

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

'theological appendixes', should prove one of the most acceptable of this year's Christmas presents.

FIRST AND LAST LOVES (John Murray, 20s.) is a collection of John Betjeman's topographical and architectural essays illustrated by John Piper. 'For myself', he writes, 'almost any age seems civilised except that in which I live', and his erudite and humane commentary on village churches and railway stations, on Cheltenham and Port Isaac, the Isle of Wight and King's Cross, is indeed nostalgic but always serene. Mr Betjeman's capacity for evoking the smell of hassocks and the glint of brass is not the mere mannerism it might seem at first to be. He sees beyond the academic categories of usual taste, and his loves are authentically experienced and good to share.

In SCIENCE IS A SACRED COW (Sheed and Ward; 10s. 6d.) Mr Anthony Standen considers that the scientists have deceived their gullible 'lay' public for too long, and sets out to expose their practices. His task gets easier as he passes from the exact sciences to those more recent ones that, by using a language borrowed from the others, succeed in passing off their guesses as truth. He brings to light a great deal of folly, but his book would be more persuasive, in this country at any rate, if he had avoided a style so constantly aggressive as to be almost unreadable.

IONA: A BOOK OF PHOTOGRAPHS (12s. 6d.) comes from the Publishing Department of the Community of Iona at 214 Clyde Street, Glasgow, and one which must have been a joy to produce, as it is to examine. Nearly sixty large and excellent photographs show in detail the ancient abbey which is being restored by the work of Presbyterian ministers and laymen, and also show the main features of the island. The Iona movement is one which Catholics watch with appreciation, but with regret that it sees history so mistily. The short introduction to this otherwise excellent book has the mixture of sincerity and exaggeration which marks a good deal of the Community's writing.

THE CRADLE OF SWITZERLAND, by Arnold Lunn (Hollis and Carter; 12s. 6d.) is more than just a guide book: it is well written and finely illustrated. The author's admiration of Switzerland is well known; it is now plain that this is not simply a sentimental attachment but is also based on a thorough knowledge of the country, its history, and its customs. Those who tour Switzerland in Sir Arnold's company will find profit and pleasure. And even if they have to stay at home they will have much to enjoy.