

The translation is uneven. An extraordinary piece of nonsense is attributed to P. Schutz on p. 93. One is left to guess what the main verb might have been.

Schökel's book was also written some years ago, the original Spanish being published in 1959—notwithstanding some contrary assumptions in the blurb on the back page. Schökel's main purpose is to put ordinary readers' minds at rest about the doings of modern biblical scholars. Many things assumed by scholars are well-nigh scandal to the Catholic public at large (p. 8). The public is inculpable but totally wrong in its attitude. Without censure the author sets out to induce a change of mind. He plays out the rope, admitting that the critical methods of modern scholars were developed by rationalists in one century and sceptics in another. Even so, two of the pioneers, Astruc and Richard Simon, were Roman Catholics. The official hostility meted out to them, especially Simon who was by any standards a remarkable man, is shown to be blindly destructive (pp. 58ff). The reader's sympathy is skilfully aroused. There are the same earnest scholars around nowadays who are in the same danger of being misunderstood. Fortunately they now have a green light in their favour, by reason of *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943), which 'opens up a new age' (p. 47). This encyclical not only defends but encourages the use of all the critical methods in biblical study. Schökel proceeds to show that

this is not a belated sell-out to the rationalists but a great step forward. He takes up interesting examples from the Old Testament to show how archaeology, textual criticism and literary genre open up a new field of understanding. Schökel wisely agrees with G. Ernest Wright that the ultimate aim of all scholarship of whatever denomination 'must not be "proof", but truth' (p. 87). I do not know what Loretz would make of a statement like this, but as Schökel has elsewhere criticized him (*Biblica* 1965) I suppose that Schökel means 'truth' in the commonly accepted sense as the opposite of falsehood.

The value of this attractive little book is further enhanced by a highly readable translation and a preface by J. A. Fitzmyer. The tone is one of honourable persuasion which should prove attractive even to those already persuaded. Alas, there are those who are neither persuaded nor honourable, as Schökel himself has good reason to know. He presented opinions similar to those in this book and in the same non-combative spirit to the Italian public in 1960 in his article *Dove va l'esegesi cattolica*. It sparked off a violent and notorious controversy. There is a bitter irony in Schökel's words 'the improved technical preparation has brought with it confidence and serenity, the necessary climate for worthwhile study' (p. 52). He little knew what a storm of Lateran horns he was going to stir up by his peaceful endeavours.

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COVENANT AND CREATION, by Piet Schoonenberg, S.J. *Sheed and Ward*, London and Sydney, 1968. 210 pp. 35s.

Dr Schoonenberg's book, the publishers admit, is a 'transitional' work charting 'one theologian's progress from a primarily speculative to a biblical-historical view of Christianity'.

There is an American university library which has bought the future contents of Robert Graves' waste-paper baskets. The librarian hopes to form a collection which will allow readers to comprehend the workings of the poet's mind. Those who have enjoyed Mr Graves' writing will doubtless in the centuries to come applaud the librarian's forethought. So also, in the future, men may be grateful for the publisher's preserving these 'foul papers'. But not now.

Now we have not time enough for observing Dr Schoonenberg's deployment of *Denzinger* and *Humani Generis*, nor even for his modest contribution to that difficult business of *le surnaturel*, and there are others who with greater

expertise can tell us what the Old Testament is about. With greater expertise and greater clarity. Cardinal Alfrink once remarked that 'what, in other countries, is thought and talked about privately is printed with us'. Private talk and public print have different manners. What will pass with a wink and a nod, what will communicate with a wave of the hand, seems sometimes intolerably dull and stodgy in a book.

Dr Schoonenberg presents his old dogmatics about God, Creation, Nature and Grace, and Jesus's Miracles with some confidence. He consistently employs the magisterial plural, and even so 'we' get quite wrong the significance of 'Let us make man in our image'.

He who would learn the best of what is going on in speculative theology had better stick with Fr Karl Rahner.

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