

still current in other circles) of dividing the Middle Ages from the Renaissance. The various formulae in which this prejudice has from time to time found expression are here shown to be inadequate: the mythical figures of 'Medieval man' and 'Renaissance man' can be seen to merge in the men and women of their time as soon as we look at them closely enough to see them as they really were. That M. Gilson has achieved this in this case, at least in the main lines of his presentation, will hardly be doubted by readers of this book.

A.M.

**KERYGMA AND MYTH: a Theological Debate.** Edited by Hans Werner Bartsch, translated by R. H. Fuller. (S.P.C.K.; 22s. 6d.)

The debate is over the 'demythologizing' of the New Testament, or rather of the 'kerygma', 'the oral preaching which lies behind our gospels', the oral preaching which for these Lutheran theologians is a sacramental event, since in it man encounters God (p. 115). If, as Bultmann contends, opening this volume as he opened the battle with his essay 'New Testament and Mythology', myth has entered not only into the expression but into the essence of the kerygma, myth from Jewish and Gnostic sources which no preacher or theologian can ask intelligent modern man to accept, it must be got rid of, not by rejection as the older Liberal Protestants did, but by interpretation. The weakness of Bultmann's thesis is that no satisfactory criterion is given of what is in fact mythological; at one point it seems to include everything except the language of personal relationship, which, as Dr Farrer points out in the last essay 'An English Appreciation', Bultmann seems to suggest we may use 'literally, as near as makes no difference'. The meaning and role of myth are discussed by other contributors with much interest. As for interpretation, this again is a source of controversy, not so much because Bultmann has chosen existentialist philosophy as an instrument of interpretation, but that interpreting the kerygma 'existentially' has led him to find an ally in Heidegger and laid him open to the charge of reducing the kerygma to a philosophy. A Catholic will echo the words of another contributor, F. K. Schumann, 'the crux of the matter is always: from what source is the interpretation derived' (p. 176, footnote), and will suggest that the Church and her theologians are already aware of the problem; as when, for example, St Thomas devotes two Questions to the effects of the Passion, that 'hotch-potch of sacrificial and juridical analogies' (Bultmann, p. 35), and demythologizes them as far as they can be. The problem is in fact very much a live one for Catholics and much in this volume is relevant and interesting.

BENET WEATHERHEAD, O.P.