

We can endorse the words of the publisher's notice: 'Seldom can a work of spirituality have been so soaked in theology'. Withal there is a redolence of piety running through the whole, true piety, a tender and loving intuition of the Fatherhood of God, an appreciation of all that is implied in this name of 'Father', seeing in it all that Jesus revealed: 'the goodness, the mercy, and the loving-kindness of him who wishes to grant us a share in his life and make us really and truly his sons'.

It is this spirit of filial piety towards God as the 'living Father' which is so much needed by souls today, adrift as they are without help or hope in a seemingly meaningless maelstrom of existence. The loss of the realisation of God's fatherly care and providence has had its logical outcome in the loss of belief in God's very existence. From the stern and terrible God of the Jansenists to the abstract and absentee God of the philosophers was only a step in the inevitable evolution which has led to the godless movement of today. Only when men again become aware that they have a Father in heaven who loves them, and whose kindly providence protects their lives, and who out of pure mercy seeks to adopt them as sons, only then will it be possible to lead them back along the road which has taken them so far from God. Mgr Guerry's book will be of priceless value in encouraging Christians to turn again to contemplate the true revelation of the Father as unfolded by our Lord in His earthly life and teaching, and, having done so, to pass on the great message:
For the Father himself loveth you.

EGBERT COLE, O.P.

DAVID, FIGURE DU CHRIST, par J. Beaurin.

AMEN, par A.-M. Roguet, O.P.

LA PREFACE DE LA MESSE, par H.-Ch. Chéry, O.P.

LA PARABOLE DE L'ECONOMIE INFIDELE, par C. Spicq. (Editions du Cerf; Blackfriars Publications; 1s. each.)

A series of excellent brochures from Editions du Cerf. Everything to recommend them; format and general presentation make the best use of what must be a limited range of coloured inks and paper. Theology is presented with a minimum of jargon; the appeal for liturgical awakening is temperate and keeps the ultimate purpose well in focus; an easy use of scriptural sources and a sound christian poetic sense all make admirable means of instruction. If these are representative of the series then everything is offered, homily, liturgical and theological instruction and meditation.

G.M.

EXTRACTS

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI and Charles de Foucauld are compared by Professor Deleaux in the September issue of *Vita Cristiana* (Florence).

Both have souls that are essentially Christocentric. The son of Piero Bernardone was immersed in the mystery of Christ: surely no other saint imitated as did he the life and sufferings of Christ, and

that in the most concrete and practical way. Charles de Foucauld, for his part, was dominated by a single passion: Jesus Christ. His life was Christ, and especially the Christ of the hidden years of Nazareth.

St Francis's journey to the Saracens anticipates, too, the special vocation of the Saharan hermit, and the foundation of the brotherhood designed to continue Charles de Foucauld's work has much in its rule that recalls the first Franciscan impulse.

WHAT DO YOU DO AT MASS? asks Père Duployé in *Témoignage Chrétien* (September 19). Echoing an appeal that one hears on all sides from the laity, he demands a serious consideration of the problem of preaching:

One can safely say that at present in France preaching is undergoing a serious crisis. Paul Claudel has reminded us that 'it is high time that the problem of preaching was studied from the point of view of the consumer'. How many Catholics go to church on Sunday morning with the hope of hearing from the lips of a priest the very secrets of life? At a time when the radio, the press, the cinema speak to the masses in a language that is too often pitifully inadequate, but which is at least intelligible, Christian preaching is marked by a fundamental unreality. The slightest word of the Gospel can change a life . . . but it is rare that the simple reading which, by itself, might be a shattering event, is undertaken in those conditions of audibility, dignity, beauty and intelligibility which could make of it a decisive act. The priest goes into the pulpit, and there pass over those indifferent heads the most solemn words as though they were empty of power and meaning, as though they had no reference to the mystery of daily existence.

The answer lies, Père Duployé argues, in the recovery of the Mass as a means of instruction. The most recent publication of the *Centre de Pastorale Liturgique*, *La Messe et sa Catéchèse* (of which an account will be given in a subsequent issue of LIFE OF THE SPIRIT), is a basic work which deals with all the problems that face the reformer. Not the least of them is the problem of language, to which the latest number of *Maison Dieu* is also devoted.

In this country, too, the activities of the English Liturgy Society reflect the same concern, a pastoral concern primarily, for as Père Duployé reminds us:

All the possible objections have been made against the use of the vernacular (i.e. during parts of the Mass). No one will question a fact that we all agree about: the Sunday gathering of the faithful is, in certain parts, an instruction, a dialogue, a representation. Does one give a lesson in a language which the pupils don't under-

stand? Does one answer an enquirer in words he cannot comprehend without the help of an interpreter? Does one perform a play in speech that is unintelligible to those who are present?

SAINT-SULPICE, Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas, Notre-Dame-du-Raincy and Notre-Dame de Mantes, are the latest titles in the attractive *Nefs et Clochers* series (obtainable from Blackfriars Publications, 2s. each volume). An interesting text and brilliant photographs give fresh evidence of the contemporary French genius for communicating the joy of the Church.

PRAEGLUSTATOR

LA MAISON-DIEU, Cahier II (Blackfriars Publications, 5s. 0d.) has 250 pages of detailed consideration of the problem of language and liturgical traditions. Articles on the past and present discipline of the Church are supplemented by an ample documentation on contemporary difficulties. The Abbé Martinort summarises an enquiry made by *Témoignage Chrétien* on the use of the vernacular in the liturgy. Hundreds of replies are analysed, from 'This is a wave of modernism' to 'The words of the Mass were not intended to be magic incantations'. The serious interest of priests and laity alike in the recovery of a living liturgy cannot be ignored. But knowledge must precede the hope of action, and the temperate and informed essays in this number of *Maison-Dieu* range from the practice of sub-apostolic times to modern German methods of translation. Père Roguet, O.P., has a most original and useful article on the terminology used in popular eucharistic sermons. 'The prisoner of the tabernacle', 'Jesus comes down on the altar', 'Bread of angels', and many more: these expressions must be 'animated by a living thought . . . must be fortified by the ever fresh resources of the Scriptures and the Liturgy, so that the preacher may be what he should always be—a prophet of the living God'.

CORRESPONDENCE

To The Editor, LIFE OF THE SPIRIT:

Sir,—In your current issue (October) you publish an article by Sister Mary Frances, O.P., on Blessed Emily Bicchiere in which it is stated that 'girls prepared in such schools as hers went to the universities not only to learn but to become professors'. Mention is made of women professors at Alcalá and Salamanca and of women at the medical schools of Salerno, also that after the 'unfortunate incident' of Abelard and Heloise 'Paris closed her doors to women and Oxford followed her example'. I should be extremely interested to know the exact authority for these statements since they stand in direct contradiction to all that I have previously read concerning medieval universities.

That the celebrated women doctors of Salerno were mythical has