

BLACKFRIARS

LITURGY

EXTERNALS OF THE LITURGY. THE MASS AND THE LITURGICAL YEAR. (Coldwell; 1/3 each.)

Both these pamphlets, published principally for the Confraternity Study Clubs of Saint Paul, Minnesota, deal in reality with the externals of the liturgy. The first one is concerned with the tangible externals such as church, vestments, and even the religious orders, while the second deals with the external rubrics and gestures of the Mass and their variations throughout the year. Unfortunately neither of them begins with a much needed introduction on the position of these externals in the general plan of the liturgy. It is risky to study a part without first considering its relation to the whole, particularly when that part is, if anything, the least essential. That is to say it is undoubtedly essential, but not of equal importance with the other two parts which make up the liturgy. The three essential elements are graded. Lowest in the scale come the externals, necessary at once to express and to encourage the worship of God by the whole man. Hidden within this shell lies the supernatural reality of union in the Mystical Body of Christ, while at the centre of all is the personal union of the soul with God. All three must play their part in religion and liturgy, and each is liable, and has indeed been subjected, to over-emphasis at the expense of the others. The modern liturgical movement as a whole—dare we suggest it?—tends to emphasize the social aspect of the liturgy in the doctrine of the Mystical Body. In England the movement—again we are conscious of the temerity of generalizations—lays stress on the externals and is linked in most minds with decided non-essentials such as Gregorian Chant and the Gothic style of vestment and architecture. So we may repeat our appeal for Study Club Outlines specially written for this country, dealing primarily with the spiritual realities of the liturgy, and modelled on the shorter type issued by the Liturgical Press (cf. BLACKFRIARS, February, 1937, p. 160), rather than these of St. Paul which are replete with facts but omit almost entirely the important item of the bibliography.

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

MEDITATIONS FOR LENT. From St. Thomas Aquinas. Translated by Philip Hughes. (Sheed & Ward; 2/6.)

St. Thomas, we are told, acquired his knowledge more by the merit of prayer than by human industry, for whenever he wished to study, dispute, read, write or dictate, he would have recourse to prayer that he might discover the divine secrets.

In these meditations, selected by Père Mezard, O.P., and translated by Father Hughes, we have the fruits of this wisdom. Day by day we accompany St. Thomas' thought upon the great truths