

BLACKFRIARS

WHEREFORE THIS WASTE? By Father James, O.M.Cap. (Burns Oates; 6/-.)

LE SACERDOCE. By Rev. Père J. Périnelle, O.P. (Editions du Cerf, Juvisy; 4 frs.)

Father James' series of essays may be said to resemble the flight of the swallow when rain threatens, mostly near the earth with an occasional upward sweep to higher levels. Some of these sermons and essays seem hardly worth publishing, while others are of great value. The reviewer of a book of this kind cannot however deal with every essay, so that he turns naturally to a set of three dealing with the same subject and occupying a considerable portion of the book. These three on the liturgy are of the higher flights.

Father James rightly sees the music and external ceremonies of the liturgy as the clothing only of the deep and precious spirit within, a spirit centred round the eternal priesthood of Christ. He pushes his enquiry into the relation between the external and the internal elements of the liturgy to the most profound question of all when he treats of *Liturgy and Religious Experience*. The latter term is perhaps unfortunate in its ambiguity, but there can be no mistaking the problem. Despite its inner spirit the liturgy is essentially external and social; how then can it include the hidden individual communings of the soul with God? The latter seems to be of prime importance in religious life and yet Christian worship appears to run counter to it. In reality there is no opposition if a steady balance be maintained between the Christian as a member of society, an individual among other individuals, and the Christian as a totality in himself, a person. We must discover too the interactions of the virtue of charity and the virtue of religion. Father James' solution would have been simpler had he first made quite certain what was the ultimate and what the mean in this matter. Sometimes he seems to regard worship as the final end to be attained, while elsewhere he speaks of it as a means to sanctity or union with God.

In his little book on the Christian priesthood, which should be read by all who have a priestly vocation, Père Périnelle makes no mistake on this point. The priesthood, even in its source, the priesthood of Christ, is a means or an instrument of salvation. The whole nature of the priest as such is summed up in the idea of a medium—a mediator between God and man. And since the liturgy is centred round this one priesthood, it follows that it too is a medium, indeed the greatest medium, of approach to God. This approach to God must be social as well as personal in character; we must go together to God, with our whole beings, soul and body. But the mystic union of the soul with God—as we

REVIEWS

interpret Father James' *Religious Experience*—is the end, is God approached and enjoyed by the Christian as a person, who as such brooks no medium between himself and his first and final cause. Man must worship as a member of his own redeemed race and as a created being uniting the whole of God's outpoured goodness of creation and leading it back to glorify its origin. But when, by means of this worship, he has reached his end, there is nothing to stand between his soul and the object of its joy. It is a direct contact. Let us not however be misled. St. Thomas shows us that Christ as man exercises an eternal priesthood because through the efficacy of that priesthood the saints are preserved in eternal happiness. Liturgy and priesthood play their part in beatitude, but they remain means just as now upon earth they are the necessary means to that union with God. The individual must be balanced by the person, worship by charity, and liturgy by the union of the soul with God.

There are many other good things in both these books, but this one point has been selected because in *Le Sacerdoce* we may find the elements with which to correct Father James' otherwise excellent essays on the liturgy. CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

THE ROMAN BREVIARY. An English Version: compiled by the Benedictine Nuns of the Abbey of Our Lady of Consolation, at Stanbrook in Worcestershire; revised and edited by Charles Francis Brown, with an Introduction by the Right Rev. Fernand Cabrol, O.S.B. Part IV: Autumn. (Burns Oates; 15/-)

This new pocket-size English edition of the Breviary is startling in its inferiority to the classical, but unhappily out-of-date, translation by John, Marquess of Bute, with whose high standards it inevitably challenges comparison. It may or may not have been preferable to use the familiar Douay translation of the Bible for the Psalms and Lessons in an edition which is clearly intended for devotional use; but it is inexplicable that the Bute translation is not so much as referred to, still less utilized. The respective merits of the two translations may be illustrated by a random comparison taken from the Second Nocturn of the Matins of St. Teresa:

NEW

She was adorned with angelic virtues; and her love made her solicitous not for her own salvation alone, but for that of all. Wherefore, inspired by God, and with the approbation of Pius IV, she put forward the sterner rule of the ancient Carmelites, first to

OLD

Strengthened in the graces of an angel, the wideness of her love embraced in its tender care the salvation of other souls as well as of her own. To this end, under the blessing of God, and the appropriation of Pius IV, she set, first before women and then