

for most of us, in fact. Modifying another publicist's cliché, one could say that it should find a place on the shelves of some educated laymen. The historical information and rubrics contained in it are accurately set down, clearly arranged and easily referred to. Anyone who can use his missal and has a good theological understanding of the mass, and who now wants to improve his knowledge of the historical and ceremonial detail would find it most useful. The section on the mass of the faithful is particularly valuable.

It is difficult, however, to recommend it to the other classes of people mentioned in the Foreword. There are so many excellent books on the liturgy these days that he is a bold man indeed who hopes to compete with them in satisfying the needs of all these people.

If seminarists or ordained priests are to buy a handbook, it should refer them to more complete and authoritative works and to means by which they may keep their rubrics and pastoral theology up to date; this one does not do so. Its theology is much too sketchy for anyone preparing to teach others about the mass. As for the general Catholic public, I am afraid this book does not meet their needs. They want help above all with their missals and with the different ways of sharing in public worship. They also need clear and simple theology, not the external details with which this book is principally concerned.

Certain statements need to be questioned. On p. 24 the quotation 'daily they were persevering of one mind in the Temple' is used to show that in the early Church the readings of the divine service took place in the synagogue. On p. 57 we read that in our present-day liturgy a 'public confession' (followed by absolution) precedes the sermon. This may, of course, refer to German practice; if so, it is one of a number of details which could usefully have been omitted or adapted in this presentation of the work to the English public. But the English public needs even more a book written directly for themselves, to forward the liturgical revival in the context of their own tradition.

MICHAEL RICHARDS

THE PASCHAL MYSTERY IN THE CHRISTIAN YEAR, by Henry Jenny;
Challoner Publications.

THE MEANING OF EASTER, by A. M. Avril, O.P.: Aquin Press.

LE DIMANCHE A LA RADIO; tome III, LE TEMPS PASCAL, by A. M. Avril,
O.P.; Les Editions du Cerf.

The term 'paschal mystery' is now a commonplace of theological and spiritual writing in English and this is as it should be, as it expresses the very heart of the Christian faith; for many, however, it remains a technical neologism devoid of precise content. For this reason the English translation of Mgr Jenny's *Le mystère pascal dans l'année chrétienne* is very welcome. Not only is it a lucid explanation of all this term conveys, but in showing how the whole of the Christian year brings, one after another, the aspects of the mystery before

us, it enables its readers to perceive the relevance of the liturgical cycle to the business of Christian life. For those who wish to make use of the liturgy of their Sunday mass to deepen their understanding of the faith and perfect their everyday life, this short introduction cannot be too highly recommended.

Père Avril has for some years been responsible for the preaching at the mass broadcast each Sunday by the French radio, and his sermons are so popular that he has now been persuaded to publish them. The third volume of the French edition contains sermons for the Sundays from Easter to Pentecost; the English translation of the second volume contains sermons for the Sundays from Septuagesima to Passiontide and it is not easy to see why it should be entitled *The meaning of Easter*. These are very special sermons preached to a vast and heterogeneous audience, many members of which make no pretence of being Christians. They are short, usually based on the epistle and gospel of the day, and their style is simple. The preacher is remarkably successful in setting out the basic truths of the Christian revelation in a way that is accessible to his audience. It is not often that one hears sermons as good as these. While everyone who reads them will benefit, preachers especially will be able to draw from them many valuable hints.

PAULINUS MILNER, O.P.

CHRISTIAN FAILURE, by Ignace Lepp; Bloomsbury, 16s. 6d.

Fr Ignace Lepp is an intellectual who owed his conversion from Communism to the influence of the *avant garde* Catholic writers and thinkers in France. After the hopes promised by the pontificate of Pius XI, and the first years of Pius XII, that 'the Church had boldly taken its stand in the progressive camp', he says, the reaction set in with the rising power of the 'dogmatists', and anyone in favour of reform or change was suspect. It was with this attitude, a complete contradiction of much that had brought him into the Church, that Fr Lepp was confronted as a priest. *Christian Failure* (well translated by Elizabeth Strakosch) is a record in the form of a diary kept intermittently between 1941 and 1956. It covers time spent in a parish in Marseilles during the Occupation (when he helped the Resistance) and after the Liberation; then in Morocco as editor of a Catholic paper, with a short visit from there to Algeria (this is most interesting as he foresees the holocaust which was to come); and he is able to give his impressions of Catholicism in country districts and provincial towns.

From all this varied experience two paramount facts emerge for him, both responsible for that 'deplorable gulf opened between Christianity and the popular masses (according to Pius XI the greatest crime perpetrated by the capitalist era)'. First the reactionary spirit of the Church; seminaries do not choose priests to deal with the problems of modern life; many religious orders answer a need which is past, while a movement like the Worker Priests is suppressed; when living side by side with another religion or another Christian