

latter essay is of the utmost importance, for, as the author says, if obedience is not assisting the subject in the virtue of prudence and therefore in a certain freedom of judgment (for prudence is the *recta ratio agibilium*), it will not be a means of perfection. Such is the urgency of the proper understanding of obedience in religious life that it is to be hoped that this volume will quickly follow in the wake of *Religious Sisters* into the English tongue.

JOHN CORSON

STIMULI. By R. A. Knox. (Sheed and Ward; 10s. 6d.)

Chesterton used to say that he had not the time to read a short book. Would he have added: nor listen to a short sermon? Short sermons, which are as good as these 'Stimuli', do indeed demand much concentration and subsequent reflection if their message is not to pass us by. As Mgr Knox himself wrote of a book by Father Gerald Vann, they need 'to be read slowly, sipped not gulped'. Readers of *The Sunday Times* will find here paragraphs which they had carefully cut out on Sunday evening—and afterwards lost—as well as those others which they would have cut out on Monday morning—had not the Sunday papers been by then already consigned to their last resting place. It is a good thing too that not only readers of *The Sunday Times* should feel the sting of these sharp goads. Altogether it was an excellent idea to reprint these sermons in book form—though a pity we could not have been assured beforehand that it was going to happen.

DESMOND SCHLEGEL

SOEUR CATHERINE. By G. Gaetano di Sales. (Editori E. L. M., Roma; n.p.)

The nature of S. di Sales's book is difficult to discern. It is certainly an interpretation of facts, both those of St Catherine Labouré's visions and silence and those of the author's conversion, the one set the effect of the other and at the same time the lens through which the other is seen. Aesthetically the book fails to unify its divided intention—to examine analytically and to express synthetically the truths of the manifestation which it justly sums up in its essence as that of 'la Vierge Immaculée, Médiatrice Universelle'. The principle that 'la cause est Supérieure à l'effet' is sometimes betrayed in the book itself, and one has to remember the warning of *The Cloud of Unknowing* and read it in its entirety lest it should be misunderstood. It is then obvious that the two theological jolts are verbal imprecisions, and that if the author indulges often in an exclamatory style himself, he admires sheerness and repose in others. As a whole this Italian study in French is interesting but below the standard of its 'intermezzo', a sonnet purer in achievement than the quasi-commentary which surrounds it.

M.H.P.