

The first group of additional biographies includes notices of twenty English and Welsh martyrs whose beatification had not taken place when the January and February volumes appeared. Thus such attractive figures as Bd Robert Southwell and Bd Anne Line now appear for the first time. Also dealt with are some English and Welsh saints such as St Caedmon, St Gwladys and St Melangell, who were omitted by accident, or, one suspects, through Fr Thurston's scrupulosity. For Dominicans it will be of interest to see that Bd Mark of Modena is now included. And Boethius appears as a martyr.

The major part of the volume is concerned with the twenty-three new canonisations and beatifications. (Most of those canonised since 1937 already appeared as *beati* in earlier volumes). Among them are sixteen women of whom no fewer than fourteen were foundresses of religious congregations or were engaged in similar work. Only two lay people, Contardo Ferrini and Mary Goretti (who was only twelve years old) are to be found among them. Among these admirable biographies it is impossible to discriminate, but one may mention Mr Attwater's life of Bd Mary Teresa de Soubiran, foundress of the Society of Marie Auxiliatrice, as a model of what a brief 'life' should be.

The volume is of special interest because of its inclusion of a number of Russian saints, all of whom lived after the dispute between Rome and Constantinople in the eleventh century and whose liturgical *cultus* has been authorised by the Holy See. Thus included are such unfamiliar saints (to the West) as St Sergius of Radonezh, St Cyril of Turov and St Abraham of Smolensk. It is indeed fortunate that in Mr Attwater Butler's *Lives* has an editor of truly Catholic sympathies who is able to interpret so justly the Church's mind and practice in regard to the holiness of her children.
I.E.

JACOB BOEHME. *Studies in his Life and Teaching*. By Hans L. Martensen. New edition, revised with Notes and Appendices by Stephen Hobhouse. (Rockliffe; 21s.)

Miss Underhill claimed Boehme as one of the very few Protestant mystics and for that reason alone we may welcome this revised edition of what might be called 'the essential Boehme'. Martensen collected all the most important sections from the seven large volumes of the mystical cobbler's works; and now Mr Hobhouse has brought Martensen's work up to date including references to recently discovered Boehme MSS as well as to Berdyaev's debt to this German mystic. In considering this revision of a mystical classic we may be excused for considering the attitude of the revisor rather than the revision. It is interesting to see how Mr Hobhouse was brought to recognise Boehme's worth through his study of William Law who was himself inspired by Boehme. Here we have a 'tradition' of inspiration: Boehme—Law—Hobhouse. Then immediately the inquirer will want to know whether this tradition is authentic, and whether Boehme himself had true insight into the

Mystery. What criterion have we to allow us to accept Boehme as a mystical authority? The Catholic will always approach 'mystical' writings, even those of the greatest such as St John of the Cross, with his terms of reference firmly fixed in the living Church in which he finds the true and living Gospel always being expounded, the true Word of God, the revelation of the mystery. But for Mr Hobhouse it is quite the opposite; having discovered the light reflected in Boehme's pewter pot he can approach the Bible itself with new confidence for he feels that he has new light to discern the objectionable from the true in the Bible itself. He has apparently been taught by the mystics what is 'unchristlike' in the New Testament, what books have to be rejected and what can be explained by allegorical interpretations. Such an approach is surely not only presumptuous but also dangerous. It is of course the devout modernist's approach which ends by offering the whole Bible as a burnt holocaust and leaving men without a vestige of Christian hope. Yet with the surety of a faith grounded in the living Christ one can read the mysterious effusions of such a man as Boehme with interest and even with profit. C.P.

THE SEVEN CHRISTIAN VIRTUES. By Hugh Ross Williamson. (S.C.M. Press; 9s.6d.)

This is Mr Williamson's third attempt to state his case. There was the play *The Seven Deadly Virtues* about 1934, and the pamphlet *A.D.33* at the beginning of the war and it does not need the author's statement in the Introduction to the present work that *A.D.33* was 'withdrawn from circulation as it contains much of what I now see to be heresy' to convince one of the sincerity of this book.

The theme of this book is that there is nothing new about the seven Christian virtues. 'Temperance, Fortitude, Justice (and) Prudence were the four virtues recognised by the general moral consciousness of Greece—and therefore of the ancient world.' Faith, Hope and Love characterised the outlook of the Jews. The meaning of these seven virtues was transformed by the 'internal logic of the Cross'—and he analyses the revolution which Christ originated in their meaning.

It is a penetrating study, lucidly written and with a profound understanding of the Catholic position—the whole book will repay reading, but if you need an aperitif read the short last chapter, 'The Christian Virtues in a Post-Christian State'.

TERENCE TANNER.

DIALOGUE WITH AN ANGEL. By Sister Mary Jeremy, O.P. (Devin-Adair Company, U.S.A.; \$2.)

In the response evoked by metaphysical poetry, sympathy is half the battle: sensibility the other half. However with this particular kind of religious poetry the critic must always be wary of allowing his personal sympathy to outrun his critical sensibility; of becoming a prey to dogma for the sake of dogma. So let it be said straightaway