

There are some delightful tit-bits put as quotations at the beginnings of chapters. The one from the 'Thinker's Library' is a gem, and is followed by a gentle exposition of its folly in the chapter 'The Crafty Exegete and the Beginning of Genesis.' And the asides are pleasant, especially when dealing with literary forms; there is the story of the M.P.'s metaphor of the snail which does not imply that his opponent has horns and a shell; there is that gay translation of St Thomas (p. 70) saying that even if the moon is actually smaller than some of the stars, it at least looks bigger, and the delightful parable about the man who missed the key signature and so got the piece all wrong, to explain how one must understand the literary form before understanding the passage (p. 42).

It is a pity that the quotations do not always let us see what version was used. Sometimes the author acknowledges Knox or the Westminster, but usually it is the Douay, though sometimes probably his own neat *tourmure*.

These essays originally appeared in the *Catholic Gazette*, but the other day there was one in the same journal on St Matthew, and maybe the author will publish a New Testament volume. One wonders if he will think of as good a title. This present volume should certainly help people to get to know and love the Old Testament.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

LA LECTURE CHRÉTIENNE DE LA BIBLE. By Dom Celestine Charlier. (Maredsous, Belgium, 1951; 3rd edition.)

'There are many text-books, as *Introductio Generalis* to the Bible. Some are more valuable than others. Many do not go beyond a conducted tour of the Sacred Text, dealing with the various problems as they arise. This is an important task, but there is more to be done. I would even say that these books show us the way round, but hardly show us the way in. Of course your book tells us about biblical codices, dates of composition and authorship of the books, the historical and the geographical background . . . ; but it goes further: it takes us right into this "garden enclosed", it explores for us its avenues, shows us its riches, discovers for us its very soul. Even the learned reader finds that it opens up new vistas for him.'

Thus the Bishop of Strasbourg, Mgr Weber, in his preface to this volume. The first chapter of the book, dealing with the attitude to the Bible in recent centuries, has been adapted (with the author's approval) to form an article in the present number of this review. That chapter serves to focus the importance of the Scriptures. What is perhaps the

central chapter of the book is entitled *Le Message du Verbe*, where the many threads of the biblical revelation in the Old Testament, historical, religious, legal, ethnographical, prophetic, sapiential and directly messianic, are brought into a unity in Christ. This chapter is suitably preceded by a study of the usual problems, linguistic, chronological, etc., briefly but adequately explained, with particular prominence given to the modern question of 'literary forms'. The later chapters deal effectively with questions of inspiration and inerrancy, and the meeting points of Scripture and archaeology, history and science. The relation of Scripture and Tradition is discussed in the section *La Bible et la Foi*; and a whole chapter is devoted to the senses of Scripture and its interpretation. The importance, though not the primacy, of symbolism is underlined, and attention is called to the present-day study of biblical theology. Good advice is given on the reading of the Bible; five ways are suggested: liturgical, discursive (as a book), meditative, doctrinal, and finally simply prayerful. These are not, of course, mutually exclusive, but should on the contrary be simultaneous.

The above remarks, taken together with the article, will show the value of this book. If the pedagogic sections are perhaps brief, they are sufficient to support the argument, and what is so stimulating throughout the work is the representation of the enormous and vital importance to the Christian world of a return to the holy Word of God.

There is no index, but since the 350 pages are divided into only ten chapters, each with many divisions which are all listed in the contents-page, with a full analysis at the beginning of each chapter, reference is not too difficult. A fourth edition, considerably extended, and including bibliographies and an analytical table, is about to appear. It seems also that an English translation is in preparation. I am indebted to the author for these last two welcome items of information.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

MAN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. By Walther Eichrodt (S.C.M. Press; 6s.)

ESSAI SUR LE MIDRASH D'HABACUC. By M. Delcor (Editions du Cerf; n.p.)

These two quite recent books, one by a Swiss Protestant, the other by a French Catholic, can be considered together. Eichrodt, here in a most readable translation, deals with that Old Testament view of man of which the influence has been so incalculably great. His book should be bought and studied. He finds, as the foundation, man's individual responsibility and unconditional obligation towards a transcendent God, which in Israel's case is reinforced by God's covenant with his chosen people. The Old Testament is seen as the record of the struggle