

to mention the seventy days of Septuagesimal penance). For him the centre of the liturgy is the Resurrection. For him the liturgy takes the sting out of the Cross; it concentrates on glory rather than suffering, on health rather than sickness. Those who have found the centre of their lives here on earth in a joint suffering with Christ on the Cross as expressed in the supreme oblation of Calvary and the Mass will be bewildered unless they realize that the centre he happens to be describing is not of this life, but of the next, where the liturgy will have given place to a unique act of adoration. Such blemishes, however, do not detract from the importance and interest of the book, which should be read by every thoughtful Catholic.

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

THE MASS AND THE LIFE OF PRAYER. By Anthony Thorold. (Sheed and Ward; 3s. 6d.)

THE SPLENDOUR OF THE LITURGY. By Maurice Zundel. (Sheed and Ward; 7s. 6d.)

Sheed & Ward are to be congratulated on providing the liturgical movement with two such fundamental works on the spirit of the Mass. Not only liturgical enthusiasts, but also those who distrust the emphasis on externals in the movement, should read these books, for between them they penetrate to the depths of the mystery that constitutes the central act of the liturgy. At the same time they are designed to give practical help in praying the Mass. Fr. Thorold's little book should be read first, as he intentionally avoids the different views of theologians in order to teach the ordinary Catholic what the Mass is for him and what it demands of him. The act of offering lies at the heart of the whole liturgy, and every Catholic shares in the priesthood of Christ that he may offer those gifts of food and drink that become the Victim of Calvary. The Mass, therefore, is a time for actively offering the sacrifice in its social context rather than for private and individualistic adoration. Fr. Thorold has some excellent things to say about praying the Mass as a preparation for Communion. Perhaps we ought to feel it presumption to communicate outside Mass without necessity, for we thus dispense with the basic preparation instituted by Christ Himself when he gave us our spiritual food in the framework of a sacrificial banquet. Again the author's remarks about the

use of the voice and particularly about the place of plain chant in the Mass are most pertinent.

Yet perhaps Fr. Thorold in shunning 'academical theories' has overlooked some simple profundities that would have unified the two parts of his book and at the same time made it more practical. He has insisted on offering, but does not make it very clear what the faithful are to do at the supreme moment of offering—the actual moment of the sacrifice at the Consecration. Insistence on this act of offering may fall flat unless enlivened with some fundamental notions of what that offering implies for the offerer. When the recipient of the gift is invisible, 'I offer' tends to lack meaning and become an empty formula. Truly we may find suggestions for a more vital conception of this action of the Mass in the second half of the book, where Fr. Thorold gives useful, if somewhat elementary, notions of the life of prayer. But he provides no actual connection between the two parts, and we are left with the feeling that the life of prayer has very little to do with praying the Mass. It is here that we must take up Maurice Zundel's more penetrating book. There we may learn not only how the first steps in prayer are fostered by assistance at the liturgy, but also how we may build on that foundation an edifice of divine love that may touch the clouds of mysticism. The book gives a full and vivid commentary of each separate part of the Mass. Historical and rubrical details are introduced, but always with a view to illustrating the central theme. It is inspired by the sacramental view of the whole of creation centred round the Mass, where Divine Love gathers together all beings in a united offering of surrender to the will of God. The whole universe pivots round the Consecration when the Christian identifies himself with Christ as the Victim and the High Priest and the whole Church joins in the mysteries of the Cross.

Thus Fr. Thorold's excellent introduction requires this other book to fill in the details and to lead to the heart of the mystery. But even the latter cannot take us all the way. It is written in too tense a style. We need an unemotional treatment of the depths of meaning in this identification with Christ as Priest and Victim before we can be introduced to the higher realms of prayer. Despite the many excellencies of these complementary works, the liturgical movement still remains in urgent need of a thorough treatment of the relation between liturgical and contemplative prayer.

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.