

# Reviews

**PSALM 23: AN ANTHOLOGY**, compiled by K. H. Strange and R. G. E. Sandbach, *St Andrew Press, Edinburgh 1978. pp. 116 £2.45*

Quite a nice little bedside book for devout visitors. It is an expanded edition of a collection of versions of Psalms 22/23, 'The Lord is my shepherd', first published in 1969. There is the Hebrew text at the beginning, with a literal translation, the Latin Vulgate, wrongly attributed to St Jerome in the introduction, and a large number of English and Scotch, versions, some of them translations from Japanese, American Indian and so on, and one of them, more incomprehensible even than the original American Indian or Japanese would have been, in Papuan pidgin.

That's about it. It is a pity that in writing their introduction the compilers did not seek some professional advice, as they make a number of little mistakes that they need not have made. I have already referred to one. A trifling matter, no doubt, that Jerome did not write the Vulgate version of the psalms; but had the com-

piler been informed of why his translation from the *Psalterium juxta Hebraeos* was *not* accepted as part of the common Latin Bible, along with his translations of the rest of the Old Testament, it would have added an interesting little point to their introduction. It was because the people were so familiar with the existing translation from the Greek, not directly from the Hebrew, that they refused to accept a new and no doubt better one. The same kind of quasi-popular idolatry that today keeps the old prayer book psalter going in Anglican Churches, though it is in fact, in its turn, not a translation from the Hebrew, but from the Vulgate – and looked at quite dispassionately (which of course can scarcely be done by bred-in-the-bone Anglicans) not a particularly good translation at that.

EDMUND HILL O. P.

**HEAVEN IN ORDINARIE** by Dermot O'Donoghue. *T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh pp. xx + 201 £5.95*

Before the publication of this book most of Fr O'Donoghue's work had appeared in periodicals which are not much read in this country. But his article in *The Irish Theological Quarterly* for April 1977, 'Vision and System', should have attracted attention. It is published here along with sixteen other articles, five of which have not appeared before. 'Vision and System' reveals a vigorous writer who, like his heroine Julian of Norwich, must be forgiven for occasional extravagances. He makes no bones about Julian's 'double vision', her acceptance of the Church's teaching and her assurance that 'the Great Deed by which God makes all things well will bring

every human being at last to God's love'; he is content to say about this difficulty that Julian is speaking not of a general wiping-out of debts but of 'a very long and hard road, in which the sinner has a terrible price to pay'. What does concern him is the danger of obscurantist persecution 'implicit in any theology of the revealed word which is not constantly purified by direct experience of God as Lover'. That is a note too seldom heard.

The prospective reader must be warned that some of these articles are of the retreat-conference kind and that there are some themes to which objection may be taken, in particular that there is 'infinite sorrow'