

REVIEWS

This knowledge M. Maritain treats of, as a theologian, taking as his guide St. Thomas, St. Augustine and St. John of the Cross.

The concluding chapter is well entitled *Todo y Nada*. M. Maritain's treatment is from the point of view of the theologian and not of the mystic. This has the inevitable disadvantage of having to define the indefinable. From the human point of view Theology is everything, from the divine point of view it is nothing: *Un Dieu défini est un Dieu fini*: to adore the object of theology is a subtle form of idolatry.

The real difference between philosophical and mystical thought is clearly established in this book. But it demands a sequel which will unify them, by relating them to the single consciousness of man-as-he-is. The success attained here makes us eagerly hope that M. Maritain will attempt it.

I.C.

THE NATURE OF SANCTITY. Essays in Order, No. 10. By Ida Coudenhove. (Sheed & Ward; pp. 121; 2/6.)

This is a magnificent book. It is of extreme importance if only because it among modern books on this subject almost stands alone. To any Catholic who is troubled by an apparent antinomy between the love of God and the love of creatures, the natural and the supernatural; who finds in the asceticism of the saints a self-mutilation, or who has boggled at the pernicious type of spiritual manual which treats the destruction of human love and human values as the foundation of any ascent to the divine, this book will be invaluable. And to any non-Catholic, too, whose interest in Catholicism is baulked by any such apprehensions.

There is an occasional emphasis, of a minor importance, which one would like to alter: the author's distinction between friendship with God, which is the characteristic of the saints, and the attempts 'painfully and stumblingly to do His Will' of ordinary mortals is rather too absolute if the term 'saint' is used in a technical sense, for the difference is one rather of degree than of kind.

But one is loath to find fault with so extraordinarily valuable a book, in which all the pertinent questions are put

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—of self-mutilation, of contempt of creatures, of renunciation and sacrifice and suffering—and the real and therefore satisfying answers given in the easy and exciting manner which the dialogue-form makes possible. It should be in every Catholic library; it is pre-eminently a book to lend to any non-Catholic who is at all interested in Catholic ideals. To pick out quotations is impossible, for every paragraph is important; the pith of the essay's argument, which is worked out in a discussion of the life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, is in these lines:

'And I maintain that the way to Divine love is not spiritual self-mutilation . . . but that the gift of human love is a mirror . . . the plainest in which to see what our love of God might be; the alphabet from which, like children learning to read, we spell out the language we should speak to God.'

L.S.G.V.

LA RELIGION D'AMOUR. By Dom Gaspar Lefebvre, O.S.B.
(Abbaye de St. André; 2 fr. 50.)

As yet the liturgical movement has scarcely begun in this country, and many fight shy of it because they fear that it is principally an affair of rubric idolatry, long services and archaeology. This is a profoundly false notion, due perhaps in some measure to the excesses of some of its advocates. In essence it is a dogmatic movement, an attempt to teach the faithful how to live the full Christian life as it should issue from the Christian dogmas, with a special insistence on their corporate and social implications. This little book is an attempt to work out certain aspects of this theological basis. The author is already known to English readers by his admirable book *The Catholic Liturgy*, and they will welcome the more thorough treatment of certain points than was there possible. Beginning with a discussion of the nature of religion itself (the treatise is explicitly Thomist throughout), Dom Lefebvre goes on to consider what is specific to the Christian religion, the fact that all its actions reach God through and with and in Christ the Son of God and the Priest of God. Through the grace of Christ and the theological virtues we become the adopted sons of God and