

THE BREAD WHICH WE BREAK. By G. D. Yarnold. (O.U.P.; 10s. 6d.)
 THE BREAKING OF BREAD. By John Coventry, S.J. (Harvill Press; 15s.)

Such similar titles advertise very different books on the Christian eucharist. Dr Yarnold is an Anglican and his approach is through biblical theology; Fr Coventry, the English Jesuit provincial, gives the history and meaning of the prayers which form the Roman rite mass. They are both intended for a wide public.

Most of Dr Yarnold's book is very winning indeed. Rather than starting off with the accounts of institution and Johannine teaching, he leads into them by seeking to understand the hieratic language of the epistle to the Hebrews; this order is excellent, and he goes on to conclude the first part of the book with a piecing together of how the eucharist was celebrated in the first few centuries. He places the eucharist in its period of saving history: it 'looks back to the saving act of God in Christ, which culminated in the Passion-Resurrection-Ascension event . . . looks forward to the *parousia*, when the Lord will return in judgment and healing, and will make all things new' (page 77). As in much modern writing on this subject the author is concerned to give the resurrection and ascension their proper value in our Lord's redemptive life, making good a deficiency of much traditional theology; this leads him into his one real error in this part of the book, that of seeing our Lord's sacrifice more in his presentation glorified before his Father's throne than in his death on the cross. It is not unfair to say the author is excellent as far as he goes: his defects are those of omission: the Catholic wants further to know how the immolated and glorious Christ is made present at mass; in a quotation from the same page as before it remains incomplete to say the eucharistic worship of the Church 'draws its meaning here and now from the perfect sacrifice offered eternally by Christ in the heavenly places'. Dr Yarnold doubtless intends an answer to be sought in the sections on real presence and sacrifice towards the end of the book; but there the direction of his interest has changed, and he has inevitably become partisan in discussing the disagreements in the practice of this, the sacrament of unity. His eirenic intentions to seek as much common ground as possible will not satisfy a Catholic, who will not share his appreciation of the unity in diversity of the Church of England, nor his apprehensions about dogmatic definition. Thus there are opinions expressed that would mislead or upset less instructed Catholics, for whom this book cannot be recommended, but others would profit from the author's many perceptive insights. They could not but be moved by his longing for Christian unity. He does not fall into the besetting temptation of ecumenism, that of preferring Christian

fellowship to Christian doctrine (noble as the aim may sound, it prizes love of neighbour above love of God), and wants no doctrinal fences to be rushed. Charity and realism mark his concluding pages. He is prepared for Christian unity to come about in a way he cannot even envisage: at this deepest level men of good will are at one.

Fr Coventry has considerably revised the first edition of his book on the mass which appeared ten years ago. Events outrun their chroniclers, and here the celebrant still gives an absolution before communion and frequently concludes with *Benedicamus Domino*. This is a work of popularization: to quote the author's own words, 'this book unashamedly pilfers the achievements of these scholars (i.e., liturgical scholars) in order to lay the gist of their discoveries, in as simple a form as possible, before the general public'. Such a book was needed, and here it is supplied, practically indispensable for an informed appreciation of the missal.

Three short chapters sketch the outline of low mass, and then the bulk of the book consists of a more detailed commentary. The arrangement could hardly be otherwise, but contrary to the author's misgivings more rather than less reiteration is needed: information on the *Kyrie eleison*, for instance, might be supposed confined to that given in the appropriate place in the commentary, but the realization that nothing is said there about its being in Greek leads one to look for the explanation given earlier on. The neat and orderly account of the *Kyrie* given here is something many scholars still hope to write: this exemplifies how the author's overriding concern for the clearest possible picture prevents readers from suspecting how provisional many of the conclusions are, given our present defective knowledge. The liturgical nymph is notoriously inconstant, and there will be a pressing demand from Fr Coventry's admirers for another edition in a further ten years: how will he then explain why he has so modified a story to tell? Fr Gillick supplies sixty-three photographs in illustration. Technically they are only moderately good; and what they portray is far from ideal, in that the altar, vestments and chalice reflect the inexpressive taste of thirty years back: the scene has much in common with the unfortunate newspaper advertisement that the Catholic Enquiry Centre uses. But worst of all, where is the congregation? Should mass be depicted as a dialogue between celebrant and server?

The introduction on the theory of the mass is more Fr Coventry speaking with his own voice. The reviewer cannot approve the distinction drawn between *real* sacrifice ('the effective submission of a man's heart and mind and will to God') and *ritual* sacrifice: any outward manifestation of submission to God is termed ritual sacrifice, even Christ's death on Calvary. But ritual is surely stereotyped action that

can be indefinitely repeated: Christ's physical death was initiative, the culminating point, the decisive moment of his life of sacrifice, the unique event which assures the inner efficacy of the mass, saving it from being magic or mere wish. The action of the sacrifice of the mass can properly be termed ritual: it is the sacramental sign of Christ's physical sacrifice, imaging it so fully that it is literally re-presented; which men will put into play till the Lord returns with power and glory and fulfils all signs. Fr Coventry goes on to distinguish sacrifice from sacrament in the mass; this is an unhappy disjunction: if the mass is a sacrifice it can only be so sacramentally. One further point: in the course of the commentary Fr Coventry follows his guides in finding considerable fault with some features of the mass, and yet in his introduction he states, 'no great changes are to be expected, nor are they desirable'. Given the torpor of English Catholics would not plain speaking have been better, to prepare them for the considerable revisions that may well lie ahead?

THEODORE TAYLOR, O.P.

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS. By J. H. Ropes. (O.U.P.; 7s. 6d.)

ETHICS AND THE GOSPEL. By T. W. Manson. (S.C.M. Press; 12s. 6d.)

THE FOUR GOSPELS. By Lucien Cerfaux. (Darton, Longman and Todd; The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland; 9s. 6d.)

Here are three slender books from the pens of distinguished scholars, only one of whom is alive today. Mgr Cerfaux stands for what is scholarly and good in the Louvain tradition; J. H. Ropes brilliantly represented the Harvard of twenty-six years ago; and Professor T. W. Manson, in his lifetime, embodied much of what was best in the new testament work done in England.

Let us hope that it is not a barrenness or a vacuum in new testament writing which brought about the reprinting of a work which first appeared in 1934. Admittedly it deserved to be better known, and if some of Professor Ropes' suggestions had been followed up, some of our contemporaries would be less heavily entrenched in the positions which they occupy. It is indeed a pleasure to read these admirable and clear chapters, so full of a certain freshness of manner in looking at our age-old gospels. Professor Ropes wins our sympathy at the outset by stating, 'I shall rather look at each Gospel for itself, as an individual book, the work, not merely of a compiler but of an author in the proper sense who tried to serve his generation with some kind of literary aim' (p. 3). At least we are fully in agreement with this, even if we do not accept all his findings or his way of looking at gospel origins. Yet his foresight and acumen showed him that source criticism was not enough; that possibly Q could be dispensed with, and that