

related are well chosen, but the narrative style is uneven—sometimes rather archaic, when quoting verbatim ('Behold the handmaid of the Lord'), sometimes rather colloquial ('Grab him quickly'), sometimes unnecessarily difficult (why not *came down* instead of *descended*?)—and of course there are traces of the book's American origin in spelling and idiom. But the excellence of the pictures amply makes up for these shortcomings.

The pictures in *Children's Bible* are intended as a stimulus to the imagination, and the artist rightly shows a blithe disregard for naturalistic accuracy. Fr McEvoy's purpose is to show children how to assist at mass, and photography is the ideal medium. Here again the illustrations are outstandingly good: about half are of the priest at the altar, the others show the congregation (mainly children) taking their part in the mass by movement and gesture. The text explains how we should worship God with body and mind together. This is welcome teaching, and very well done. There is only one small criticism to make: the little altar-boy is perhaps rather too cherubic, and the photograph of him which appears on the dust-cover might have come from a 'holy picture' of the more sentimental kind. It would be a pity if any prospective buyers were put off by it. A.G.

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI: His Life and Writings. (*The Mirror of Perfection*, with all the known writings of the saint.) Translated by Leo Sherley-Price. (Mowbrays; 15s.)

The life and personality of St Francis of Assisi still exercise the same fascination as they did seven centuries ago. Now as then he has a message for everybody. Probably all do not receive the message in its pristine clarity: it is often obscured by sentimental pantheism in the case of authors outside the Church, and by a plethora of interpretations from writers within the Catholic fold.

Lovers of the *poverello* will welcome this new translation of *The Mirror of Perfection*. First written in 1318, it is a collection of short accounts of incidents in the saint's life, recorded for the most part by his contemporaries. They catch the authentic glow of that strange ardent flame which was peculiar to Francis and was never equalled in any of his followers, with the possible exception of Clare.

To collect the known writings of the saint at the end of the book is an inspiration. We can find our old especial treasures and even discover new ones without long search and reference to the appendix which usually tails any book on St Francis.

Leo Sherley-Price's translation is eminently readable and attractive; and it is not confused by the footnotes and glossaries which are so apt to put off the reader who is not interested in historical and scholastic arguments.

This book should introduce a truer, purer conception of the spirit and message of St Francis to a wider reading public than it has hitherto reached.

P.C.C.

GEORGE FOX AND THE QUAKERS. By Henry Van Etten. Translated from the French and revised by E. Kelvin Osborn. (Longmans; 6s. *Men of Wisdom Series.*)

'I was glad that I was commanded to turn people to that inward light. . . . The Lord taught me to be faithful in all things, and to act faithfully two ways, viz. inwardly to God and outwardly to man, and to keep "yea" and "nay" in all things. . . . Then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone; whereby then ye may be a blessing, and make the witness of God in them to bless you.'

These words were written by George Fox, the founder of the religious movement called the Society of Friends or Quakers, and are quoted among other extracts from his journal and letters in this enterprising little book. Its 192 pages include many illustrations, an account of William Penn and the Quakers in America, some prominent Quakers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Quakerism in the modern world and an anthology of Quaker writings. There is also a list of books for further reading and a chronology of events mentioned in the text.

In the first chapter there is a concise and vivid account of the times leading up to the birth of George Fox and his great mission during which his followers 'came to be numbered in tens of thousands'. . . . 'George Fox never thought he was founding a new church or sect; he was convinced that he had rediscovered a fundamental truth and that he preached "the truth". It must be remembered that he did not use the word "truth" in any exclusive sense, and that he never believed himself infallible.'

For the reader who is not himself a Friend, this first chapter is the most helpful. A large part of the book consists of a somewhat confused account of the events in George Fox's life with extracts from his journal, taking him in and out of prison and covering many miles of travel. The continuity of the narrative is broken by dissertations on various aspects of Quaker belief. The short extracts included in the anthology of Quaker writings, emphasizing their subjective attitude towards religious questions and their personal interpretation of the gospels, could well be misunderstood by readers outside the Society. The book would be improved if the illustrations were placed together in a separate section and not inserted at random all through the text. It is a pity that there is no index.