

Without the massive documentation that usually supports his profound scholarship, the author has ventured to present in more popular style 'the central message of the New Testament' with a delicate regard for its characteristic unity and diversity. But this is far from being a popular work in the superficial sense that would offer nothing more than a least common denominator of critical views. The reader familiar with the very specific positions for which Jeremias is known to the world of New Testament scholarship will recognize his hand on almost every page. And the reader less familiar with him will find no better way to make the acquaintance of one of the leading and most stimulating biblical interpreters of the day.

The first essay evaluates what is uniquely revelatory in Jesus' proclamation of the fatherhood of God by studying the title 'Abba' in relation to the meagre Old Testament and later Jewish allusions to God as Father. Secondly the author brings his personal exegetical insights to bear upon the sacrificial interpretation of Jesus'

death, with special reference to the Servant Christology which he has long defended as authentic not only in the early Church but in the message of Jesus himself. Thirdly he turns to the developed theology of St Paul to analyse afresh the difficult concept of justification by faith. The Catholic reader whose notion of Protestant interpretation on this theme is of the readily-answered, made-to-order-adversary type will have much to learn from this very nuanced presentation. The final essay learnedly treats a key to the particular Christology of the Fourth Gospel, the Prologue and its Logos concept.

It is impossible to do more than list the subjects here; merely to have compassed them intelligibly in such a brief volume is a feat. It must be read and re-read, for the hand of a master is at work in it. And in the bargain, the book is very attractively bound and beautifully printed – a distinguished addition to anyone's religious library.

George MacRae, S.J.

MAN AND WIFE IN SCRIPTURE by Pierre Grelot, translated by Rosaleen Brennan. *Burns and Oates (Compass Books), 10s 6d.*

The fault of much scriptural theology is that it is too bookish; the need of accurate scholarship keeps the exegete's eyes so fastened to the text that he tends to forget the experience out of which the biblical author is writing, an experience of the existential reality of fallen man and the embodiment of God's deliverance in matter and history. This book does not fall into the trap. The scholarship is there, but without pretentiousness, used to illuminate the minds and experience of the biblical writer in such a way as to shed further light on the experience of marriage and sexuality in our own times.

The author begins with a section which contrasts the basic data of ancient Near Eastern paganism and of the new religion of Israel. In the myth and ritual of the former, marriage is fragmented into institution, passion and procreation; in the latter, despite the knowledge of failure and tragedy, we glimpse the beginnings of the re-integration of these three fragmented

aspects. The second section traces the development of the consciousness of a new ideal through the Old Testament; here the salient point, emerging from a comparison of the way the Biblical writers treat human marriage and the way in which the prophets use marriage as an allegory of the love of God and Israel, is that the ideal glimpsed can only be realized in a new covenant. The third section, the New Testament, deals with the proleptic realization of this covenant in the union of Christ and the Church, the fact that makes possible the ideal of marriage while at the same time providing the true interpretation of Christian celibacy and virginity. But this outline hardly does justice to the honesty, good sense and inspiring quality of the book.

On two points it would have been interesting to hear more from the author. First, he mentions often enough the ambivalence of Woman vis-à-vis Man (roughly speaking Wife or Seductress), but there is nothing, perhaps because there is

nothing in the patriarchal-minded scriptures, about the ambivalence of Man vis-à-vis Woman (Master? Lover? Partner?). Secondly, he dismisses without enough discussion the disappearance of sexuality in the resurrection state – 'in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven' (Mt 22, 30). True, but the context indicates that the emphasis is on procreation of which there is no further need, and surely leaves

open the question of the physical and psychological distinction of the sexes.

It is a pity that the scriptural references have been given in the Douai version and the scriptural quotations in Knoxese. The translation for the most part is happy, though the translator might have found a better way of expressing 'Protoplasts, on p. 125, and must, I think, have misused the sense of footnote 13 on p. 101.

Benet Weatherhead, O.P.

BUDDHIST DEVOTION AND MEDITATION by Pe Maung Tin. *S.P.C.K., 21s.*

Those who know Hinayana Buddhism only from the early Pali texts, which no doubt come nearest to the Buddha's original teaching, will find this little book extremely refreshing. The early texts, though the note of joy and triumph is never absent, often strike one as austere, with their emphasis of the pain of this world, the need for moral effort and the negative character of Nirvana as the 'extinction' of becoming, this book gives quite a different impression. It is a collection of texts of modern Burmese devotion, which, though partly based on early texts, is filled with quite a different spirit. Here the basic theme is devotion to the Buddha as well as to the Dhamma (the Law) and the Sangha (the Order). It has a warmth and beauty which are most touching. The Buddha is praised as the 'saint, supremely enlightened, proficient in knowledge and conduct, well-farer, world-knower, peerless driver of men to be tamed, teacher of spirits and men, the Buddha, the Blessed One'. Even more striking is the insistence on the compassion of the Buddha, which is usually associated rather with

Māhāyana Buddhism. Thus it is said: 'What man can fail to love the Blessed One, Him who loves the unlovable, Who has compassion on all, Who gives happiness to all?'

The author of this book is a Burmese Christian and there is a Foreword by the Bishop of Rangoon, but he has not made any attempt to relate this Buddhist devotion to Christianity. He has been content to make an 'objective' study setting out this devotion in its simple beauty and this is certainly of value, as our first task is to get to know and understand the prayer-life of other religions. Yet one would have welcomed some attempt to show the relation of Christianity to this devotional Buddhism.

The last part of the book, which is much shorter, contains a summary of Buddhist methods of meditation. This covers much more familiar ground and does not add anything to what may be found, for instance, in Nyapnaponika Thera's *Heart of Buddhist Meditation*.

Bede Griffiths

THE KINGDOM OF GOD TODAY by Otto Karrer. *Herder-Nelson, 28s.*

The most notable thing about this collection of essays is its eirenic mood; it would be difficult to imagine Fr Karrer losing his temper with anybody. Whether he is writing on the relationship between the Church and other world religions, on the ministerial and general priesthood, on 'The Image of Mary' or 'The Reunion of Christians', he maintains a completely imperturbable serenity.

There is, however, the danger that the eirenic can deteriorate into the soporific. Those people for whom all theological things German are automatically suspect (and such people do exist) will not have their suspicions allayed by his failure to grapple satisfactorily with many of the problems he raises. It could be argued that such problems cannot be dealt with in depth in what