide an answer—he states the residue of ascertainable truth in all its cogency. The mystery remains—but it is shown to be a mystery not of darkness but of light.

As *Providence* is the product of a mind formed and matured in the ways of classical Thomism, the detached and somewhat colourless method of treatment may well prove disconcerting to the average English reader. Perseverance, however, with a designedly abstract manner of statement will reveal an underlying practicality and realism beyond the reach of writers of a more emotional school. Conclusions of the greatest practical value are shown in their connexion with truths concerning the nature of God. At the further possible remove from anything that could be termed theological pragmatism, spiritual teaching of every-day application is here based upon the dogmatic principles traditional in the Church. No happier proof could be forthcoming of St. Thomas's thesis that theology, when properly understood, far from being a purely speculative, is an *eminently practical* science. The work will accordingly prove of value both to the student, as a model of theological lucidity, and to the general reader as an inspiration and encouragement. Conspicuously free from polemic and technical terminology, it may be recommended even to those as yet unacquainted with St. Thomas.

BLACKFRIARS

Not least will it be of service—and for such perhaps it was chiefly intended—to those who feel called to closer union with the God whose ways to man are here so admirably justified.

ÆLRED GRAHAM, O.S.B.

PHILOSOPHICAL FRAGMENTS. By Søren Kierkegaard. Translated by David F. Swenson. (Humphrey Milford; 7/6.)

SOREN KIERKEGAARD. By Theodor Haecker. Translated and with a Biographical Note by Alexander Dru. (Humphrey Milford; 2/6.)

Søren Aaby Kierkegaard has been called the Léon Bloy of Protestantism. The parallel, in many respects misleading, is perhaps suggested by some similarity of volcanic temperament and by certain affinities of their prophetic apocalypticism and the vehemence of their self-abnegating lives. There is a parallel also in the whole genius and orientation of the immense posthumous influence exercised by these two great souls; indeed to their respective influence is due much that is most vital in contemporary Catholicism and in contemporary Protestantism. But whereas his Catholicism is of the very essence of the message of Léon Bloy, the Protestantism of Kierkegaard is something almost accidental and adventitious; something moreover which, as Dr. Haecker has no difficulty in showing, is, such as it is, a source of weakness and incompleteness rather than of strength and fulfilment. But this very fact, together with his immense breadth of human understanding and sympathy, has given him a wider sphere of influence than was attainable by Bloy, and has made it possible for Kierkegaard profoundly to influence the thought and lives of many Catholics as well as to impart a new vitality to a decadent and Modernized Protestantism: Dr. Theodor Haecker is but one of many living Catholics who owe much to him. The fact that Kierkegaard is claimed as the father and inspirer of the school of Barth and Brunner must not obscure from us the fact that his thought and vision are too big to be fitted into a Calvinistic framework. Dr. Haecker shows that, notwithstanding his intense realization of the holiness of God and of the corruption of human nature, and his constant emphasis on the infinite otherness of nature and grace, he was free from the extreme dualism of many of his disciples, and understood clearly that "Christianity is the perfection of the really human." Moreover, it may be added, he was no apostle of faith without works. Barthianism is to be understood as an interpretation and even a modification of Kierkegaard in terms of Calvinism rather than as the only possible legitimate evolution of his thought and vision.

Kierkegaard was not only a prophet; he was a thinker, even a "dialectic" thinker, nay even a "scholar," in a sense in which