

REVIEWS

THE ROMAN RITUAL in Latin and English. Volume 1: The Sacraments and Processions. Translated and edited with Introduction and Notes by the Reverend Philip T. Weller. (Bruce, Milwaukee; \$8.75.)

It is one of the misfortunes of the modern liturgical revival that the means have sometimes seemed more compelling than the end they serve. Thus it is that a matter of ecclesiastical discipline, such as the extent of the use of a vernacular language, has assumed a false importance, false because secondary. And the *Encyclical Mediator Dei* has clearly indicated what must be the priorities of the liturgical apostolate. An univocal insistence on particular methods of participation in liturgical prayer, for instance, can defeat the primary end of Christian worship, for 'people differ so widely in character, temperament and intelligence that it is impossible for them all to be affected in the same way by the same communal prayers, hymns and sacred actions' (para. 115). What is essential is the recovery of the sense of the Liturgy as—to quote the Pope's words—the public worship which our Redeemer, the Head of the Church, offers to the heavenly Father, and which the community of Christ's faithful pays to its Founder, and through him to the Eternal Father; briefly, it is the whole public worship of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, Head and members' (para. 20).

But with the recovery of the unity of liturgical worship, expressing as it does the unity of the Mystical Body itself, there must go an increasing awareness of the words and gestures in which that worship is—since it is the action of human persons—in fact enshrined. Without prejudice to the possibility of future adaptations, it must be an immediate task to make the existing liturgical practice at least intelligible. And that means translation of the liturgical books in common use. The Missal is already well served (and in England the new *Roman Missal* provides a model of exact translation as well as of worthy book-production—itsself an important matter). The Ritual exists, but only in a modified translation undertaken by the Stanbrook Benedictines (*The Layfolks' Ritual*, unhappily out of print) and also in a Catholic Truth Society publication (*The Layfolks' Sacramentary*) which, however, is far from satisfactory as an English rendering.

The American initiative of producing a translation of the whole of the Roman Ritual in three volumes is therefore to be welcomed, and not least because it is complete. The detailed rubrical directions and introductory chapters of the Ritual may seem only of specialised interest (and their translation will certainly be useful to the specialists most concerned, parish priests), but they are of great importance as an authoritative commentary on the sacred actions themselves.

Father Weller has spared no pains to make his edition up-to-date, and it includes recent decrees of the Roman Congregations, such as that authorising confirmation by delegated priests in case of grave illness. And the 'General Rules for the administration of the Sacraments' provide, perhaps unexpectedly, a reminder that what is sometimes thought to be liturgical innovation has the most respectable justification. 'As the Council of Trent prescribes, the pastor will use the opportunity offered at the administration of the sacraments to explain with diligence their efficacy and use, as well as the signification of the ceremonies, whenever this can conveniently be done, basing the instruction on the teaching of the holy Fathers and on the Roman catechism' (art. 10).

The translation as a whole is clear and idiomatic, though it seems sometimes weakened by lengthy paraphrase. Thus (in the rite of Baptism) *ut templum Dei jam esse possis* is rendered 'that thou mayest deserve henceforth to be known as God's temple', where 'that God may henceforth dwell in thee' would seem sufficient. Again, there is a tendency to use such archaic, or at least unfamiliar, words as 'handwork of God' for *plasma Dei*, or 'sated with the paschal sacraments' for *sacramentis paschalibus satiasti*. But, within the limitations imposed by the retention of such archaisms as the second person singular, the translation preserves a consistently high standard of intelligibility. Less happy is the rendering of some of the rubrics and introductory material. Thus, in the preface to the sacrament of anointing, we have, 'Although it is not *per se* required for salvation by necessity of means'. In other places, too, there is the same bald transliteration of a technical vocabulary which makes so much 'scholastic' writing in English not merely inelegant but incomprehensible to those not in the secret.

Fr Weller provides his own introduction to the sections of the Ritual, and his success here is to be questioned. Often the grammar is faulty, and such a sentence as 'It is certainly made plain from the history of Christianity that the sacraments fare better or worse in respect to how men evaluate them at different times and among different cultures as well as individuals' is only an exceptionally bad example of a general imprecision. Fr Weller has felt obliged to provide an apologetic defence of the sacraments which is not altogether appropriate to an edition of the Ritual, and which in any case cannot be adequately managed within his limited space. But this must not distract attention from the substantial merit of his translation nor from his good intentions in commenting on the sacraments themselves. His remarks about Confirmation, in particular, are valuable, even though his argument gets grounded with such phrases as 'character is the foundation of union and elevation'.

This edition of the Ritual can scarcely become generally available to Catholics, but for priests whose office it is to make the sacra-

ments known for what they are in the economy of Catholic life it should be of the greatest usefulness.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

ISRAEL AND THE ANCIENT WORLD. By Daniel-Rops. (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1949; 16s.)

It is to be hoped that Catholic readers of the Old Testament will grow more numerous. But the Catholic and all readers need guiding lines, a historical framework, and introduction to a library of authors whose lives and activities spread over hundreds of years in very different climes and circumstances. They need too some approach to the mysteries of God's authorship, of God's choice and shepherding, of messianic prophecy, and of the converging of all on Christ. *Israel and the Ancient World* will in part fulfil this role and supply a much-felt need amongst English-speaking Catholics. For chronology and general lay-out our author follows Ricciotti and other competent authorities, marshalling his matter vividly. We would prefer a later date for Abraham, question whether Caiaphas was nephew of Annas, deny that Herod had any Jewish blood in him. Anyway, as a background and introduction for general readers (rather than specialists), M. Daniel-Rops' work is admirable—we can but recommend it.

There is, alas, another side. The translation is readable, but there is a total and woeful lack of adaptation to an English reading public, and there are innumerable gallicisms. What are we to make of 'stratagems in the manner of Dugueschin', 'precise geographical instructions elaborated by the marines of Tyre and Sidon', 'le grand Ferré'? or references to French history and literature, some indeed *recondite*? Names of persons and places are 'in accordance with the Authorised Version of the Holy Scriptures as being most familiar to English readers'—yet the transcription of Semitic names is too often in no recognisably English form. Thus we read 'Michna' for Mishnah (p. 268), 'achera' for Asherah (*passim*), 'aramean' for Aramaic (p. 236), ch for sh (p. 124, note), 'Nauplius'? for Nablus (p. 241), 'Marduck' for Marduk (p. 65). In addition there are gross errors: 'Letter of Aristes' (*passim*) for Letter of Aristeas; 'Epiphany' and 'Epimanus' for Epiphanes and Epimanes (p. 251), 'Azion-Baber' for Eziongeber (p. 169). And, finally, misprints: Phrophets (p. 275), Pégut (p. 236), Asmonian (p. 264), Boaz endormi (p. 132, note), and rough breathings missing in the Greek (p. 264).

These are but a few points among many crying for revision and correction. Altogether a deplorable presentation of what is in itself an admirable book that can do much good.

We can only hope that a drastically revised edition will appear soon.

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