

tion of its aims, and the excessively high price, are enough to deter most readers from giving it a second thought. Yet it is well worth reading. Every page of its twelve essays on such diverse subjects as patience, friendship, boredom, pleasure, fear, and work, gives ample proof of the author's expert and deep knowledge of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church and of Holy Scripture. The selection of subject-matter will not please everyone, but it is only fair to say that many of the topics that greatly exercise the interest of the faithful are discussed in an earlier work. There are a number of statements that arrest attention and invite challenge, but the author's subsequent explanation of what he means is for the most part perfectly acceptable. In the essay on *Fear*, however, he goes completely astray on one important point. Having described a situation illustrating what he calls an unreal, insubstantial and imaginary fear, he prescribes by way of cure a large dose of common sense and will-power. The example given is, in fact, a clear case of psychic disorder common enough in the daily practice of the psycho-therapist. Moreover, the author's assertion that fear is first and foremost a moral problem involving cowardice, and only secondarily a psychic problem, is the very reverse of the truth. This blindness to the fundamental obstacle to perfection in the lives of many of the faithful considerably lessens the value of this book for just those people who are so much in need of help.

MURDOCH SCOTT, O.P.

OUR FAITH. By The Rt Rev. John C. Heenan. (Nelson; 12s. 6d.)

Bishop Heenan's book is intended primarily for school leavers: it is the sort of book a wise parent will buy for his son about his fourteenth birthday, the sort of book a wise teacher will use in the leavers' class and the sort of book a wise leader of youth groups will have handy for use and reference. It is more than a book of instruction in the faith; there are several admirable ones already on the market. It is an illustrated guide to the meaning of life and the Catholic Church, and in addition to directing the reader's steps it stimulates him to walk. Working inwards from the outside we first notice the remarkably attractive format: the dust-cover is beautifully adorned with fine reproductions of stained glass windows, the boards themselves are handsomely covered in white vellum paper with the title inscribed in red and gold, the text is excellently printed on graceful heavy paper and the thirty-two magnificent illustrations are an education in themselves. The photographs, especially the close-ups, are particularly fine. It is then such a shock to discover the moderate price—12s. 6d.—that other praise is almost drowned in admiration for the man who could persuade publishers to do all this for so little.

When we turn to the text itself, the list of contents is impressive. We start at the root, 'Does religion matter?' This is followed by chapters, About God, About Man, How the World Began and The Bible. Then we come to Christ and the Church and the traditional layout of Catholic theology. Here there are interpolated stimulating practical chapters such as Why Be Holy? Why Pray? How to be a Better Catholic. The last nine chapters deal with the history of the Church in England and the Church's teaching on social affairs. Merely reading the four pages of contents is instructive. For instance, under the chapter entitled The Bible we find the sub-heading—Copying the Holy Scriptures; on page 39 Bishop Heenan gives a simply worded paragraph about the early manuscripts of the New Testament and the work of scholars. In this matter there is one fault in Chapter 40: either the sub-heading or the chapter itself, it is difficult to tell which, have been printed the wrong way round because the first two topics in the sub-headings are the last two in the chapter.

The style is clear and simple and, as the Bishop claims, avoids baby-language. One can foresee another criticism. Some people might complain that the treatment of many subjects is sketchy. The answer to this is to be found in the prefaces. This is by way of being a source-book and the author hopes that his young readers will keep it on hand to refer to and when they come across anything that needs explaining or amplifying that they will take it to a priest or teacher. He also asks teachers and priests to be ready for this. In addition there is, as many people will know, a new series of text books on religious knowledge for schools nearing completion. *Our Faith* is in fact a by-product of this work which has been going on for some years. It should also turn out to be an excellent reference book for these text books.

There is another quality of *Our Faith* which is perhaps its most important one. In all the business of getting the facts down on paper Bishop Heenan does not lose sight of his chief aim which is to persuade people to be good Catholics. Thus many of the asides and illustrations are in effect pleas for more frequent communion, greater devotion to prayer and so on. For instance in Chapter 25 the vivid description of Sunday morning in the Burns' household is a strong appeal to boys and girls to get up early and go to Holy Communion often. In every way the reader gets his money's worth.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

CHRISTIAN ESSAYS IN PSYCHIATRY. Edited by Philip Mairet. (S.C.M. Press; 15s.)

This is an interesting and stimulating series of ten essays by a group composed of Christian psychiatrists, clergymen and an educationalist