

Bultmann. The author's own argument, though somewhat diffuse and repetitious in presentation, is intensely interesting, and one would like to see him develop it at greater length.

JOSEPH BOURKE, O.P.

A CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. By G. A. F. Knight. (S.C.M. Press; 30s.)

This book is an attempt to recreate, by careful examination of the sacred text, the living experience of the nation of Israel in its relations with God progressively revealing himself; and to present Israel's own divinely inspired interpretation of that experience. The author considers this the only way to do justice to the theology of the old testament, for 'the moment we seek to tabulate and systematize that living experience . . . its reality will grow cold and dead to our touch' (p. 19). The author is not a Catholic and he does not seem to be familiar with Catholic works on the subject; he is no doubt here revealing his own reactions to the 'scientific' treatment of the inspired books by 'scholars who may not necessarily be committed to a Christian obedience' (p. 7). He insists that the old testament is the word of God to the Church, and that St Augustine's principle '*credo ut intelligam*' must be followed by all who hope to understand it.

The author also seeks to discover what the old testament has to say to the twentieth century in the light of the Christian revelation as a whole. He does not view the old testament as merely preparing for the new; he sees them rather as parallel, though successive, events in the working out of the divine plan of redemption. In both testaments God reveals to us his redemptive activity in and through the Son. In the old testament this 'son' is the nation of Israel (Exodus iv, 22, etc.). God dealt with Israel in the same way, and to the same purpose, as he dealt with his divine Son. "In Israel" God did not succeed in redeeming the world. It remained for him to act "in Christ" in order finally to draw all men to himself' (p. 8). And we may expect these dealings to be paralleled again in his relations with the Christian Church, body of the divine Son, and with the individual Christian. 'The story of Israel is the story of "me" writ large' (p. 215).

It is perhaps a consequence of the author's 'experiential' method that the reasoning employed is often intuitional rather than logical; one is often left wondering whether a particular conclusion really follows from the premisses given. That is not to say that it is necessarily false. Presumably we must have had the same 'experience' before we can be in a position to judge; we cannot but gain in biblical understanding if we make the effort to acquire this. If we find even then that we cannot agree with an interpretation, it will not be a bad thing to have been

forced to scrutinize more carefully interpretations previously taken for granted.

There is nothing in the book to which a Catholic need take exception, though a reader unacquainted with current biblical theory may well see error where there is none. Thus, on pages 71 and 197, the author interprets the 'sons of God' of Genesis vi as angels. This does not mean that he thinks the angels capable of sexual functions; careful study of pages 127-8 should make clear to such a reader the theory which makes the interpretation acceptable. The text commented upon is the authorized version, but this is corrected where necessary. No use is made of the deuterocanonical books which the author, as a Protestant, thinks apocryphal. Even this point, however, is stated quite inoffensively (p. 213).

There is an occasional slip, as when the great eighth-century prophets are described as '*virtually* monotheists' (p. 26; italics mine), and when the author quotes Isaias xlii, 8: 'My glory will I not give to another', he comments: 'i.e. to another people, *not* to another god; and certainly not to a graven image' (p. 289). The synonymous parallelism of the verse, one would think, sufficiently refutes this contention.

One is also surprised to find a modern scholar adhering as closely as does the author to Welhausen's unfounded application of evolutionary theory to the religion of Israel. There is no evidence that this latter was ever henotheistic, and it is surely going too far to maintain that temple prostitutes (Deut. xxiii, 17-18) were considered by orthodox Yahwism at any period as 'holy unto the Lord' (p. 91).

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THE LIVES OF ANGE DE JOYEUSE AND BENET CANFIELD. By Jacques Brousse; edited from Robert Rockwood's 1623 translation by Anthony Birrell. (Sheed and Ward; 18s.)

A FLORENTINE PORTRAIT. By D. B. Wyndham Lewis. (Sheed and Ward; 12s. 6d.)

If one is not to be irritated by Mr Birrell's book one has to remember that the object of all historical writing, until a relatively short time ago, was never simply to inform but almost always to persuade. (Whether the modern historian is always the impartial arbiter of the past is doubted by some sceptics.) Facts which helped the case could be introduced at intervals; nothing adverse would be mentioned except as an Aunt Sally.

This gave to historical figures a curious and not really credible flatness, portraits without perspective. The good were incredibly good and the bad depressingly consistent in their evil doing. Lives of the saints, written for edification, suffered greatly from these disadvantages.