

Book Notes

Cardinal Heenan rejoices that once again Catholics will be able to walk to Mass with a Missal in their hands. *The Sunday Missal* (Collins, £1.90; £3 de luxe binding) is beautifully produced, with excellent illustrations by Meinrad Craighead. As the Cardinal says: 'They (the laity) have grown tired of cards and pieces of paper. It will be an immense relief for them to be able to follow the whole of the Mass in their own book'. But do we come together to follow Mass, united in the simultaneous turning of a hundred pages, or to hear the Word of God proclaimed? Any Sunday Missal is in danger of discouraging a creative approach to liturgy, and of reinforcing the prejudice that the Mass is a private devotion. What would a ballad singer have thought if, when he intoned 'You frolicsome lads and you lasses draw near', his audience had all immediately turned to page 17 of *Later English Broadside Ballads*, edited by John Holloway and Joan Black (Routledge & Kegan Paul, £6.50)? These ballads are of great social and literary interest, which is more than can be said of most of our liturgical prayers.

Many of this month's books share a common concern to make theology a 'living subject': Carlos Mesters claims to have consulted only two books, the Bible and Life, for his *Road to Freedom* (Veritas Publications, Dublin, 95p), but the result is an oversimplified theology of liberation. Peter de Rosa, in his *Come Holy Spirit* (Collins Fontana, 40p) consults too many in his attempt to conjure up the meaning of the Holy Spirit in our lives as Christians. And be warned, this is not a book on pentecostalism, as the blurb might suggest. Gonville French-Beytagh wants to bring religion back to 'personal experience' in his *Encountering Light* (Collins Fontana 35p) but almost any attempt to make experience itself the object of discourse is doomed to failure, which is why his autobiographical *Encountering Darkness* is a much better book. Perhaps it is just easier to talk about the Devil than about God. Four volumes of the *Religious Experience Series* have appeared, edited by Edward Malatesta, and published by Anthony Clarke. They are *Jesus in Christian Devotion and Contemplation* (£1.20) by Irénée Noye et al. *A Christian Anthropology* (£1.10) by Joseph Goetz et al. *How to Pray Today* (65p) by Yves Raguin, and *Imitating Christ* (£1.20) by Edouard

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Cothenet et al. These books largely consist of good solid articles translated from the *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*.

Albert Schweitzer's *Reverence for Life* is now available in paperback (SPCK, £1.25). This collection of sermons, given in Strasbourg between 1900 and 1919, before and after his first visit to Lambaréné, show how an academic who made no appeal to sentiment or experience ('I have tried to use reason to illuminate everything that concerns faith and reason', p. 89), could yet speak most movingly about God. The life and work of a totally unacademic figure, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who was moved by the same compassion for the suffering, is described in *For the Love of God* (Veritas Publications, Dublin, 70p), by Georges Gorrée and Jean Barbier. One suspects that the authors are rather more sentimental than Mother Teresa could ever afford to be.

Asian Religions by Geoffrey Parrinder has been reissued for 95p by Sheldon Press. When it first appeared seventeen years ago it was just *An Introduction to Asian Religions. The Bible as History*, by Werner Keller, now in paperback (Hodder and Stoughton, 60p), has for its subtitle 'Archaeology confirms the Book of Books', but one would like to know whether archaeology also confirms *this* book, which first came out in 1956 and makes no reference to any work done since that date, for example the recent excavations in Jerusalem. *The Old Testament: a guide to its writings*, by Hans Wolff (SPCK, £1.30) has the advantage of being up-to-date, but is far too brief. Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and second Isaiah are all introduced in a mere ten pages. The introductions given in the Jerusalem Bible are just as helpful. The companion introduction to the New Testament by Gunther Bornkamm (£1.30) is of better value.

Finally, if you wish to brighten a sermon or propose to the vicar's daughter, Mowbrays have published *The Concise Dictionary of Religious Quotations* (£4.50) by William Neil. About half of the 2,500 quotations are taken from the scriptures, and the rest are inadequately referenced and often uninspiring. But 'do not grudge to pick out treasures from an earthen pot' (p. 133, quotation 7).

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