

WHAT IS THE MASS? By H. Chéry, O.P. (Blackfriars; 5s. Cloth 7s.6d.)

Père Chéry's book is not the perfect book on the Mass, but it falls little short of a very high standard. In just over a hundred pages the author contrives to say at greater or less length all that we need to know about the centre of the Christian life. The book is divided into four parts: doctrine, history, liturgy, practical methods. Such an amount of material is satisfactorily compressed into so small a space because Père Chéry writes with true perspective, and in each section the less important topics are granted less space. The history of the liturgy provokes books 'bogged down in scholarship'. Père Chéry's historical section is a model of proportion and good sense: for instance, while four pages are devoted to the Mass in the Scriptures, the history of the Church's liturgy in the last four centuries is sketched in succinct sentences such as, 'Some proper prefaces have been added'. Similar balance may be observed in the liturgical section: 'liturgical things' such as altar linen, vestments and colours are put in their places and the bulk of the section is devoted to a study of the form of the Mass. The last section, practical despite excursions into theory, is a lucid explanation of the place of the Mass in the Christian's life. The book has found a worthy translator in Mr Sheppard, a writer who never wastes his readers' time. His own deep sense of the Communion of Saints fills the English version.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

LA MESSE, APPROCHES DU MYSTÈRE. Par A.-M. Roguet, O.P. (Editions du Cerf; Blackfriars; 6s.)

The special importance of the liturgical work sponsored by the *Centre de Pastorale Liturgique* (of which Père Roguet is the director) is that it allies sound theology to a realistic appreciation of the needs of the apostolate. We should in this country be sufficiently familiar with the activities of liturgical publicists to appreciate the value of that sane theological learning without which the liturgical movement can degenerate into an endless pursuit of means unrelated to adequately considered ends. Père Roguet's writing is an excellent example of a theology that lives: and it lives because it is firmly rooted in scriptural and patristic tradition. It can afford to proceed to practical suggestions because it has first established the basic theological truths which liturgical 'action' exists to declare.

In his latest book (in the series *L'Esprit Liturgique*) Père Roguet considers the Mass as a 'mystery', avoiding equally the divergent emphasis of the work of archaeologists and ritualists, the books of 'meditation on the Mass, and, finally, the strictly theological discussions of 'the sacrifice of the Mass'. Such works have their value; but it is partial, it