

the outflow of charity. The supreme example of God's will-to-share in the sufferings of mankind is the Passion of his Son, Jesus Christ, which we must remember to see *sub specie æternitatis* as God sees it. God's willing 'involvement' (an ugly word Fr Vann seems fond of) in human suffering remains, for with him there is neither past nor present. But what do we mean by God's 'will-to-share'? That is the crux of the whole thesis. Using human analogies, Fr Vann points out that sorrow and joy, even with us, are not necessarily successive states but that often they interpenetrate one another: 'the deepest joy is that in which there is the trace of tears', something perhaps of what Virgil was trying to say. Apply this with all the necessary reservations to God, remember, as the early Church did, the suffering of Christ *with* the joy of his Resurrection and glory, and we come to glimpse a possible state, transcending joy and sorrow, where God sees 'the good, which is love, emerging from evil and the evil only in terms of that triumphant good'. These words remind one of St Paul's, 'Death is swallowed up in victory'.

Such is an outline of the thesis, delicately and respectfully handled, and the dangers of sentimentalism firmly avoided. We hope Fr Vann will expand his thesis a little and perhaps re-write it for the many simple and anxious souls who will welcome his doctrine.

J. D. CRICHTON

THE BOOK OF THE LOVER AND THE BELOVED. Translated from the Catalan of Ramon Lull, with an Introductory Essay by E. Allison Peers. (S.P.C.K.; 5s.)

Professor Peers has recast his introduction and translated the treatise afresh from the critical text of the original. The improvements on the first edition of twenty years ago are slight quantitatively but they give light in many passages: in the description of love, 'It is boldness. It is fervour. It is fear', becomes 'Love is the mingling of boldness and fear, that comes through great fervour'; 'each declared his Beloved perfection' becomes 'each one had the Beloved for his precious possession'. In addition the translator now includes the paragraphs from *Blanquerna* which immediately precede the *Book of the Lover and the Beloved* in its original context, and an appendix of additional paragraphs found in certain versions only.

These improvements will help the reader to draw more benefit from this classic, in which Blessed Ramon sets forth 366 short paragraphs for daily meditation. Some of these would take a day to sort out—'Lover and Beloved are so strictly united in the Beloved that they are one actuality in Essence. And Lover and Beloved are actualities distinct, which agree without contrariety or diversity of essence'. Others will bring a happy conviction to the seeker for right order in his spiritual life—'Ninety of these hundred fear Me lest I should condemn them to Hell, and ten love Me that I may grant them Glory; hardly is there one who loves Me for My goodness and nobility'. The objective type of spirituality conveyed in this lament is characteristic of the

book as of the age in which it was written. The scholastic training and interests of the author did not deprive him of the vigorous directness of a Spanish mystic. We look forward to further translations of this attractive writer by Professor Peers. CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

LE BAPTEME, *Fêtes et Saisons*, Special Number (14). (Centre de Pastorale Liturgique, Blackfriars, Oxford; 1s. 6d.)

Anyone who has seen the ordinary issues of *Fêtes et Saisons* will know how attractive and excellent they are. Now the same Centre is publishing a special series on Baptism, the Mass, Marriage, etc., as instruments of the liturgical apostolate.

This, the first number, on Baptism, gives in simple language an explanation of the meaning and the ceremonies of Baptism. Every phase of the baptismal service is illustrated by first-rate photographs which are both accurate and charming.

The compilers say that a former issue on the Mass (now being revised) has been used by many priests in instructing their people. There is no doubt at all that we must nowadays instruct through pictures and use 'active methods' even with adults. We hope that the Church in this country will wake up to the urgency of the matter and begin producing an English *Fêtes et Saisons* and, better still, a series of Catholic documentaries such as are suggested by this French paper that lies before us. Perhaps, even, the C.P.L. could produce a series of silent films which could be used anywhere in the Church by enterprising priests and teachers. J.D.C.

A RETREAT FOR PRIESTS. By Ronald Knox. (Sheed & Ward; 10s. 6d.)

These eighteen conferences for priests, with passages explicitly devoted to the needs of religious, will be eagerly bought by those who have heard them from the author's lips. He remarks with approbation on the transitory nature of any new vision that may be gained in retreat; but if we are not meant to live permanently on the mount of transfiguration, we can still go on pilgrimage to it from time to time, and be helped in doing so by a guide who has helped us before.

But we hope that a far wider public will be taught to appreciate the Priesthood as Mgr Knox appreciates it, and helped by his compassion for the earthen vessels in which that treasure is carried. He knows the stresses to which they are subjected, well discerns their weaknesses of structure, and has the appropriate word of comfort, strength and exhortation for all.

The newcomers to this guidance will find the vision fresh, yet not so new as to be unintelligible. It is rather a new look at very old and familiar possessions, some of which we have got into the habit of not noticing, others of which we have cared for too much. Stories of the Bible, experiences of our youth, thoughts we formed in the seminaries, our common and our private histories, our natural and supernatural inheritances are reviewed and revalued for us. Above all we learn better—and what layman or cleric cannot do with the lesson?—what manner of calling it is to be a Priest. IVO THOMAS, O.P.