

(And yet on reflection even that seems insufficient: can we possibly deny that there is prayer in the last quartets of Beethoven?) We certainly cannot agree with Bloy that he failed to do God's will because he became a writer when he might have become a saint: for why did God give him his gift if not to use it? It was not so that St Thomas thought about his brain, or St Louis his throne, or Fra Angelico his art, or Bl. Jordan of Saxony his love for Diana d'Andalò. Some artists, it is true, turned at last from their art in despair of reaching through it the infinite they thirsted for: so the aged Michelangelo smashed his statues, as St Thomas for his part regarded his writings as worthless as straw. But there is the 'way of affirmation' too: Handel on his knees in the composing of the *Messiah*, or Angelico at once painting and adoring his Saviour. Artists, no doubt, are often wild fellows, supplying plenty of ammunition for an *advocatus diaboli*: but if they are led through their art, through their idolatry, to a great humility and a great thirst for the Infinite, so that in what they make there are expressed a deep vision and a great longing, are we to say that they are remote from the essential stuff of holiness? In this last chapter M. Gilson does indeed dig into the problem he has raised; but we could have wished for much more: could have wished that instead of being merely a final chapter it had been expanded into a second part of the book, balancing the historical survey with a full-length analysis of the problems the survey involves.

GERALD VANN, O.P.

HOLY MASS. Approaches to the Mystery. By A.-M. Roguet, O.P. (Blackfriars; 5s.)

Père Roguet's excellent little study is the second short work on the Mass to be published by Blackfriars, the other being Père Chéry's *What is the Mass?*, and it maintains the high standard we have come to expect from French liturgical writers. The author has a great deal of experience in liturgical preaching, in the course of which he has acquired a deep knowledge of the needs and difficulties of the faithful in regard to the liturgy; this is evident in the book under review, which is designed to meet these needs.

In his introduction he indicates three kinds of approach to the Mass which he wishes to avoid: the historical, which sometimes tends to lose sight of the Mass itself in a welter of detail; the 'spiritual', which comments on the prayers, and sometimes gives the impression that the Mass is a meditation rather than an act; and lastly the theological, which offers what are often over-subtle analyses of the Mass, and which 'too frequently forget to consider the mystery in its breadth'. (p. 7.) Père Roguet's own approach is to study the Mass from its ritual acts, and his aim is 'to get a glimpse of the mystery, to present it under various lights, to bring the Christian soul into contact with it, leaving him the possibility of penetrating further by his own efforts'. (p. 8); and by this method one will

live the Mass, which is the only way to know it. He never loses sight of the fact that the Mass is an act, that it is the mystery of religious worship, and it is in this context that he sets the points he wishes to discuss, such as the Sacrifice of Praise, the Eucharist, the Offering, the Chalice, and the Sacrifice and Christ's Resurrection. Mention must be made of the chapters dealing with the congregation and brotherly love; here Père Roguet provides the layman with a key to the understanding of the Mass, for before he can live it he must understand what part he plays in it. The author develops the theme that the congregation is not a shapeless conglomeration, but an organised body, having a head, and not only an invisible head, Christ, but also a visible one, the priest. (p. 15.) He points out the essential relationship existing between the Church (i.e. the assembly of the faithful) and the priest at the altar. 'It is the Mass that brings the Church together, it is the Mass that makes the Church, just as it is the Church that offers the Mass and that offers itself at the Mass.' (p. 55.)

Preachers and retreatants will find in this book abundant material for sermons and meditations on the Mass, and it will be of great assistance in the instruction of converts. Throughout Père Roguet writes with the ease of one who is master of his subject, in language which is simple and direct, yet highly accurate and precise. A special word of praise is due to the Dominican Nuns of Carisbrooke for their very fine translation. F.P.

EARLY CHRISTIAN FATHERS. Edited by Rev. C. C. Richardson, TH.D.
(The Library of Christian Classics, Vol. I. S.C.M. Press; 30s.)

This is the first volume of the Library of Christian Classics which is to include the works of writers so various as St Augustine, St Thomas Aquinas, Luther and the English reformers. It is an ambitious project, well planned, and if carried out as well as this first volume, will be an indispensable addition to any theological library.

This first volume, beautifully printed and bound, contains fairly long extracts, and in some cases the whole work (e.g. the *Didache*), of the early Christian writers, I. Clement, St Ignatius, Polycarp, Diognetes, *I Apology* of St Justin, and passages from St Irenaeus, etc. There is a general introduction to the whole book, a special one to each writer, and a well-selected and up-to-date bibliography. The translations are all new.

The general impression given is that the scholarship is first-rate, the critical views of the various editors are sober and balanced, genuinely impartial and objective. There is a manifest respect for Catholic patristic scholarship which, in the question of dating the *Letter to Diognetes*, is allowed to have a decisive voice. The translations are careful, and, one feels, eminently trustworthy; where there is a doubt about a rendering, it is noted in the lower margin. Altogether, this is an introduction that inspires confidence, as well as a welcome sign of the revival of patristic studies in our own time.

J. D. CRICHTON