

from neurotic introspection, but it is a view which accommodates and indeed demands the Christian conception of sin and evil.

If *The Way to Blessedness* lacks the brilliance and soaring quality of the *Centuries*, this is because Traherne is at great pains to explain in *The Way* what he was content simply to celebrate in the *Centuries*. *The Way* is more loaded with aphorisms, more eager to give advice, though the book is by no means wholly didactic. Traherne writes of the proper end of man's life, of wisdom, virtue, and so on; but, as in the *Centuries*, his prose seems most at ease and completely relaxed when he talks about God rather than about men. Thus in the chapter entitled *Of Magnificence in God*, the reader might almost imagine that he is reading the *Centuries of Meditations*—"The creation of the universe was a great and magnificent work, because the lustre and beauty of the world is a sublime and wonderful gift imparted to millions. The bounty of God in adorning all ages with cities and empires, for the benefit and enjoyment of all the world, is another piece of his royal magnificence. The infusion of a soul so divine and everlasting into the body of a man is an act of love transcendently greater than all the aqueducts and trophies in the world'.

This is the familiar Traherne, the man who can combine, with the utmost ease, the high and the low styles. Grandeur and simplicity are here perfectly mingled. But *The Way to Blessedness* is more sparing of such moments than the *Centuries*; it is a book of instruction primarily but, fortunately for us, Traherne often forgets that he is teaching and is content simply to praise and glorify.

ELIZABETH JENNINGS.

Notices

Burns Oates are to be congratulated on giving us the new German catechism (in English simply called *A Catholic Catechism*) in the form of three paper-back booklets. At its first appearance it was justly acclaimed as a great advance on anything of the kind we have shown any signs of producing in England. The style is intelligible and the theological approach sane, firmly based on Scripture, though there are still major faults, such as the extremely conservative general arrangement, in which moral theology remains out on a limb, under the heading 'life in accordance with God's commandments'. But it deserves to be used wherever young Catholics are struggling to learn the faith, and this new edition will be of real value to schools.

While we are slowly turning the great Jerusalem Bible into English, the indefatigable French continue to turn out thoroughly revised editions of the fascicles. Two valuable recent ones are P. Benoit's *S. Matthieu*, with its fine

general introduction to the synoptic writings (8.40 NF) and the *S. Marc* (4.80 NF) of which he has been responsible for the revision. The publishers are the *Éditions du Cerf*.

The Oxford Press has now reissued R. H. Lightfoot's *Gospel Message of S. Mark* at 6s. in the *Oxford Paperbacks* series, already containing his commentary on St John. These are works of Anglican scholarship at its lucid best.

Collins' Fontana Library now includes Unamuno's classic, if rather dated, *Tragic Sense of Life* (8s. 6d.) and the sayings of *The Desert Fathers*, who never date, in Helen Waddell's well-known translation (7s. 6d.). Burns and Oates' Universe Books provide de Lubac's *Catholicism* (5s.) and Thibon's *Love and Marriage* (3s. 6d.)—both well worth getting. It seems to be part of the new pattern of our lives that we should now buy our books only after they have made their way in the world and come down to the price of a packet of cigarettes or a bottle of wine. Unfortunately the system also gives a new lease of life to books that have quite outlived their usefulness. Such, for example, is Hendrik Van Loon's *Story of the Bible* (Mayflower Books, 5s.). We are not told when the book appeared in its original form (a characteristic of this kind of reprint) but the changes that have occurred in our understanding of scripture away from a fundamentalist approach, ought to be taken account of even in a book intended for children.

St Teresa of Avila's autobiography, in the translation of David Lewis, is the latest addition to Burns and Oates' well produced Orchard Books at 30s. It has a new introduction by Professor Knowles, who writes of the Saint's thought with his accustomed insight.

So little that is of use to the ordinary Catholic has been written about confession that *The Sacrament of Freedom* by John Sheerin, c.s.p. (Geoffrey Chapman, 16s.) is worth a mention. It may help to clear away some of the more obvious difficulties. But in general the theological approach is not sufficiently sensitive to meet the difficulties which thinking laypeople rightly have about the meaning of this sacrament.

L.B.