

LITURGY AND LIFE. By Dom Theodore Wesseling, O.S.B.  
(Longmans; 3s. 6d.)

This book may be said to give us something new in the liturgical realm; not in the sense of a newly discovered truth, but an old truth of which we are becoming newly conscious: the underlying doctrine which when assimilated by the Christian becomes the liturgical outlook on life. The importance of this attitude, or at least any explicit analysis of it, has been strangely neglected by some modern liturgical movements. Because of this the liturgy has to great extent remained a thing apart, cut off from the rest of reality; few have related liturgy to sociology, morals, economics; fewer were able to focus a liturgical outlook on the recent crisis.

*Liturgy and Life* seeks to remedy this matter, and does so by virtue of the definition of Liturgy with which it begins: for 'Liturgy is never restricted to the use of the Missal or to one or other rite, but . . . stands for the concrete and practical realisation and expression of our corporate life in the Mystical Body.' Thus the liturgy is based on the Sacraments and sacramentals, and through them, ultimately, on the Incarnation; so it centres round the Mass and Sacraments, but from these reaches out and has effect on all levels of life, conduct and reality. The fact that incorporation in the Mystical Body permeates the whole of man's human existence, and specifies his life and his life's purpose, is the driving force of authentic liturgy. All external forms—chant, rubrics, Latin—only have validity in so far as they further the realization of this outlook on and philosophy of life. Dom Wesseling, therefore, devotes his first chapter to elaborating this definition; he does so with great clarity by showing the meaning of the Incarnation and its effect on humanity. The term Mystical Body is scarcely used, and wisely, for we are not thus misled into thinking the doctrine something queerly mysterious and cut off from life's problems. On the contrary, we are left with a very real impression of the transforming effect of Christ's manhood on mankind, and the urgent necessity of the personal appreciation of this doctrine by Christians.

The second chapter, applying the general doctrine to man's moral and spiritual life, stands out as an example of the happy co-ordination of theology, psychology and history. And the last chapter, where we are shown the more specific application of the liturgy to modern problems, bears eloquent testimony to its real practical value.

It is difficult to resist superlatives in a description of this

book; not because it contains any great new discovery, but because it says what has so long needed saying, and moreover says it well. It is a book to ponder upon, and all who are already engaged on some form of liturgical work would do well to read and dwell on it, for it will throw more light on his work than ever ictuses, neums or collects can. This is but to repeat the author's plea that his book be re-read. He is not aiming at a mere intellectual appreciation, but a full human realisation, emotional as well as intellectual; something of the whole man; and this can only come about by continual and repetitive thought. This that we should become more perfect Christians, for '... we mean indeed to say that Liturgy understood in the sense in which we use the term is integral, unalloyed and uncompromising Christianity.'

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

#### PHILOSOPHY

FROM MORALITY TO RELIGION. By W. G. de Burgh. (Macdonald and Evans; 12s. 6d.)

One's high expectations on opening the 1938 Gifford Lectures are not disappointed. Professor de Burgh resumes, with many amplifications, the theme of *Towards a Religious Philosophy* (*vide* BLACKFRIARS, July, 1937). In the second, third and fourth lectures he deals with the question, so much treated of in recent years, of the right and the good, and certainly deserves thanks for insisting that both action *sub ratione boni* and action motivated by duty must alike be respected and accepted, instead of one of the two being 'explained' out of existence. For all that, however, the scope of action *sub ratione boni* is too much restricted, for not all action, that done for duty's sake included, is allowed to be *sub ratione boni*. Hence it is found 'necessary, at the cost of some violence to accepted usage, to employ the term "ethical" generically, to cover both specific types of action, and (with Kant) to confine the term "moral" to one of those types—*viz.*, to action in the line of duty.' We do not dispute, what it is indeed acute of the author to recognise, that the concept of duty is developed in widely differing degrees in different and, it may be, exceedingly virtuous people; but it is something more than paradoxical to deny the epithet 'moral' to one who acts aright because such action is ordered to the true good for man, and not because he feels it his duty to act so. The fact is rather that whereas all action is for the sake of good, in the case of free agents we have to distinguish between their real and apparent good, or what is good for them