

The Dean of Lincoln's small book is a defence and explanation of the way of worship embodied in the Prayer Book, written with the Eirenic intention of commending it to Christians of other allegiances unfamiliar with the Anglican tradition. It is a clear explanation and, presuppositions apart, a very telling apologetic for what Catholics understand by worship.

The Church of England has had experience in the past hundred years of a great liturgical revival, in the course of which many mistakes were made. The lessons taught by those mistakes are being painfully learned today. We Catholics have our own liturgical problems to which our own liturgical movement is drawing attention with increasing urgency. Nothing in this book bears directly on these specifically Catholic problems but there is much in it which has indirect applications. It discusses the nature of worship and in particular of Eucharistic worship in a way almost entirely acceptable to Catholics and from which they may well draw enlightenment. It goes on to treat of the materials of worship; words, music and ceremonial in relation to the Prayer Book offices of morning and evening Prayer and of Holy Communion; the whole, of course, in an Anglican context. Yet in view of much contemporary discussion of liturgical reform among Catholics there are lessons which we ourselves may learn from it. One at least is that in liturgical development there should be no radical change imposed, roughly displacing traditions and habits of worship deeply rooted in the life of the people, but that it should proceed by slow evolution from within, if these deep roots of traditional piety are to be left undisturbed.

HENRY ST JOHN, O.P.

THE COASTS OF THE COUNTRY: An anthology of prayer drawn from the early English spiritual writers: Edited by Clare Kirchberger. (Harvill Press; 15/-.)

It is encouraging to see a further example of the interest which has been reawakened in the writings of the English mystics and there is no doubt that Miss Kirchberger has done most valuable work especially in discovering so much of her material from the original manuscripts. The introduction by Fr Godfrey Anstruther, O.P., emphasises the importance of this study and shows how much still remains to be done in this direction. He gives several indications of the significance of the English mystics. He shows how the pre-Reformation character of their writings recalls a simpler and less self-conscious spirituality and he tells us also that they wrote for people who were already praying liturgically and that what they wrote was intended not as a substitute for the Liturgy but as an enrichment of it. There are some good examples of this in the passage quoted on Liturgical prayer from the 'Chastising of God's Children' with its warnings against saying 'the more hastily and with the less savour their service that they be bound to, for great desire that they have to other

special devotions 'to which they are not bound'; and again from *Ara Dei*, the proper way of hearing Mass with its insistence that those who understand Latin and Scripture should attend 'discreetly and devoutly unto sense literal of the Mass', following at certain times not their own prayers but the words of the priest.

There is the inevitable disadvantage in any anthology of this kind that the extracts quoted are taken out of their context, which means especially in the case of the longer works such as the *Cloud of Unknowing* and the *Scale of Perfection* that the sense of continuity is lacking; and unless the reader is already familiar with these works, he is not brought into touch with the teaching of these writers taken as a whole. As if to compensate for this, the editor has tried the interesting experiment of arranging her selections according to the life of prayer as seen from various angles and according to a certain line of development. It may, however, be questioned how far this scheme has been successful, and whether these divisions do not tend to be somewhat arbitrary in character, giving a certain rigidity of distinction not entirely in accord with what the introduction describes as the 'simpler and less self-conscious spirituality' of these writers. This impression is further confirmed when we read in the editor's foreword that 'the majority of pieces in the first half are not mystical *in any degree*' and that 'a host of spiritual writers appreciated and were content to transmit the spiritual traditions handed down from Patristic times, through the great Benedictine age, even if their personal experience did not attain to the higher degree of prayer.' It is always difficult to judge of what the personal experience of a writer has been, but if he has handed down the traditions of the Fathers and the Benedictine age, it is hardly possible that his writings should not reflect something of the contemplative spirit which inspired those traditions. But even if doubts remain as to the success of this approach, we are bound to be grateful for this work, both as an excellent introduction to the more well known writers for those not familiar with them and for the work of research in new discoveries which should be an incitement to further efforts in this direction.

DOM ODO BROOKE

RIGHT AND WRONG. By Martin Buber, tr. by R. G. Smith. (S.C.M. Press; 6s.)

This is a series of short meditations on five Psalms, in which a modern Jew ponders their meaning in the light of the problems of today. The first, Psalm 12 (Vulg. 11, *Salvum me fac Domine, quoniam defecit sanctus*), represents 'the generation of the lie' as the root of calamity in the world, leading on to the second, Psalm 14 (Vulg. 13, *Dixit insipiens. . . Non est Deus: corrupti sunt. . .*), which emphasises what the author calls 'the Rift' in Israel, 'Israel torn in two' (p. 21). There are 'those who say in their hearts, there is no God. They do not say it aloud . . ., with their