

NOTICES

THE PASSION of our Lord has from time to time been analysed from a scientific angle, and though such an analysis runs a risk of missing the sacramental character of the act of redemption by concentrating on the literal, material fact, it obviously has its part to play in the total picture of what happened on Calvary. Dr Pierre Barbet, the eminent French surgeon, contributes the latest scientific knowledge to this analysis in *THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST* (Clonmore and Reynolds; 16s.). He is able to bring out the intensity of our Lord's physical sufferings in a way that is peculiar to the doctor of medicine; and from his descriptions we are able to learn much of the horror of the Stations of the Cross. But perhaps his most interesting and constructive chapters deal with the archaeology of the Crucifixion and of the Holy Shroud.

FR GEORGE BICHLMAIR, S.J., in his *The Man Jesus* (Mercier; 10s. 6d.) has also submitted the person of our Lord to a special analysis, this time with a view to revealing his masculinity, as opposed to the feminine traits which he feels have been too often emphasized in the popular picture of Christ. Again we have to remember that such a study concentrates only on a part of the whole sacrament of the Incarnation. On its own it would give a false view, but as a precise study of one aspect of Christ's character and work it has its value. The author makes some very wise remarks about the true Christian attitude to sex; but he tends to overstep the mark in drawing such a sharp distinction between Christ as a man and not a woman.

THE PASSION has been treated too from the Scientific Scripture scholar's point of view, and this time in the form of seven Lenten Conferences, by Mgr John M. T. Barton in *THE PHASES OF THE SACRED PASSION* (Sands; 2s. 6d.). In this he is most successful, supplying details not about the physical torments but about the day-to-day happenings as described in the New Testament. There are hints and suggestions in the texts of the Gospels which only the Scripture scholar can detect. So we turn with confidence to Mgr Barton's elaboration of the story of the Passion. He fills in the picture of the passion and death of Christ in a manner that is far more helpful and constructive than the analytical method of the specialized physicist or psychologist.

THE EASTER VIGIL has been presented in French and Latin and commented on by Charles Becker in a very handsome and well-bound volume (*La Nuit Pascale*, Desclée de Brouwer; 54fr. b.). A neat volume like this would be invaluable in English, too.