

siderations, as Mr Robertson says, are accuracy and intelligibility, but as soon as one begins to probe the modern translations he examines it becomes evident that these principles point outside his book in certain *theological* directions.

To whom is a translation to be intelligible? Presumably not only to Christians or to certain Christians—and yet if we are to say that the Bible is the Book of the Church, the book which plays an essentially creative role in the Church, both in the original formative period and continuously as a permanent centre of resource (for example in the liturgical and theological practice of the community), do we not begin to see refractory and crucial theological problems which this book never broaches? The Church is the New Israel: will it really do, like Rieu, to put the old testament references in Matthew into footnotes? The use of scripture is as significant as its existence: how is one to maintain the sacral quality that cultic use demands and creates? The Bible is a much richer book for Christians than it can ever be for anybody else. Is it much of an exaggeration to say that recent attempts to make it 'intelligible' make it attractive but ultimately barren? It is a serious question, whether we need two different versions: a readable text for butterfly-readers and a more resonant text for those who still 'search the scriptures'.

Catholic vernacular texts may not be published without notes. Would it not be better to dwell less on the negative aspects of ecclesiastical concern for scripture (Mr Robertson takes some pleasure in our freedom to read the Knox Bible) and to think of these notes not as Bishop Challoner's stalwart vindications but as the generous clues and insights offered by the Jerusalem Bible? 'At the beginning God expressed himself' is a brave attempt by J. B. Phillips to put the *logos* of the Johannine prologue into accurate English. But can accuracy of this kind really compare with the token translation by *Verbe* in the French Bible and its brief note and references which at least establish the inadequacy of any translation and encourage one gradually to take possession of something of the meaning? There is no use in encouraging anybody to skim the Bible.

We hope that it will not be too long before we have an English Bible which will be intelligible and accurate in the more complex and theologically directed senses we have tried to suggest. Meanwhile we have this book, but it hardly lives up to the promise of its fine cover.

F.K.

HAPPINESS WITH GOD. By Dom Basil Whelan, O.S.B. (Bloomsbury Publishing Co. Ltd.; 12s. 6d.)

This is a collection of twenty spiritual conferences, intended originally for religious, but one hopes that they will now find a far wider

circle of readers. They really are inspiring. This is the kind of book one wishes to pass on to a friend when one has read it. It is good spiritual reading with just that touch of poetry every now and again, which lights it up all along the way. 'We do not walk into heaven on our own feet, we are carried in on the shoulders of the good shepherd; we do not swim into the harbour of safety by our own strength, we are swept into it on the high tide of the merits of our saviour' (p. 43). There is an excellent chapter on what is called, after St Francis de Sales, 'the little virtues', and an even better one on the words 'If thou didst know the gift of God'. Certainly this little book can be recommended, and when read, put into the hands of others.

D.A.L.

CHRIST AT EVERY CROSSROAD. By F. Desplanques, S.J., trans. G. R. Serve. (The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland; \$2.75.)

This book could have been written only in France, a country where the youth of the Church is being renewed like the eagle's. In twenty-five meditations, Fr Desplanques explores the truths of the gospel and the mysteries of the faith with a stimulating freshness of vision. His subjects are diverse—from the circumcision to the angels, and from the dormition to a Christian burial in France. He has an intense awareness of the mystery of the incarnation, of the paradox of the eucharist, of the pain and beauty of the cross. It is these pivotal truths which give to the book its profound unity. His language is contemporary, his application penetrating, his style forceful yet often moving.

These meditations are difficult in any literary *genre*. Sometimes they are vivid commentaries on gospel scenes, sometimes they verge on poetry, with isolated lines forming a counterpoint to the main text. The writer which this brings to mind is Whitman. He is like Whitman in his use of long rhythmic lines, in the intimate relationship he establishes with the reader, in his sudden movement from prosaic statement to moments of true poetry. Unfortunately he shares some of Whitman's defects also, notably his formlessness and over-repetition. Yet where Whitman spoke for humanity in the mass bound by the spirit of friendship, Fr Desplanques speaks for humanity redeemed and bound by the spirit of love. He is a poet of the mystical body.

Outstanding is a lovely gentle meditation on our Lady's dormition, where he takes the unpromising material that nothing was said about it because 'there was nothing to say', and weaves out of this a moving commentary on 'that mysterious departure . . . when Mary was taken by her spouse'. Not all the book is up to this standard, but he can suddenly transcend a conventional discourse with an unexpected and profound conclusion. Sometimes amusing, often tender and moving,