

It is remarkable that the Feast of the Holy Name was authorised in England by Pope Alexander VI in the sixteenth century, two hundred years before the feast was kept by the universal Church. This English tradition no doubt owes its origin to the preaching of the Friars of St Francis and St Dominic, who vied with one another in propagating this devotion.

Today we have the wonderful success of the Holy Name Society in the United States and Australia. Wherever this devotion prevails there is a manifest reawakening of Catholic life. People who are unacquainted with the Jesus Psalter should not delay in getting a copy and using it. It will be a new experience and a means of grace.

BERNARD DELANY, O.P.

THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL: A MODERN INTERPRETATION. By Georgia Harkness. (Andrew Melrose; 8s. 6d.).

In her introduction the author speaks of the need to treat of spiritual desolation in religious therapy and in the psychology of religion. It is one point, apparently, which has been overlooked in discussing the relation of religion to health. So she writes 'for those who have tried earnestly, but unsuccessfully, to find a Christian answer to the problem of spiritual darkness'. Later Professor Harkness quotes with approval 'an unusually able professor of biochemistry—"When the ductless glands are out of order, it is as impossible to achieve victorious spiritual living by an act of will as it would be to walk without legs"'. This will reveal the nature of the book. The publishers rightly refer to the 'limitations' imposed by the author on herself; for these limitations appear to be the exclusion of the supernatural and the use of a sound common sense and psychological experience for immediately human ends. She makes use of St John of the Cross, Madame Guyon, Thomas à Kempis, and similar writers on the supernatural life to support her treatment of depressive characters or depressed states. It is very practical within its compass, but that compass is so narrow that it is dangerous. To skim the 'psychology' from the mystics in order to find more instruments and medicine for 'therapy' in its various modern forms is the opposite to removing the cream from the milk. The cream is lost and the watery 'skim-milk' gives little nourishment though it may temporarily remove a thirst.

JOHN HUNSTER

PLATFORM REPLIES. Volume One. By the Very Revd. J. P. Arendzen. D.D., Ph.D., M.A. (Mercier Press; 5s.)

Dr Arendzen has gathered together the answers he has provided to questions put during several years to members of the Catholic Missionary Society. They cover a vast field, from the philosophy of Spinoza to the Serpent in Paradise, from Purgatory to Psychoanalysis. It is not difficult to give debating answers to the muddled

queries of the man-in-the-street. What is harder—and more valuable—is to go behind the question, often pitifully inadequate to express a real difficulty, and to understand its presuppositions. It is here that Dr Arendzen is most helpful, and anyone who is engaged in Evidence Guild speaking, or indeed who is merely anxious to clear his own muddle of mind, will find in *Platform Replies* a charitable and discerning guide to many modern misconceptions about the Catholic Faith and will find too a brief but effective means for their resolution.

I.E.

THE AKATHISTOS HYMN. Translated by Fr Vincent McNabb, O.P.

With Notes by Donald Attwater. (Blackfriars Publications; 3s. 6d.)

OUR MOTHER CHURCH, HER WORSHIP AND OFFICES. C. Svegintzev. (S.P.C.K.; 3s. 6d.)

In recent years, with the full and solemn encouragement of the Holy See, there has been a notable increase in the interest shown in the Eastern Churches and their rites and traditions. Knowledge of these can only result in the deepening of our appreciation of the richness and splendour of the Faith. The Akathistos Hymn is one of the best known forms of prayer used in the Byzantine Rite, being composed in honour of the Mother of God and commemorating the great events of her life. The translation into the English language of liturgical texts composed by an exuberant people is notoriously difficult, while the requirements of modern devotion are more exacting than those of our forefathers. Consequently Fr McNabb's translation, while of great use to 'Ecclesia discens' in showing those whose Greek is pedestrian the images, concepts and formulas used by the Byzantines in worship, will hardly commend itself to 'Ecclesia Orans' in spite of the attractive way in which it has been bound and printed. It is too literal and in consequence upsets our recollection. The notes by Donald Attwater are both interesting and informative.

C. Svegintzev's book will be extremely useful to all those interested in the Byzantine Rite. It gives a description of the church and its furniture, and goes through all the ceremonies, the Eucharistic Liturgy, Baptism, funerals, Holy Week, etc., in detail without confusing the reader in the way that handbooks of ceremonial usually do.

RICHARD BLUNDELL, S.J.

ANNE DE ROUSIER. Translated from the French by L. Keppel. (Sands; 4s.)

This unusual life of a nun begins with a murder. Anne de Rousier was only eight years old then. In due time she became a nun of the Society of the Sacred Heart. She saw the early days of the Revolution in Italy when her community had to be dispersed from their convent at Turin. Travelling was difficult and dangerous, and cross-