

treatment as the sacramentaries since they have had such great influence in shaping the liturgy. The chapter on the breviary is an excellent summary—though it is not true that the Gallican breviaries were promulgated ‘in defiance of the liturgical law existing at the time’ (p. 50)—and so is that on the martyrology. The treatment of the pontifical and ritual, so important for the study of theology, is less successful. The *Ordines Romani* are again neglected, the formation of the Romano-Germanic pontifical and its introduction into Rome are hurriedly passed over, while Durandus and the later editions are treated at a length unproportionate to their importance. One is surprised to find no mention of the great work of Andrieu on this subject. A last chapter gives a useful summary of twentieth century reforms. Despite its shortcomings this is a helpful introduction, however.

PAULINUS MILNER, O.P.

Notice

THE LIVING BIBLE is a series of 12 inch Long Playing Records, twelve in number, issued by His Master's Voice, read by Sir Laurence Olivier and interspersed with special music played by several symphony orchestras, the Royal Philharmonic and the London Philharmonic among them.

It can only be described as embarrassing to hear an actor as admired and distinguished as Sir Laurence in other spheres, reading this most magnificent of all prose with so little sense of fitness or propriety. The intention of those responsible for the series is probably laudable enough but it is difficult to believe that the same could be said of the reader with his mannered theatrical tricks of emphasis and pitch, the utterly meaningless and distracting pauses dragging out this, one would have thought, almost fool-proof rhythm till it suggests a piece of worn-out elastic.

Such immodest egotism is all too often heard in the faithless rendering of verse with which the professional actor betrays the poet's intention; yet little did one think it would be possible so to ‘interpret’ the Old Testament that its majesty would be reduced to ham dramatics. The operative word there is ‘interpret’ and is the root of the evil. If ever words ‘spoke for themselves’ these do, when allowed, and when not rendered by every artifice the voice can muster from breathless self-conscious coyness to ranting hysteria, by when it becomes time to call a halt and lodge a bitter protest at the desecration. The music, otherwise pleasing, is wasted in this desert of histrionics.

LEIGH LESTER