

thoughts of the Mother of God, who is the outstanding example of the great Christian virtue of virginity. The book is intended for general readers who are interested in spiritual problems. As we learn from the Introduction, 'The vocation of virginity is lived in two principal forms, either by official consecration in community life, or, in the world, by a deliberate choice of conscience that brings new life to the ordinary single life'. Mary, the Mother of God, is the ideal of this life of dedication. The soul becomes the Bride of Christ, closely united to him in his sacrifice, and strengthened and supported by the Holy Eucharist as the Bread of Life.

The translation betrays some un-English words and phrases, and does not include St Augustine's treatise on Holy Virginity. In both the French and the English editions will be found the full text of the Pope's recent encyclical letter on Holy Virginity.

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JEWISH RELIGIOUS POLEMIC. By O. S. Rankin. (Edinburgh University Press; 18s.)

The purpose of this book, described by the late author in his preface, is to show from the translation of a number of Hebrew documents what was the type of Jewish biblical exegesis and religious apologetic used in the past, say from the second to the seventeenth century. There are four documents translated with copious introductions and notes: the Chronicle of Moses, a narrative account of the great leader with the addition of legendary and fanciful elements; a poem written by a fifteenth-century rabbi attacking Christian interpretation of Old Testament texts; a series of controversial letters exchanged between a nameless Jew of Amsterdam and a convert Jew named Johan Stephen Rittangel, dating from the seventeenth century; and finally a record of the debate between a rabbi of Gerona and a Spanish Dominican convert Jew held in Barcelona in 1263 in the presence of and under the inspiration of St Raymond of Pennafort, the ex-Master General of the Dominican Order, and his penitent King James I of Aragon. The last is most interesting and is accompanied by some useful historical notes. The book also contains a good account of what may be called rabbinical theological literature, if that is not too flattering a title for the Talmudic writings. For the understanding of rabbinic mentality in the matter of biblical exegesis, a thing of importance for the understanding of St Paul, it is most instructive, though tedious, to follow the meanderings of the rabbis in these translated documents.

R.G.