

EXTRACTS

RELIGION IN PAPER-BACKS. Collins the publishers have inaugurated a new venture by re-publishing in paper-backs and shiny picture-covers, certain popular religious works. The attempt is not, however, as new as they may claim, since Sheed and Ward made a courageous effort before the war in their Unicorn series to provide a sort of religious 'Penguin' within reach of the most modest purse. What is new is the shiny cover which we in this country have adopted from America. Now the shy or nervous reader can buy C. S. Lewis's *Screwtape Letters* or his three booklets *Broadcast Talks*, *Christian Behaviour* and *Beyond Personality*, here in a single volume called *Mere Christianity*, for two shillings each and whip them out in train or bus without his neighbour being aware that he is not deep in a Peter Cheyney. The publishers tell us that *Screwtape Letters* has already sold nearly a quarter of a million copies, but they are confident that this cheap and attractive format will entice 'a whole new reading public'. Both these books are worthy of an even wider public than they have already achieved; there are many for instance who are interested in temptation and virtues and vices who would find their lively presentation in *Screwtape* easy reading compared with the stiff books on the subject they put down hurriedly if they ever take them up. To *Mere Christianity* Dr Lewis has contributed a new preface defending his attempt to put forward a 'common Christianity' beyond the realms of the disputes of 'the Churches'. He says for example:

Ever since I became a Christian I have thought that the best, perhaps the only, service I could do for my unbelieving neighbours was to explain and defend the belief that has been common to nearly all Christians at all times. I had more than one reason for thinking this. In the first place, the questions which divide Christians from one another often involve points of high theology or even of ecclesiastical history, which ought never to be treated except by real experts. . . . And secondly, I think we must admit that the discussion of these disputed points has no tendency at all to bring an outsider into the Christian fold.

However dubious we may be in thinking that Christianity can be put forward in an H.C.F. form, it is evident that the new reading public in view is mainly non-Christian. But with a word of warning about the inevitable defects of such a view of a common denominator many a Christian, too, has found and will continue to find illuminating points in this volume too.

(*Screwtape Letters*, and *Mere Christianity*: Fontana Books; Collins; 2s. each.)

THE RATTLE OF ROSARIES. The opening paragraph of the February issue of *The Rosary* (Walker, Hinckley; 4s. 6d. per annum) a lively English religious magazine which is not yet sufficiently well-known, may help those who complain of Rosaries at Mass to complain less:

A complaint came from Wales in 1590 that 'the people do carry their beads openly, and make much a clapping with them in church that a man can scarce hear the minister for the noise thereof; alleging that they can read on their beads as others on their books.' The statement is not only evidence of Welsh dislike of Protestantism even at that comparatively late date; it includes an important assertion about the rosary. It is, according to the mind of those long-ago Welshmen, a source of information, a volume for study. What they thought is in agreement with the mind of the Church.

NEGRO SPIRITUALS have something to teach us within their simple naivety. This is the burden of an article in the March issue of *La Vie Spirituelle*, and it is the second on the subject in recent months. It is time that such simplicity with its popular appeal was considered.

S P O D E H O U S E

Hawkesyard Priory, Rugeley, Staffordshire

(Telephone: Armitage 331)

Holy Week Retreat preached by Fr Illtud Evans, O.P., following the full liturgical ceremonies in the Priory Church, with the Restored Easter Vigil.
6—9 April

'Rhythm in Worship & Life'—The second Music & Religion Week; Lectures by Fr J. D. Crichton, Fr Sebastian Bullough, O.P., Anthony Milner, Wilfrid Mellers, Fr Lawrence Bevenot, O.S.B., etc. Recitals by George Malcolm and Marie Wilson. English Versers composed by Anthony Milner.
12—18 April

'Faith, Morals & Psychiatry'—a weekend on modern Psychology. Speakers include: Fr Thomas Gilby, O.P., Père Plé, O.P., Dr Edward Larkin, Dr Charles Burns.
29 April—2 May

For full particulars of these and other events, write or phone:
THE WARDEN, SPODE HOUSE, RUGELEY, STAFFS
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