

BLACKFRIARS

to the starting point and have to fall back on ridiculing the intellectual fashion of the immediate past. The Church alone stands as the one firm representative of true progress and equilibrium, and Liverpool Cathedral will be the visible sign of this position. Such a view of the cathedral's religious significance is incomparably nearer the truth than the view of those who measure by the pound.

The essays have been given by the authors in the spirit of medieval cathedral building, at which the whole countryside is said to have helped. The purchaser will not only contribute to the Cathedral Fund, but also possess a valuable, handsome and well-printed volume of essays.

C.P.

LES MOTS D'ORDRE de Sainte Jean de la Croix, Docteur de l'Eglise. Par Dom Chevallier moine de Solesmes. (Paris : Desclée de Brouwer, 1933 ; pp. 124 ; fr. 7.50.)

Dom Chevallier deserves well of those eager to respond to the movement of the Holy Ghost in the Church which has led to the proclamation of St. John of the Cross as Doctor of the universal Church—in a very special sense, therefore, Teacher of the mystical path.

To his greater works of profound and painstaking scholarship—his edition of the Spiritual Canticle and that of the Maxims—he has added a welcome little book, very attractively produced by Messrs. Desclée de Brouwer, the purpose of which, as Dom Chevallier tells us in his *avertissement*, is 'to put the principles of conduct formulated by the Saint within the reach of consciences and hearts, even if, to achieve this, it is necessary to modify the exterior form of the Collections of Sayings handed down to us : to adopt a new arrangement of them, in accordance with the doctrine of the Saint himself.'

This new arrangement Dom Chevallier has attempted with sobriety and, in general, with success. He takes as the pivot of the Saint's entire teaching maxim No. 228 : 'Wisdom comes through love, silence and abnegation.' What, then, is wisdom? Wisdom is 'a seed sown by God on earth.' Maxims illustrating this are grouped in the first section of the handbook. The second section groups those sayings which throw light on the treatment required to preserve the heavenly seed from danger ; while the third and last group of maxims relates to the treatment which kills it.

This notion of the heavenly seed seems to spring not from the maxims themselves, but from Dom Chevallier's devout mind. We must not grudge him an invention which serves so

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advantageously to keep in order two hundred and eighty maxims formulated by St. John to meet the needs of individual souls greatly varying in temperament and insight. If some maxims appear to be dragged into their proper section, as it were, by the skin of their teeth, that is far from weakening our interest in them and will not hinder us from utilising them in our own way, in a personal synthesis, which may not be so subtle as Dom Chevallier's, but which has the advantage of being our own.

Strange, the reader will exclaim, perhaps, that the maxims of the mystical Doctor should be almost entirely concerned with conduct! Well, he knows! And we must admit that, where the divine magnetic force remains in itself invisible and ineffable, the iron filings of the seeker's doings and sufferings point to It and surround It, hushed in adoration.

Amid so many maxims where the austerity of the Teacher is shown forth in the stern terseness of his expression, it is a relief, at times, to find St. John the Poet emerging in a figure like that of maxim 222:

'Hair that is frequently combed will keep in good order and will be easy to comb as often as one desires. The soul that frequently sifts its motives, utterances and doings, that is guided by the love of God in all encounters, will have a magnificent head of hair, and the Spouse will turn His gaze towards the neck of His Beloved and will be ravished at the sight.'

C.R.

BERNADETTE, CHILD OF MARY. By Fr. Lawrence McReavy, M.A. (Alexander Ouseley; 3/6 net.)

If you already have a devotion to Bernadette, this book will certainly delight you, if you have not, the reading of it will surely make you love her. As the author says in his preface: 'This is not the story of Our Lady of Lourdes but of one of her greatest miracles of grace, Bernadette.' 'Our Lady found her a normal little girl and left her a normal little girl,' and Father McReavy gives us a delightfully satisfying account of the stubborn little Pyrenean peasant being led by her 'lovely Lady' along the familiar road of the saints, that of humiliations and suffering. With her sturdy common sense and her Heaven-taught prudence we see Bernadette steering her way through the difficulties of a publicity calculated to ruin any spiritual life less firmly grounded in humility. Our Lady promised 'to make her happy not in this world, but the next,' and this book enables us to learn how she kept her word.

M.F.