

of life; he uses his long experience to direct our eyes beyond edges and surfaces to substance. He speaks in a sincere fashion devoid of all mannerism and for that reason his meditations must have a wide appeal.

LE PROBLEME DE LA FOI. By Chanoine Jacques Leclerq. (Casterman; 30fr.)

Canon Leclerq writes for '*les milieux intellectuels du XXe siècle*', and especially for the young (not only in years) university student. With great clarity he outlines the problems raised on the one hand by the intransigent rationalism of the scientist and on the other by the equally intransigent irrationalism of literary circles. The scientist and litterateur may both feel their faith to be ill-founded, the one because he cannot analyse it as he analyses his microbes, the other because it appears to lack the open-mindedness (or perhaps empty-mindedness) of his literary traditions. Canon Leclerq's answer underlines the transcendence of faith, following Christ for what he is in himself and not for his rational or aesthetic attributes. This is done by clear and vivid use of gospel evidence, especially John 1, 35-42. '*Que s'est-il passé et qu'est-ce que Jésus leur a dit? L'Evangile ne relate pas; mais nous sommes assurés que Jésus ne leur a pas fait de démonstration*'. Transcendent faith however must not ignore the reason and sensibilities: '*Dans un trop grand nombre de cas, il semble que l'enseignement chrétien, trop cérébral, a séparé la doctrine de la vie*'. That could well be emblazoned on the walls of all lecture rooms, scientific, literary and theological. There is Canon Leclerq's final solution; no delicate nibbling at the edge of problems but a bold march in pursuit of Saint Truth armed with faith, science and the arts. His answer is Christ's answer, Come and see.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.



EXTRACTS

THE NOUVELLE REVUE THEOLOGIQUE (Louvain) for June publishes the text in Hebrew, with a French translation and commentary, of a 'Psalm' recently discovered with twenty others in the desert of Judea. It is a prayer of gratitude for the Lord's having rescued the soul from the depths, as though the *De Profundis* had already been answered.

The guilty spirit, thou hast cleansed it from all sin
that it may continue to dwell among the hosts of the holy ones
and be gathered into the assembly of the sons of heaven.

Thou grantest to each a place that lasts for ever
with the spirits of wisdom

to praise thy name in unison with them

and to recount thy wonders in the sight of all thy works.

The soul has been raised from the regions of Shéol and Belial, it

has been wrested from the jaws of death. The commentator, Père G. Lambert, S.J., indicates the parallel passages in the book of Psalms, and serves to whet our appetite for an English edition of the whole set of poems, for they will certainly help to rekindle devotion for the inspired Psalms themselves.

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'ST JOHN OF THE CROSS AND MODERN PSYCHOLOGY' is the intriguing title of a lecture given by Dom M. Oswald Sumner to the Guild of Pastoral Psychology (Lecture No. 57, price 1s.7d., from 65, Cottenham Park Road, London, S.W.20). The author shows that St John begins where Modern Psychology ends.

It is only when we discuss the rarefied heights on which St John walks that we have to place things in a different key and refer to most marvellous results of human achievement as the end of the process of the 'beginner'—this rarely reached goal being that of 'beginners' when compared with the extremely rare state of 'transforming union'.

There is certainly a parallel to be drawn between St Thomas writing his *Summa* for the novice and St John of the Cross expounding his own mystical poems for the 'beginner'. But the psychologist must beware of considering his own 'end', the natural integration of the human personality, as something to be achieved first before the work of supernatural integration into the Spirit of God can begin. Although St John may be writing for the more advanced in the spiritual life it must never be forgotten that the end has been the same from the very first moment of 'conversion' when the spark of grace enters the soul. It is all one progress towards eternal life. Dom Sumner does not, perhaps, make this clear enough; so that he writes as though the soul can choose its own moment for entry into the first Dark Night about which St John's direction is specially concerned. 'The soul is to take the greatest care not to enter this state of darkness until she is quite clear that the time has come. . . .' This is surely a misunderstanding of the passive nature of such nights. But on the whole the paper is a useful demarcation of the spheres of the psychologist and the mystical theologian, about which Fr Victor White has been writing so impressively in the *LIFE OF THE SPIRIT*.

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ST CATHERINE OF SIENA, who now has an Italian quarterly review to herself (*S. Caterina da Siena*, Basilica di S. Domenico, Siena; per ann. 400 lire), is also the object of studies in the other reviews in Italy dealing with the spiritual life. The Carmelite *Rivista di Vita Spirituale* shows her as the model and 'maestra' of the Eucharist, for she lived almost physically as well as spiritually on the Sacra-

ment, and her *Dialogue* deals with the doctrine with 'an exquisitely thomistic finesse of analysis'. The Dominican *Vita Christiana* draws attention in two articles to the 'conversion' of Fawtier on the subject of the true St Catherine. In 1921 the professor had poured scorn on most of the sources for the life of the Saint, but during the war while in a concentration camp he had vowed to write a definitive and truer life of the Saint. B. Raymund, for the professor, had still failed to produce the *Legenda Maior* that he had set out to do, the process of canonisation remained suspect. But these documents are now treated with a respect not granted them in 1921. Nevertheless Fawtier, according to these two critics of his *La Double Experience de Catherine Benincasa* (Paris 1948), has still missed the bus. In spite of realising that St Catherine has a power all her own, that she is the saint for these critical times in the Church; in spite of having an abundance of historical documents to hand; yet he has failed again. 'These human failures are the patrimony of the Saints who must follow Christ through the bitterness of Calvary in order to be able to rise again and ascend with him.' We hope then that these disservices will eventually lead to a greater resurrection of St Catherine in our own day.



BOOKS RECEIVED

- Arundel Press*. Fr Gordon Albion: Because You Belong to Christ, 3s.0d.
Burns, Oates and Washburne. Timothy Harris: Mary, The Blessed The Beloved, 7s.6d.
Devin-Adair Co. (U.S.A.) Sr M. Jeremy, O.P.: Dialogue With An Angel, \$2.00.
Dennis Dobson. E. Mersch, S.J.: The Whole Christ, 30s.0d.
Letouzy et Ané. L. Moulieu: Liturgie des Sacraments, n.p.
Mercier Press. Daniel O'Keefe: The Story of Knock, 3s.6d.
Douglas Organ. Teresa Lloyd: Paul to Pius, 7s.6d.
Oxford University Press. D. H. Southgate: Draw Near to God, 6s.6d.
S.C.M. Press. Hugh Ross Williamson: The Seven Christian Virtues, 7s.6d.

LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

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