

SPIRITUAL CLASSICS



"The Annunciation from Ustyug": one of the forty-eight magnificent full-page colour plates which form the body of Konrad Onasch's "Russian Icons" (Phaidon, £3.95)

The friendly and fruitful tone between Christian and Jew in *Brother or Lord* (Collins, 50p) may be judged by the following remark of Pinchas Lapide in the course of his dialogue with Hans Küng: "I would say that, for the Jews of my generation, ours is fundamentally a paschal self-understanding. It belongs to Easter, because, for all Jews of our time . . . Auschwitz really means what Good Friday must be for devout Christians: a Golgotha on a national scale. The foundation of the state of Israel, on the other hand, is Easter Sunday. . . ." This is a little booklet packed with interest for participants in Jewish-Christian dialogue.

MR. VANSTONE'S magnificent book, his first, is the product of many years of his thinking, working and praying as a parish priest in the North of England. It is theology that has been lived through, and at considerable cost, before being written, so that to read it is not only an exciting intellectual journey but a spiritual experience of the greatest importance.

Mr. Vanstone immediately takes us deep into his perplexity on beginning his ministry in a new area of corporation housing in an industrial town. He tells how his depressing conviction that all the evidence seemed to indicate that a church was not needed in this new area was transformed into its opposite by his being led to see that the importance of the church lies in something other than its service to, or satisfaction of, the needs of men. For the next twenty years he worked this insight into his daily life and work, and established its trustworthiness until the opportunity came for expounding it in his admirable essay.

He sees the importance of any aspect of reality as residing in the fact that it is in some sense a work of love. Love that is authentic is characterised as unlimited, precarious and vulnerable. This leads him to examine afresh the idea of God's love. The same features characterise God's being as it is expressed in creation and redemption. Traditional consideration of God's love in creation and redemption, however, too often expounds an inauthentic love through insufficient acknowledgement of the fact that the issue of God's love, as triumph or as tragedy, has passed from his hands while God waits on the response of his creation.

That response can be seen as recognition of God's love. In waiting

to be recognised God's love waits upon its own celebration, without which it must be a tragic love. The Church is that by which and in which God's love is celebrated and achieves the triumphant completion of its work as man aspires to make an offering appropriate to his recognition of God's love.

A brief review cannot do justice to Mr. Vanstone's book. It needs, and will clearly be given, extended consideration elsewhere. Its thought is fresh and of the greatest interest; it is

By NEVILLE WARD

theological and practical; it has eloquence and humility. All who read it will be profoundly thankful for it.

★ ★ ★
Prayers from Prison, collection of ten pieces written by Dietrich Bonhoeffer during his imprisonment by the Nazis, is published with a commentary by Johann Christoph Hampe, who is a Lutheran minister and theological journalist.

Included is a poem about Bonhoeffer by W. H. Auden, "Friday's Child," first published in his collection "Homage to Clio." The poem is enigmatic and skilful, unlike those of Bonhoeffer, who was not much of a poet; but its austere mood of question and suggestion is a significant conclusion to the book.

All except one of Bonhoeffer's poems have already appeared in the enlarged edition of "Letters and Papers from Prison," published by SCM Press, and are familiar to English readers. They are meditations rather than poems, the prayers of an extraordinary Christian in dreadful circumstances.

It is the candour of the writer and the grim situation from which he

LOVE'S ENDEAVOUR, LOVE'S EXPENSE: The Response of Being to the Love of God. By W. H. Vanstone. (Darton, Longman and Todd, £2.95)

PRAYERS FROM PRISON. By Dietrich Bonhoeffer. (Collins, £2.50)

NEWMAN'S SPIRITUAL THEMES. By C. S. Dessain. (Veritas Publications, Dublin, £1.80)

writes that make them important and powerful, for he is unselfconsciously himself. Bonhoeffer saw suffering as something to be accepted as part of the burden of God and as necessarily involved in one's being human, and he saw it this way from within extreme experience of it.

He has become for a whole generation an image of the heroic Christian, in the great tradition of those who confronted a hostile world with God in their hearts. Such examples sometimes daunt rather than inspire, but it becomes clear that there was a major task of working through the despair and resentment following his arrest to the freedom of acceptance in which he met death. In this light his experience loses remoteness and speaks to everyone.

The commentary, which forms two-thirds of the book, relates the poems to Bonhoeffer's life and other writings. It is interesting and helpful, and will make readers wish to learn more of Bonhoeffer's spirituality—especially his attitude to joy and sorrow as coming indistinguishable from God's hand and finding their meaning in God's use of them for blessing.

