

NOTICES

his own personal mind. In accordance with this interpretation Prof. Robin in five chapters condenses Plato's teaching in a remarkable synthesis dealing with the problem and the acquisition of knowledge. Knowledge is neither sensation nor opinion, but is based on being and depends on being, and if relations are the constituents of being, then knowledge must be the faithful image of these relations. And then we follow Plato step by step in his aspiration towards the full intelligibility, his incessant *inquiétude*, his perpetual search for truth, his cosmological, psychological, theological teaching, the physical world, the soul, God, and finally his ethical, sociological and political ideas.

In A. E. Taylor's *Plato, the Man and his Work* which gave us an analysis of the Dialogues a systematization of their contents under subject-headings was avoided, for Plato himself hated nothing more than system-making. L. Robin approached his subject from a different angle. With a thorough knowledge of Plato's thought, derived from a minute analysis of his works (which we have learnt to admire in his former books), he has now attempted a synthetic view. We do not think that Plato has lost anything by this attempt. On the contrary, it seems to us that a great deal may be gained in clearness and exactness by co-ordinating—not quite systematizing—the same ideas scattered in the many Dialogues. Apart from certain interpretations, with which one may perhaps not agree, the book is a very great success.

DANIEL A. CALLUS, O.P.

NOTICES

UN PROGRAMME RECONCILIATEUR PROPOSE PAR JACQUES MARITAIN: MEMOIRE POUR PRONER SA MISE EN PRATIQUE. By Dr. Henri Minot. (Labergeirie; pp. 33; n.p.)

The author urges that Maritain's programme of Christian humanism, suggested in his *Lettre sur l'Indépendance* and elaborated in *Humanisme Intégral*, should not be left on paper, but should be translated at once into action. The formation of a *Mouvement Fraternel pour l'Humanisme intégral* is suggested in order to discuss ways and means. They would be many: Christian humanism, because it is Christian, looks first to the establishment of the conditions necessary for human perfection not for an *élite* but for the masses, and all the current problems, political, economic, cultural, religious, immediately present themselves. The pamphlet is a *fervorino*; but the author has anticipated criticism of lyricism of style (*les cités s'édifient au son de la lyre*) as he has anticipated the more substantial and perhaps more irrelevant objection that Catholic action should be initiated by the hierarchy, not the laity; and a *fervorino* in favour of something at once so urgent and so well defined as Maritain's programme is not to be despised in these days of apathy. May the *Mouvement Fraternel* flourish. And why not an English equivalent?

G. V.

MARRIAGE AND PERIODIC ABSTINENCE. By J. G. H. Holt, M.D.
(Longmans; 8/6.)

The publishers are to be complimented on the appearance of this book dealing with an important matter which in the last few years has been distorted by the wildest statements based on prejudice and insufficient information. It is scientific in the true and classical manner, giving facts, laws, and a confirmatory hypothesis. As to the facts, there has not always been agreement on whether there is a certain period in the monthly cycle in which conception is less likely to occur or on which this period occurs. Here Dr. Holt is exact and statistical and confirms his conclusions with numerous case-histories and the observations of other workers in the same field. The laws of periodicity are determined and illustrated by charts and diagrams. Here Dr. Holt is careful to avoid the mistake of over-simplification; he does not misunderstand and abuse the notion of the *normal*, indeed, in his view, an invariably regular cycle is a myth. The hypothesis concerns the functions of the *Corpus Luteum*, the body which develops after ovulation and produces a secretion which through the bloodstream exercises a profound influence on the organs and processes of sex.

It should be pointed out that the "Safe Period" theory (an unfortunate name) serves the purpose of procreating life equally with the contrary purpose, and in fact is so used in several of the case-histories. With regard to the morality of using it as a method of birth-control, the reader may be referred to another book recently published by Messrs. Longmans, *Morals and Marriage*, by T. G. Wayne; to *La Continence périodique dans le mariage*, by R. P. Mayrand, O.P.; or to the appropriate sections in any recent and approved Roman moral theology. In brief, it is lawful when intercourse is morally desirable and pregnancy morally undesirable.

T. G.

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI. By T. S. R. Boase. (*Great Lives* Series: Duckworth; 2/-.)

