

REVIEWS

THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. Vol. II.
By Jules Lebreton, S.J.; translated from the French. (Burns
Oates; 10/6.)

HERDERS BIBELKOMMENTAR: Die heilige Schrift für das Leben
erklärt. Band VI: DIE PSALMEN, erklärt von Edmund Kalt
(linen, RM. 7.80; half-leather, RM. 9.60). Band XI.
I. Hälfte: DAS EVANGELIUM DES HL. MATTHAEUS UND DES
HL. MARKUS, erklärt von Willibald Lauck (linen, RM. 7.20;
half-leather, RM. 9.60). (Freiburg i.B.: Herder.)

It is presumably unnecessary to do more for the first of these books than to remark that it is a serviceable rendering of the original. For it is generally acknowledged and was widely advertised in reviews recently when Vol. I of this book appeared that Père Lebreton's Gospel Commentary (for such it is rather than a *Life*) is one of the soundest and most generally useful that we have.

The German books belong to a series which is steadily progressing, assisted by strong episcopal patronage, towards the formation of a complete biblical commentary. There is no occasion for comparison of French and German here. They are engaged at different stages of operations. The purpose of the German undertaking is not to impart scientific information, not to provide the processes of knowledge, but with the hidden help of scholarship to present the Scriptures in such a way that their divine teaching may be immediately entered into, appreciatively, "fruitionally." Unless study is at each progressive stage fulfilled by contemplation, that is by an enjoyment of, a resting in the truth already won, it turns to vanity and weariness of spirit. So it is that for want of more books like these from Germany the Scriptures tend to become something of a burden to us. What we are given, then, is not so much means to an understanding of Scripture and never simply pious glosses decorative of the margins, but (as far as this is humanly feasible) the Scriptures themselves. It may be true that not all that is valuable in recent scholarship has been assimilated. But synthesis must always be somewhat in arrears.

One protest must be made, however. The author of the commentary on the Psalms in the course of defending the character of the comminatory Psalms—having there in mind no doubt the anti-Semite comminations of the Nazis—makes two very unfortunate remarks about the nature of biblical inspiration: first,

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in giving the impression that the theory is a tenable one which would make the inspiration of certain psalms to mean no more than the fact of their having been canonized by the Church—whereas this is in defiance of the teaching of the Vatican Council. And then secondly, in declaring the contents, the doctrine of certain psalms to be alone inspired, the human author being exclusively responsible for their outward expression (. . . die Form ist ausschliesslich das Werk des Dichters)—a disastrously retrogressive theory.

RICHARD KEHOE, O.P.

CONTEMPORARY GERMAN PHILOSOPHY. By Werner Brock. (Cambridge University Press; 6/-.)

Dr. Brock is one of those Germans who have been driven from their country by the present *régime*; formerly he was a Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Freiburg im Breisgau. This book contains the substance of three lectures delivered at the invitation of London University. According to the author, German philosophy since Hegel has been chiefly concerned with the problem of defining the real task of philosophy. He is here aiming at no more than an Introduction to contemporary German thought, not a complete survey of it, and so he deliberately omits some few philosophical movements.

There are three chapters. The first shows the general background; the Humanism which had inspired the classical German philosophies and the emergence of new sciences, especially historical and "humanistic." Hegelianism and indeed all speculative idealism was rejected, and two tendencies showed themselves: to restrict philosophy to the search for a world-view synthesizing the results of science, or alternatively to concentrate on problems of the possibility of knowledge, and the principles and methods presupposed and not investigated by the sciences. In illustration of this he gives short accounts of Husserl's method of Phenomenological analysis, of Dilthey's historical attempts at a "philosophy of philosophy," and of Weber's reflexions upon the relations between the social sciences and the values of human life. Each of these three, in his own specialized way, went beyond the limits of mere epistemology or mere "science of the sciences."

The second chapter deals with the influence of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard. To the former may be traced the modern tendency to take a fundamental phenomenon such as "Life" as a standpoint from which to tackle philosophical problems, to the latter the concentration on "Existenz," the effective attitude of a human individual towards himself as a whole.

Coming in the third chapter to philosophers of the present day, and giving little more than a mention to those he considers as continuing academic tradition—though even here the tendencies