

and because he not only sees with his eyes and mind but also perceives with his heart and affections, he presents the things he sees in a manner incarnate, alive. The measure of a true poet is found in those two things, the power to link things up, and the power to bring them to life in words. Naturally, even those of us with an irritating appetite for poetry look with suspicion on broad generalizations and wide sweeps of history. It is so easy to do these things with little or no justification. However, we have no such fears when Father Bouyer is at work: here we have a scholar at work, and there is a sureness of touch, not to mention learned footnotes verifying the statements, which only comes from sureness of knowledge. One remembers for instance the reference to the Suffering Servant of Jahweh with the comment that here we find the difference between Judaism and all primitive paganism: in Judaism alone is suffering seen to be fruitful.

The heart of the book, the thing that makes it live, is the clear intuition of the mystery that is at the heart of the liturgy. What do we mean by a mystery? It is a moment or an experience when a man reaches both dimensions of human life at once, time and eternity. Truly there is only one mystery, and that is Calvary. But Calvary was not just an historical event; it was, or rather is, 'mysterious' in this special sense in so far as it links time and eternity, Man and God. The important thing is that this is going on now—it is not just an event of the past. Father Bouyer is caught up with the notion that Calvary is here and now among us, that grace cannot be separated from the person of Christ and when therefore we are baptized we are brought into a relationship with him which is as real as our relationship with mother or father. This is the mystery which penetrates every 'branch' of the liturgy, and is what makes a man fully a man. It is common enough to have these truths presented in a cerebral fashion that stimulates notional assent, but here we have them warm and alive; they cannot fail to move us. That is what is meant by poetry, and it is the only effective way to present a mystery. It is effective enough to recall one of the finest statements of the mystery:

sacrifice

Can only perfectly be made by God
And sacrifice has so been made, by God
To God in the body of God with man,
On a tree set up at the four crossing roads
Of earth, heaven, time, and eternity
Which meet upon that cross.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

L'AU DELA. Par François Grégoire. (Presses Universitaires de France.
Like many of its kind, this little book compresses a great deal into

125 pages. It sets out to define man's different conceptions of the after life and attempts to see what they have contributed to contemporary beliefs and how far they can help us in discovering the truth. Our interest is first caught by the scope of the historical survey. The first section, mostly archaeological, sketches the beliefs in immortality among Celts, Germans, Slavs, Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Jews, Christians, Mahommedans, India, China, Japan. An enormous array that is perhaps a little too dazzling for clear sight. Then comes the inquiry into philosophical notions as such from Plato to Gabriel Marcel. Again there is the same scope. This is entirely laudable and one only complains that perhaps too much space, and emphasis by proportion, is given to nineteenth-century philosophies and modern investigations and occultism. Nevertheless one is impressed in the end by the genuine 'objective' manner in which Professor Grégoire sets out his ideas. Being 'objective' or 'detached' in many modern English faculties of philosophy has an unfortunate connotation because it seems to have bred not devotion but indifference to truth, and the 'detachment' of many of our own writers is such that they present their views as just another phase in an ever changing fashion parade. But here at least the author does allow us to believe there is a real truth beyond everyone's ponderings, and that is very refreshing.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS. By John Fahy. (Browne and Nolan; 6s.)

This book is not designed to appeal to those who are over-sensitive to language; the phrases of the pulpit are plentiful—'each and every action'—and there is here and there a dramatization that is hardly necessary—during the consecration 'a tense dramatic silence descends upon the church'. It would however be unjust to judge the book by these things alone. The subtitle is 'The Greatest Thing on Earth', and the author's purpose is quite simply to convince us of this fact: this he does by going step by step through the Mass and giving us a simple commentary on the words and actions. 'Simple' is the keynote of his treatment and it would be a mistake to be repelled by the naïveté which makes it possible for him to say, 'Few acts of worship give more joy and happiness . . . than the act of genuflection', and 'Approaching to receive Holy Communion the feeling of one's personal unworthiness naturally predominates'. If we do not perhaps share these experiences, or not all the time, we should at least reflect that they spring from a state of soul which our Lord commended, the simplicity of doves, and our only complaint about this book is that we do not also hear enough about the guile of serpents.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.