

THE NEW LIBRARY OF CATHOLIC KNOWLEDGE, VOLS. 1-6. *Burns and Oates, 15s. each.*

There will eventually be twelve volumes in this series, covering the Bible, the New Testament, the contemporary Church, the organization, teaching and liturgy of the Church, its art and buildings. Contributors to the reviewed volumes include Father Gordon Albion, Aloysius Mullins, O.P., and Robert Nowell, the assistant editor of the *Tablet*. The advisory editors are three Dominicans, all experts in their own fields, a former president of the Catholic Library Association (U.S.A.) and two representatives of the English Catholic Teachers Federation. The result of this formidable array of learning, journalism and teaching experience is delightfully readable. The text is clear, straightforward and easy to read. The illustrations are excellent, particularly the colour plates and the reproductions of old masters and sculpture. The maps are very helpful to a deeper understanding of the historical sequence of Old Testament events ('Preparing the Way' by M. E. Odell) and to Father Gordon Albion's outline of Church history (Volume 3). The photographs of early manuscripts of the gospels add interest to Father Aloysius Mullins' volume on the New

Testament. This also contains analyses of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Apocrypha.

If a volume on saints was necessary to the series it was perhaps a pity that Barbara Lucas (Volume 5) did not extend her section on uncanonized saintly figures. Her accounts of Cornelia Connelly and Blessed Elizabeth Seton are good. The line drawings throughout the series, and particularly in this volume are not up to the standard of the other illustrations.

The series is designed to appeal to all ages, and although one would not expect a child much below fourteen years old to read through consecutively, much younger children have enjoyed selected passages. It is not an encyclopaedia nor a reference book in the accepted sense, but as a general outline of Catholic knowledge it introduces fresh approaches to the subject matter not found in the usual school text-book.

The series should make a useful addition to school and parish libraries and to the family bookshelf.

*Ann Hales-Tooke*

THE NATURE AND USE OF PRAYER by Maurice Nédoncelle, translated by A. Manson. *Burns and Oates, 30s.*

The original title of this book is *Prière humaine prière divine* – a title which gives a very good picture of what the book is about and the actual shape that it takes. It is the author's contention that these two are, structurally as it were, very closely related. He considers it essential to examine what a relationship of prayer between two men can be, before going on to examine prayer addressed to God, for the former throws much light on what is involved in the latter. Here he is very successful, but I think that a deeper understanding of prayer could have been achieved if he had given more attention to those aspects of what is involved in it which are not tied down to *requesting, imploring*, etc. And although he is naturally careful to show how the prayer of man

to God differs from that between men, nevertheless one feels the need for a greater attention to the problem of nature and the supernatural in general for the significance of the similarity to be made clear. But any such consideration was probably excluded by the philosophical technique which the author adopts.

The nature of this technique is well brought out by the English title. It is, however, in danger of giving the immediate impression of indicating what precisely is being offered, which would thus appear to be: *What prayer is, and how to use it* – a prospectus and programme, in somewhat managerial terms. But this is far from the intention; and the stress with which this study is presented as *phenomenological* soon shows that the title