

Catholicism in the free world. This is a book for all who wish to understand the history of our times.

UVEDALE TRISTRAM

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE OLD LOW COUNTRIES. By Stephanus Axters, O.P. Translated by Donald Attwater. (Blackfriars Publications; 6s. 6d.)

As the Preface tells us, this book is made up of a series of Conferences originally delivered at Le Saulchoir, and previously published in French. The Conferences sketch in outline the spirituality of the old Low Countries from the earliest Christian ages to the seventeenth century. Inevitably and rightly the central figure is Ruysbroeck, and it is his teaching on contemplation which is made the touchstone for the authentic spirituality of the old Low Countries. Great as the influence of Ruysbroeck undoubtedly was, such a procedure is open to objection, for although what may be called the practical school of the *devotio moderna* may have been indebted to Ruysbroeck in so far as it dealt with mysticism at all, this, as the author admits, was not very far, and the temper of the two schools was essentially different. The attempt to defend a thesis, in fact, somewhat detracts from the usefulness of the book. A representative list of the spiritual writers of the region is considered, though necessarily in a somewhat cursory manner, and it would have been more satisfactory to have considered them objectively, stressing what was characteristic and valuable in their teaching, rather than examining the often abstruse points for which they seem to be indebted to Ruysbroeck. When all is said and done 'the old Low Countries' remains a geographical division, but it serves as well as any other to delineate a group of writers to discuss.

The translation reads easily, but it is a pity, though no doubt not the fault of the translator, that there is a considerable amount of what can only be called theological jargon, due perhaps to the fact that the Conferences were originally delivered to an audience of theologians.

The book provides a useful guide to a body of writers many of whom are little known, but its value would have been considerably enhanced by an index.

GERARD SITWELL, O.S.B.

NOTICES

SONNETS AND VERSE, by H. Belloc (Duckworth; 12s. 6d.), appears in a new edition, with additional poems and an introduction by Reginald Jebb. Mr Jebb reminds us that in his latter years Belloc often said he would wish to be remembered by his verse, and *Sonnets and Verse* provides a noble memorial.

CALVARY IN CHINA, by Robert Greene, M.M. (Burns Oates; 16s.), is the account of a Catholic missionary's sufferings in Communist China—the gradual destruction of his Mission, his own arrest, condemnation to death and reprieve. Here is an authentic and moving record of what Communism has meant to the Christian missions, written by one who loves China and can see beyond the surface.

SAINT THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX, by J. B. Morton (Burns Oates, 9s. 6d.), is yet another study of the most written-about saint of our times. Mr Morton brings to his task qualifications unusual in the biographer of St Thérèse, and his good sense and scholarly instinct provide a clear and attractive account of the saint's significance for our generation.

MENTAL HYGIENE AND CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES, by André Snoeck, S.J. (Mercier Press; 5s.), is an essay by the distinguished Belgian moralist which argues that 'mental hygiene' needs the context of spiritual principles to make its work effective. Father Snoeck's book is sponsored by the newly-formed Catholic Association of Mental Hygiene (of Belgium), whose standpoint it seeks to describe.

WALTER HOWARD FRERE (Correspondence on Liturgical Revision and Construction), edited by Ronald C. D. Jasper (S.P.C.K.; 35s.). The latest volume in the Alcuin Club Collection is devoted to the correspondence of the former Bishop of Truro, *nomen praeclarum* among Anglican liturgical scholars. While its interest is principally for those concerned with the intricate problems of Anglican public worship, this monument to Dr Frere's scholarship and integrity should find a place in any library that can claim to reflect English religious life in this century.

LE CIEL C'EST LES AUTRES, Par Yvan Daniel et Gilbert Le Mouël (Editions Ouvrières, 12 Avenue Soeur-Rosalie, Paris 13; 496 francs), is an anthology of texts and comments on the love of God and of our neighbour. Boldly parodying the existentialist *l'enfer c'est les autres*, it reveals the Christian tradition in its true strength.

OUR LADY SAINT MARY (The Icon Press, 6 Croft Road, Hastings; 5s.), is a charming book 'in praise of our glorious and gentle Mother', the text by William Griffiths and the illustrations and initials by Philip Brown. Printed on a hand-press, this is an encouraging sign of decent workmanship in a good cause.

THE CONVENT AND THE WORLD, by Sister Mary Laurence, O.P. (Blackfriars Publications; 9s. 6d.), brings together in one volume three short books on the religious life which have already achieved a considerable popularity. Sister Mary Laurence writes with sympathy and humour, and her one-volume work should find many new friends.

THE PRIEST IN THE WORLD, by Josef Sellmair (Burns Oates; 18s.), has had a great success in its German original, and this account of a priest's life and problems in the modern world has the merit of realism and informed knowledge.

ST FRANCIS DE SALES IN HIS LETTERS, edited by the Sisters of the Visitation (Sands; 9s. 6d.), appears in a new and revised edition, retaining a long and valuable introduction by the late Abbot Cuthbert Butler.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

THE AQUINAS SOCIETY OF LONDON

DEAR SIR,

Many readers of BLACKFRIARS will be familiar with the Papers published from time to time by the Aquinas Society of London, which have for many years made a notable contribution to the advancement of Thomist studies in this country and indeed in the English-speaking world. These published Papers are a selection from those read and discussed at meetings of the Society, and thus owe their existence to an active body of interested members who take part in these meetings and who also support the Study Week Ends, Disputations and other activities of the Society.

The object of the Society is to study the principles of Thomist philosophy—not solely by reference to the writings of St Thomas but also in relation to other philosophical systems—with a view to their application to the intellectual, ethical and social problems of the day. Membership is open to all persons irrespective of religious denomination, and although no academic qualifications are required, it will prove particularly valuable to those who have undertaken, or are undertaking, a course of philosophical studies, e.g., those arranged by the Extra-Mural Departments of the Universities, and similar bodies.

The minimum annual subscription of 10s. will, for an experimental period, entitle a member to a free copy of certain of the Society's publications for the current year, with special concessions for country members who are unable to attend the meetings.

Any of your readers who would like fuller details of the Society, or who wish to become members or to renew membership, are invited to write to me at 476 Upper Richmond Road, Richmond, Surrey.

Yours faithfully,

J. B. WELLS,

Hon. Secretary, Aquinas Society