

Blackfriars

As is usual in works of this kind, there are sections devoted to a description of the political situation in Palestine and of the different groups among the Jews themselves, to an account of the non-canonical apocalyptic literature of the time and of the rabbinical teaching on the Reign of God, but what is not so usual is a most interesting chapter entitled 'Les tendances du Judaïsme dans ses rapports intimes avec Dieu,' treating of such subjects as 'La vie mystique,' 'La prière officielle,' 'La prière privée et l'oraison mentale,' 'L'amour de Dieu,' etc. We have done no more than mention part of the book's contents, but perhaps we have said enough to show that it will prove a valuable help for reading the Gospels intelligently, and of far wider interest than the title might at first sight suggest.

L.W.

PASCAL'S PENSEES. Translated by W. F. Trotter. With an introduction by T. S. Eliot. (Everyman's Library, 1931; 2/- net.)

Pascal translates no better than anyone else; by which remark we do not mean to disparage this translation, which is really very good. But consider such a sentence as the well-known Pensée 206: 'The eternal silence of these infinite spaces frightens me.' The thought is there, right enough; but what a world of magic is lost in the English rendering! And so must it be with the translation of any wizard in words. For the rest, however, we commend this version as eminently faithful. Mr. T. S. Eliot contributes an interesting introduction which emphasises the apologetic value of Pascal's work for the modern man.

J.M.

SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER. By Margaret Yeo. (Sheed & Ward; Crown 8vo; pp. 325; 7/6.)

Here is the life of a saint which, free from the craze for psycho-analysing, tells his story as only an artist in the use of words can tell it. Against a vivid background alight with colour, the winning figure of St. Francis stands out with an appealing charm, irresistible. We love him for his buoyancy of spirit, his light-hearted gaiety; we pass with him thrilling days of incessant toil and journeyings, and catch the aroma of a life steeped in the prayer of God.

The Francis of Mrs. Yeo's pages is a mighty lover; his to serve his Master without reserve—*cur igitur non amem Te, O Deus amantissime*—dedicating his great gifts of mind and heart

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to the glory of God in the salvation of souls. And his was a stupendous triumph, and yet a triumph of failure and disappointment. He had made himself all things to all men, and he died abandoned, almost alone, on the threshold of what might have been his greatest triumph. Let the book speak for itself; once taken up, it will not lightly be set down. Such 'lives' of saints are all too few.

J.K.

ONE HUNDRED READINGS FOR THE SICK. By Fr. Robert Eaton. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne; 3/6.)

'In sickness,' wrote Jeremy Taylor, 'the soul begins to dress for immortality. It is that agony in which men are tried for a crown': an agony, therefore, which is an opportunity for the practice of humility, resignation to God's will, and especially patience. In his 'Hundred Readings' Fr. Eaton has provided plenty of excellent help and instruction. However, *facile omnes, cum valemus, recta consilia, aegrotis damus*.

G.T.

UNDER HIS SHADOW. Devotional Studies in the Sacred Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ. By the Reverend Francis Shea, C.P. (The Sign Press, Monastery Place, Union City, New Jersey, U.S.A.; \$1.60.)

To-day, when to most minds penance is an obsolete barbarism and suffering is regarded in practice if not in theory as a greater evil than sin, there is special need for meditation on the Passion, and for clear, forcible explanations of the Church's doctrine on suffering. These Father Shea has excellently supplied in these twenty-six studies, reprinted at the request of many readers of *The Sign* (the monthly magazine edited by the American Passionists) in which they first appeared.

Those who use them as meditations will do well to read the wise definition on p. 166: 'Watching Jesus is a holy and fruitful occupation.' And yet it will surprise many to know that it is nothing else but *Meditation*. Saints have urged the practice of meditation, have pointed out its advantages, have outlined the manner of making it. Many have been moved by their arguments, have been desirous of reaping its fruits, but have been repelled or discouraged by the unfamiliar, psychological terms employed to explain the exercise. Meditation on the Passion can be defined in its simplest terms as 'Watching Jesus' and asking oneself the question: 'As I am now, as I feel at present, what does that mean for me?' Thus,