

It is neither to praise nor to condemn this book to make some observations on the meaning and use of the word liturgical. Liturgical prayer is first and foremost the public official prayer of the Church expressed in the Mass and Divine Office of the day. But there has been for long a false and profoundly pernicious dichotomy between liturgy and life. This leads to the water-tight compartment view of life, and in particular to the segregation of public from private prayer with the consequent treatment of liturgy as a theatrical 'stunt.' From one side popular devotion has been debunked in favour of formal liturgy; from the other rubrical fanaticism has been denounced as the begetter of insincere externalised prayer. The true way lies in the integration of private and public prayer (the distinction between them is only partial in any case) and in liturgical *living* over and above liturgical prayer—we do not cease to be members of Christ after Mass is over. We learn best to pray and to live from the Church's public prayer, the liturgy, by making it our own, and pursuing in our private prayers the thoughts offered us by the Church in the Mass and Office. After this fashion private prayer is the indispensable link between liturgy and life. It is the remedy for much pious vulgarity, and, more important, the cure for slipshod thought about, and ignorance of, the truths of faith. If there is any theory behind this book it must be this, and if there is any major criticism to be made it is to regret that there is not some kind of preface outlining it. As a simple exposition of the meaning of the gospel it succeeds throughout in spite of periodical long-windedness. The Ignatian method is used: composition of place, that is to say a clear, simple description of the event, followed by the points, or food for thought, to be drawn from the Gospel story. In straightforward, simple exegesis the meditations rarely fall short, the 'points,' on the other hand, are occasionally artificially forced; here it is well to remember that the highest form of prayer consists in simply looking at God without making any inferences. For those who have the leisure to use it this book will provide a counterpart to the missal, should any be necessary. For others, so long as they do not find fifteen shillings beyond them, the simple presentation of the scriptural story interleaved with a few shrewd practical comments, will be welcome, for, though booksellers' returns since the invention of printing have proved that it is not possible to tell the gospel story better than the evangelists themselves, Mother St. Paul has made a tolerable job of it.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

THE WAY OF PERFECTION. By Saint Teresa. Translated by a Discalced Carmelite. (Sands; 7s. 6d.)

Present circumstances favoured a new translation of the Valladolid text of Saint Teresa's celebrated work, but the opportunity seems to have been partly lost. A close comparison with the text

established by Padre Silverio de Teresa in his edition of the complete works shows that the translation leaves much to be desired. It is in many places inaccurate, in others clumsy, and very often, whilst translating the words, fails to give the sense of the original. Few chapters have not some sentences incorrectly turned: and though one must admit that Saint Teresa, with her sudden changes of subject, her elliptic phrasing and complete absence of logical sequence, is not easy to follow, yet the Stanbrook version is at hand to provide the translator with some guidance. Whilst the competence of the present translator is not in question (since the greater part of the book is satisfactory), one cannot but regret the hasty and amateurish work which disfigures many of its chapters.

HUGH TALBOT, O.CIST.

THE MINISTRY. By W. J. Huxtable. (Independent Press; 2s.)

An adequate exposition of the Congregationalist teaching on the nature and function of the ministry making as clear as possible the idea of a 'non-hierarchic' constitution, a concept so difficult for Catholics and many others to grasp. The ideal set before the minister is a very high one indeed, springing from a fundamental dichotomy between the 'secular' and the 'spiritual,' and depending for its prosecution on his personal efforts alone, for a slack minister ceases to be a minister. This simple outlay of ideas should do something to 'clear the path to the reunion of Christ's Church,' but for this reason it is unfortunate that there is faintly discernible in some passages an undertone of distrust of 'other branches of the Christian Church.'

G.M.

LETTERS OF A HEBREW-CATHOLIC TO MR. ISAACS. By David Goldstein, LL.D. (Radio Replies Press, St. Paul, Minn.; \$2.00.)

This is a series of letters written by a convert Jew to an imaginary opponent. Dr. Goldstein therefore argues on ground of his own choosing, and makes a number of debating-points with enthusiasm. The result is as unsatisfactory as pure controversy always is, and as over-simplified; Dr. Goldstein uses the Bible as a source of ammunition, and with no hint of acquaintance with critical problems, even those exegetical points much in debate, such as the meaning of the word *virgin* in Isaias vii, or the existence of resurrection-doctrine in Job. xix, 26-7; and he appears totally to have missed the importance of the influence upon Judaic religion of the period of the exile.

But one remark should be quoted, sadly: 'judging by the activities of Catholics during the thirty-six years that I have been in the Church, there has been less work done by the Catholic Church to convert Jews than has been done to convert any other group of non-Catholics.'

L.T.