

scene and circumstance and draws a noble profile. One could wish that he had insisted a little on Croce's detailed historical studies and on his literary criticism, which, outside Italy, have hardly yet had their meed of recognition.

SAUNDERS LEWIS

A READING OF GEORGE HERBERT. By Rosemond Tuve. (Faber; 25s.)

Scripture is to be interpreted by tradition, and though Herbert spent many hours in private meditation such as he describes in 'The Holy Scriptures', he was familiar with the traditional typology and wrote for a public to whom it was equally familiar. Professor Tuve sets out to show just how familiar he was and how much we by our ignorance miss, and this not only in meaning and association, but, as she rightly insists, in the 'tone' of Herbert's wit.

In the first part of the book she examines 'The Sacrifice', showing the compression of images well-known from liturgical sources and from Middle English poems of a similar kind, and the quality imparted to what was thus quite conventional by Herbert's own mind; in the second she assembles a number of typological themes to explain obscurities, restore lost associations and regularise distorted interpretations in various other poems. The evidence for the wide knowledge of this traditional interpretation of Scripture is taken from the illuminations in manuscripts, pictures from early block-books, and the windows of, for example, King's College Chapel, and many are reproduced as illustrations in the book. All this is excellent, and one can agree with Professor Tuve when she opposes those modern critics (she singles out Mr Empson by reason of his interpretation of 'The Sacrifice') who will not admit scholarship to have any contribution to make to aesthetic appreciation; her own last section on the two 'Jordan' poems, if nothing else, demonstrates how much it may. But one is less happy when she is reflecting on the nature of the images used by Herbert and their relevance to the contemporary mind; it is only at the end of the book that it is suggested that some of the symbols are meaningful outside a Christian context and some require that the context shall be learnt. However, this is a slight fault in a book which is both beautiful and enlightening, and which must certainly be read by anyone who is interested in George Herbert or in the metaphysical poets in general.

BENET WEATHERHEAD, O.P.

VOCATION (Religious Life: II). (Blackfriars Publications; 10s. 6d.)

The first book in this series was *Religious Sisters* which sought to diagnose the reasons for decline in religious vocations and to make constructive suggestions with particular reference to the training of Superiors and Novice Mistresses.

The present book deals with the problem of vocation for the guidance of Religious Superiors to help them to winnow the chaff from the wheat, to reduce so far as is possible to human frailty mistakes in the selection of applicants to the religious life. 'The sacred character of grace, especially the grace of vocation, as well as respect for the human person, make it a serious obligation for us to use every possible means to avoid mistakes about vocation' (p. 109).

Like its predecessor this book is compiled from conferences in Paris by priests experienced in the direction of Religious who are at pains to decide what constitutes a vocation, how to recognise it, and are particularly concerned about the natural criteria of character as well as the supernatural criteria of a vocation. Under the heading of negative criteria they deal with difficulties of character which may not be eradicated but may be suppressed during the time of postulancy and novitiate. They discuss too whether a vocation if recognised must be followed as a matter of precept or counsel. There is also a useful chapter dealing with answers to a questionnaire as to breakdowns as observed in several communities.

As the careful selection of applicants to the religious life is of such grave importance to religious communities every Superior will be grateful to the publishers for making this book available in English.

J. BENNETT



## NOTICES

THE PENGUIN CLASSICS now include Helen Waddell's *Mediaeval Latin Lyrics* (3s.) and a new translation of *The Imitation of Christ* (2s. 6d.) by Leo Sherley-Price. Of Miss Waddell's exquisite renderings it is enough to say that they have by this become classics in their own right, while Mr Sherley-Price's successful attempt at providing 'an accurate, unabridged and readable modern translation' should ensure a vast new public for the most popular of all spiritual books.

THE BOOK OF THE SAVIOUR (18s.), following the pattern of *The Mary Book*, is an anthology of writing published by Sheed and Ward based on the single theme of Christ our Lord. The variety of contributors, from Cynewulf to Arnold Lunn, is sufficient indication of the range of Sheed and Ward's enterprise, and this latest selection, fortified by excellent illustrations and useful