

# RELIGIOUS BOOKS



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ONE INDICATION OF THE VITALITY OF CATALAN RELIGIOUS LITERATURE IS THE CONSTANT EMERGENCE OF WORKS BY NATIONAL AUTHORS IN ESTABLISHED COLLECTIONS AND THE CREATION OF A NEW COLLECTION, «CLÀSSICS DEL CRISTIANISME», ONE OF THE MOST FERTILE INITIATIVES OF RECENT TIMES.

JOAN LLOPIS DOCTOR IN THEOLOGY

One of the most fertile initiatives of recent times as regards the publication of religious books in Catalan has been the creation of the collection «Clàssics del Cristianisme», which began to come out at the end of 1988 and has so far released twelve of the eighty titles it intends to publish over about ten years. This collection is the result of collaboration between the Faculty of Theology of Catalonia and the Fundació Enciclopèdia Catalana, with the technical co-operation of Edicions Proa, in Barcelona. The director is Sebastià Janeras and it receives specialist advice from Joan Bada, Jaume Fàbregas, Evangelista Vilanova and Josep Vives.

The aim of the collection is to offer the Catalan public the most important writings from the Christian literature of all periods and traditions, both from the oldest, which is common to all confessions, and those which are most characteristic of the Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant branches. The books it includes are not aimed only at specialists in religious matters, but are intended for a broader public, as these are writers and books that form part of our general cultural baggage. As well as the Catalan translation by a specialist, directly from the original texts, each volume offers introductions, explanatory notes and chronological and bibliographic tables, without in any way detracting from—quite the contrary—the collection's educational nature.

These are the titles and authors of the twelve volumes published to date: *Escrits*, by Francesc i Clara d'Assís; *Relats sincers d'un pelegrí al seu pare espiritual*, by an anonymous Russian of the 19th century; *Senzillesa de la vida cristiana* and *Darrera meditació*, by Jeroni Savonarola; *El pòrtic del misteri de la segona virtut*, by Charles Péguy, *Exposició de la predicació apostòlica*, by Ireneu de Lió, and *Sobre la Pasqua*, by Melitó de Sardes; *Sobre el baptisme i altres escrits*, by Tertul·lià; *Apologia «pro vita sua»*, by John Henry Newman; *Tractats i Sermons*, by Thomas Müntzer; *Confessions*, by Agustí D'Hipona; *La consideració*, by Bernat de Claravall; *Les cinc plagues de la santa Església*, by Antonio Rosmini, and *Discursos teològics*, by Gregori de Nazians.

Another indication of the present healthy situation of Catalan religious books is the completion of a monumental work, *Història de la teologia cristia-*



na, by the Montserrat friar and teacher at the Faculty of Theology of Catalonia, Evangelista Vilanova. The three volumes of the work, jointly published by the Faculty of Theology and Editorial Herder, in Barcelona, have appeared regularly over five years (1984-1989) and present an overall view of the development of Christian theological thinking from its beginnings down to our own

day. Although the author does not pretend to be doing a job of research at first-hand into every period or every author, he skilfully summarises the results of investigations by the most significant historians and presents them to the reader in an easily assimilable, interesting and pleasing form, showing a clear preference for anything that liberates theology from taboos and repressions, dogmas and authoritarianism, and converts it to a mature, adult expression of the rationality of the believer. Also, each volume has had the collaboration of a specialist in a particular subject: the first volume includes an outstanding piece of work by Pius-Ramon Tragan on Biblical theology; the second, an extensive chapter on the theology of the Protestant Reformation, by Lluís Duch, and the third, various chapters by Josep Hereu on the philosophical systems of the modern age, which show up the profound implications of what we could call «profane» philosophical reflection for the theological thinking of the last centuries. It is important to remember that this *Història de la teologia cristiana*, written from Catalonia, aims at diffusion beyond the Catalan context; the first two volumes have already appeared in Castilian translation and various versions in other languages are now being prepared. Another indication of the vitality of Catalan religious literature is the constant appearance of works by national authors in already established collections, such as «Sauri», of Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, and «Els Daus» or «Horitzons», of Editorial Claret, in Barcelona.

I must also mention two books published on occasion of the celebration of Catalonia's millenary: *Sants de Catalunya*, a joint work sponsored by the Comissió Eclesial del Mil·lenari and published by Alta Fulla, and *Homilies d'Organyà*, a facsimile edition of the first document written in Catalan, produced by the Fundació Revista de Catalunya, with critical notes by Joan Coromines and modern Catalan transcription by Jordi Bruguera. Finally, the Institució Bíblica Evangèlica de Catalunya, to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of its foundation, has published the facsimile edition of *Lo Nou Testament*, a Catalan translation by Josep Melcior Prat, first published in 1832, during the build-up to the explosion of the Catalan *Renaixença*. ●