This is a very sympathetic treatment of St. Francis and differs from most non-Catholic lives of the Poor Man of Assisi in not fighting shy of the Saint's Catholic faith and dealing merely with his human attraction. He admits Francis' strong grip of the Church's dogmatic teaching, but fails sadly in his attempt to explain away the Stigmata on the grounds of auto-suggestion.

W. G.

UNE TOMBE PRES DE DANUBE. Vie et Journal de Soeur Marie-Marguerite Bogner—religieuse de la Visitation Sainte Marie de Erd (Hongrie). By Elemér Csavossy, S.J. (Art & Book Co.; 1/6: Lefebvre-Ducrocq, Lille.)

Translated into very simple French and well got-up, this little book makes attractive reading to all interested in the spiritual

NOTICES

life, but especially to those who like to see this life as a rich harmony of grace and the natural dispositions of the soul. In this young nun—she died at the age of twenty-eight—we can see a naturally very vivacious, happy, and yet, from an unusually early age, suffering-afflicted person with a deep understanding of the purpose of life, and a steady living according to, and progressing in, this understanding. Her natural freshness of character stamps itself on this book. It is fresh, and speaks of a soul whose outstanding note was joy. Pain and poor health had taught her a wonderful synthesis—one to which we must needs all approach; an invigorating little book. P. P. F.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- BURNS OATES: *The Last Words from the Cross*, Edwin Essex, O.P. (1/-); *More Five-Minute Sermons from "The Universe"* (5/-).
- CASSELL: *The Wise Thrush*, W. Cumming Tait (7/6).
- CENTENARY PRESS: *In whose Heart are thy Ways*, Percy Maryon Wilson (3/6).
- CHURCH LITERATURE ASSOCIATION: *Grace and Nature*, A. G. Herbert, S.S.M. (1/-).
- COLDWELL: *Confraternity Study Club Series: The Mass and the Liturgical Year* (1/3); *Externals of the Liturgy* (1/3); *The Newman Book of Religion*, ed. Aloysius Ambruzzi, S.J. (3/6).
- DESCLEE DE BROUWER: *A l'ombre des grands Ordres: Histoire, Spiritualité et Constitution des huit principaux Tiers-Ordres* (18 frs.).
- EDITIONS DU CERF: *Discours sur la guerre possible*, Pierre-Henri Simon (10 frs.).
- EDITIONS SALVATOR (Mulhouse): *La chaste adolescence*, Mgr. Tihamer Toth, tr. du hongrois, 3me. ed. revue et augmentée (15 frs.).
- HODDER & STOUGHTON: *An Introduction to Pastoral Theology*, H. Balmforth, L. Dewar, S. E. Hudson and E. Sarn (10/6).
- MACMILLAN: *Adventure of the Amethyst*, Cecily Hallack (7/6).
- FLON: *L'Art de l'Extrême Orient: Paysages, Fleurs, Animaux: 15 planches en couleurs* (n.p.).
- SANDS: *St. Francis for Little Folk*, Teresa Lloyd (3/6); *A First Bible Story Book*, Teresa Lloyd (3/6).
- SHEED & WARD: *Letters to his Fiancée*, Leon Bloy, tr. Barbara Wall (5/-); *The Space of Life Between*, Bede Jarrett, O.P., 2nd edn. (3/6); *Geneva versus Peace*, Comte de Saint-Aulaire, tr. Francis Jackson (7/6); *Mark Symons*, Stephanie Wines (5/-); *Canticle of the Three Children in the Fiery Furnace*, illustrated by Frances W. Delahanty (4/6).
- S.C.M. PRESS: *Christ and Prayer*, C. F. Andrews (2/6; 3/6 cloth).
- S.P.C.K.: *Moscow the Third Rome*, Nicolas Zernov (2/6).
- STANBROOK ABBEY PRESS: *Why God created the World, or The Purpose of the Creator and of Creatures: A Study in the Teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Johann Stuffer, S.J., tr. Edmund F. Sutcliffe, S.J. (2/6).

Printed in Great Britain by Samuel Walker, Hinckley, Leicestershire, and published for the Proprietors by The Rolls House Publishing Co., Ltd., Rolls House, 2 Breems Buildings, London, E.C.4.