To read this book is to see how the use made of Bonhoeffer in the

debate about religionless Christianity sprang from a superficial understanding of Bonhoeffer's mind. In its profound simplicity and assurance it may well take its place among the classical texts of Christian prayer.

★ ★ ★
Fr. Dessain's work as one of the leading authorities on Newman is well known. He had prepared these chapters, on the main themes of Newman's writing as they affect the Christian life, for a retreat he was to give to the Oratory of France; but he died a week before he was to deliver them.

The book forms an excellent introduction to Newman's teaching for the general reader. An introductory chapter sketches Newman's life and work. There follows discussion of his conviction of the place of personal influence in the communication of religious truth, his understanding of the Incarnation, the Holy Spirit and the Communion of Saints, and his almost obsessional sense of the holiness of God. These themes, with many subsidiary ones, are appropriately illustrated by extensive quotation—so much so that the book is virtually an anthology of passages from Newman's major works.

Newman himself is not quite the vivid and warm presence that has never lost its power to fascinate; but Fr. Dessain's purpose, to present the principal themes which Newman's absolutely committed mind continually pondered, is lucidly achieved.

Specialists and scholars, and indeed anyone interested in medieval and Renaissance treasures, will welcome *Books of Hours and their Owners*, by John Harthan (Thames and Hudson, £10.50). Mr. Harthan begins with a study of the background to Books of Hours—the personal prayer books of a devout society—and follows it up with an anthology of over ninety manuscript pages superbly reproduced in full colour. This book is a veritable treasury.

BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS 1977

We do it for Jesus

Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity
E LE JOLY

Mother Teresa once wrote: "People misunderstand us: they take us for what we are not". This is why she asked Fr Le Joly (who was for twenty years spiritual director of her Order) to write the first inside account of the real Mother Teresa and the spirituality which is the basis of her Order, the Missionaries of Charity.

£2.95 net

A Taste of Heaven

Adventures in Food and Faith
LIONEL BLUE AND JUNE ROSE

An amusing, informative and instructive account of a journey through the kitchens of Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and other faiths. Many unusual and delicious recipes.

£1.95 net

Education, Nihilism and Survival

DAVID HOLBROOK

David Holbrook argues that, in order to replace the implicit nihilism that is being taught today, there is an urgent need for fundamental revolution in our philosophy of life.

£3.00 net

She Died, She Lives

The story of Maria Orsola

GEORGE FRANCIS

The remarkable life and diary of a schoolgirl who lived by the gospel, and died at the age of fifteen.

£1.95 net

Darton Longman & Todd

89 Lillie Road, London SW6 1UD

Dictionary of Medical Ethics

Edited by

A. S. DUNCAN, G. R. DUNSTAN,
R. B. WELBOURN

Executive Editor, J. A. Rivers

116 eminent contributors

'This 336-page volume with 116 contributors reflects nothing short of glory on the publishers who have had the courage to produce it in paperback at a relatively inexpensive price; on the doctors and moral philosophers whose discussions in recent years are here summed up; and on the general practitioners and medical students for whom the book is primarily intended.' *Church Times*

'... this pioneer work of providing orderly and intelligible information is of immediate value.' *The Times*

£4.95 net

The Two Dantes

KENELM FOSTER OP

This book, written by one of the world's leading Dante scholars, examines diverse aspects of Dante's genius. It is concerned with humanism and religion, in a way apposite to our contemporary problems, and discusses the relationship between Dante's religious vision and his attachment to the graeco-roman world of Virgil and Aristotle.

£7.00 net

The JB Choir Psalter

A really New Translation for singing in the Church

The words, pointed for singing to the chants contained in the First Chant Book.

60p net Desk Edition £1.75 net

The JB Choir Psalter:

First Chant Book

Sixty-five original chants; mainly for four parts but including some which may be sung in unison; giving a choice of chant for every Psalm.

50p net

Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense

The Response of Being to the Love of God

W. H. VANSTONE

An analysis of human love which leads us to an apprehension of God's love. The foreword is by H. A. Williams who says "It is I believe a masterpiece and will become a classic . . ."

£2.95 net

This Promise is for You

Spiritual Renewal of the Charismatic Movement

DAVID PARRY OSB

An introduction to the charismatic renewal movement, providing also a scheme of fifty days of meditations, prayer and spiritual renewal.

£1.95 net

The Hermitage Within

Spirituality of the Desert

A MONK

Written for those who want to find spiritual values and yet live and work in the modern world.

£1.95 net