

Reviews

LET US PRAY. A Book of Prayers for use in Families, Schools and Fellowships, prepared by the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Oxford University Press, 1959, 95 pp., 8s. 6d.

Most ministers have had great difficulty in finding a suitable modern collection of prayers to recommend to those who have asked them for devotional material for use with the family in the home. Family worship has tended to have an indelibly Victorian stamp upon it, and most of the available material has been of that kind. This alone assures an appreciative welcome for this excellent book of prayers for use in families, schools and fellowships.

It is interesting and significant that the Oxford University Press is publishing *Let us Pray*, for the General Assembly's present committee, just a century after the appearance, in 1859, of *Prayers for Social and Family Worship*, the first of the modern books of prayers produced by an Assembly Committee. Since the 1859 book, the attempted compilations to aid family worship have been much less successful than the various books designed to serve the public worship of the Church. Accordingly, *Let us Pray*, so well adapted for home use today, is sure of a most appreciative reception, and, one hopes, of the widest use. A possible criticism of the Family Prayers is that perhaps too much of the intercessory prayer is concerned with the world at large, and too little with the narrower and more intimate spheres where the members of any household are engaged day by day.

When the Church is on the eve of celebrating the Fourth Centenary of the Reformation, that spiritual renewal of our nation under John Knox which gave so important a place to education and the parish school, it is relevant and fitting that *Let us Pray* should contain such suitable material for use in connection with schools. The sources of the daily School Prayers represent a very catholic background and a large sweep of history, while the intercessions in the larger forms of service seem particularly relevant to the life of the

schoolboy or schoolgirl. One would hope that the set End of Term services before Christmas and Easter attain widespread and regular use. Employed by ministers, these services should help to raise the liturgical standard of school services generally, particularly those held in parish churches. It is especially timely that this book becomes available almost simultaneously with the *Scottish School Hymnary*.

This salute to the outlook and intention of the Scottish Reformers is further expressed in the Form and Order of Service provided for the Dedication of a School. This is just the kind of thing which should help the National Church to recover some of its lost territory in Scotland. Another welcome form is that for the Hallowing of a House with a variable given for use when the house is a manse.

It is more than possible that the third section of the book containing Prayers for Christian Fellowships, including Epilogues, will achieve the widest use. Material for use in Youth Fellowship Epilogues and at camps and conferences is constantly being sought, and here is adequate provision for this need. Some people may be a little dissatisfied with the adaptation of Compline which is presented as "An Order for Evening Prayer", since traditional services are usually best retained in their unaltered original forms.

This book of prayers, beautifully printed and produced, will be of great use both to ministers and Church members, and it should contribute towards a truer sense of orderly worship, and to a more prayerful and devotional outlook within the Church.

R. STUART LOUDEN

SCOTTISH SCHOOL HYMNARY. Oxford University Press, 1959, 132 pp., 3s.

In compiling this selection (words only) of psalms, paraphrases and hymns for use in schools, the Church Hymnary Trustees have done a most valuable service to the religious nurture of the young. In their task they have had the co-operation of the Scottish Joint Committee on Religious Education, and also other interested committees of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

There are 14 psalms, 6 paraphrases, and 94 hymns, with suitable tunes noted. The book is clearly printed, in good type, and attractively bound. It is assured of a wide circulation.