

Meissen, in Eastern Germany, who made so profound an impression on those who heard him at the great Assisi Congress of 1956, gives a moving account of the life of the liturgy under Communist persecution.

Père Dalmais, who is a professor at the Institut Supérieur de Liturgie of Paris, provides in his *Initiation* not only a useful account of liturgical rites and ceremonies, with their history and distribution, but a valuable theology of the Liturgy, seeing in it the meeting of God and man through Jesus Christ and, in consequence, the coming together of men among themselves. This double mystery is indeed that of the Church herself, and Père Dalmais's book is profoundly original essay in the sense that it goes back to the origins of liturgical worship, not simply in terms of texts and terminology but in terms of the mystery of the Church which the Liturgy exists to proclaim.

Mgr Chevrot, for many years parish priest of St François-Xavier in Paris, had a great gift for the popular exposition of the Liturgy; and *Our Mass* consists of thirty-six chapters which cover the Mass step by step, providing historical references as well as straightforward explanations of the words and ceremonies themselves. It will be invaluable to priests who wish—as every priest must surely wish—to preach as it were in depth on the Mass, for Mgr Chevrot combines an acute pastoral sense with much learning.

It is a pleasure to welcome the first issues of *Parole et Mission*, 'a review of missionary theology'.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

THE APPROACH TO PENANCE. By Hubert van Zeller. (Sheed and Ward; 7s. 6d.)

THE APPROACH TO PRAYER. By Hubert van Zeller. (Sheed and Ward; 10s. 6d.)

These two books are marked by the positive and constructive spirit that is typical of all Dom Hubert's writing. Religion is not a technique but a life to be lived that makes a man more of a man while it makes him more godlike. There is more to it than a list of do's and don't's and rules of thumb. All the time we are being led onwards and inwards to see more of human life and what makes a man tick. So the key to penance is love, not techniques. No amount of turning in on ourselves and scratching away at our dominant weakness will alone generate in us the spirit of penance. The first three sentences of the book put us on the right trail. 'People are discouraged from approaching penance because they see it from the wrong angle. They think at once of what they will have to do in the way of disagreeable hardship. If they thought of it as turning wholly to God, which is to see it from the right angle, they would be more ready to pursue its implications.' Again, 'The only kind of penitence which is worth anything is conversion. Not con-

version *from* but conversion *to*.' And so Dom Hubert goes on to show us how penance weaves itself into the very fabric of Christian life. It is not an optional extra, but a thing without which it is impossible to practise any Christian virtue. 'The spiritual life does not require us to become cringing, obsequious, diffident. It requires us to become thoughtful for others, as selfless as possible in our desires and decisions, dependent always upon the grace of God.' There is the heart of penance.

Prayer too is no matter of special techniques and mystical states. It is the climate in which a man's life is lived and the thing which makes a Christian's life fertile and lively. So there is neither good nor bad prayer, there is just prayer. 'The devil alone is incapable of prayer', says St Francis of Sales, 'because he alone is unable to love.' And so prayer is for everyone; it is wrong to imagine that it is only meant for those who have 'advanced' (whatever that may mean) in the spiritual life. It is a condition of living any spiritual life at all.

It is difficult to write briefly of Dom Hubert's work because on every page there is a gem to be quoted. There is also a danger in his work. Both what he says and his way of saying it are so charming and felicitous that it is possible to imagine he is trying to eat his cake and have it, trying to get the best of both worlds. But of course the Christian is the only man who can do that in any true sense. Dom Hubert does give us the best of both worlds, but he never soft-pedals the hardships, difficulties and frustrations. They are all faced in both these books, but because they are faced with courage, we too grow brave and embrace them as a constructive part of the Christian life. These books should be treasured by everyone who wants to enrich his Christian life.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

**THE GREAT SOCIETY.** By Paul Foster, O.P. (Blackfriars Publications; 6s.)

Father Foster's writing has some of the qualities of cinerama; it assaults the reader from all sides. This is more than a trick to lull us into listening; it is the form appropriate to the matter he is discussing. Catholicism, *The Great Society*, invests the whole of our personalities, and our lives are not divided into sacred and profane compartments. Still, we have been told that often enough and are ceasing to listen. So instead of saying it Father Foster does it; he shows us the Church in a dozen places and postures, likely and unlikely. His book begins with four Dominicans eating hors d'oeuvres in a plane over the Alps and ends with a mid-day meal, again eaten by Dominicans, at the Priory of San Clemente in Rome. This is symbolic not only because you see a family, even the family that is the Church, at its truest at a meal, but because you find the Church displaying one after another of her innumerable charismata; modern and medieval, temporal and eternal, in the world and above it, and still for all her changes unchanged. If