

means of a very deep knowledge of the sacred writings, and the messages are presented in a fresh light. The choice of the chapter-titles alone must have called for much reflection: God with us (for Moses), Conscience and Reason (for Samuel and Elijah), Mercy (for Amos), Love (for Hosea), The Eternal in the Temporal (for Isaiah), God and the Individual (for Jeremiah), and God and the Nations (for 'Deutero-Isaiah', or, as he calls him, 'The Poet-Prophet').

It is a pleasant duty to thank Dr Elmslie for the very many valuable ideas in his book, the shortcomings of which from the point of view of the Catholic reader are due to his necessarily different theological approach and to the fact of his having drawn almost exclusively upon the literature of the critical school of yesterday and today. One notices with particular pleasure his Cambridge *pietas* towards that eminent scholar Professor S. A. Cook. It is good that the University Press has published this latest document of Old Testament scholarship in Cambridge.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

IALOGUE DE L'HOMME ET DE DIEU. By Chanoine Jacques Leclercq. (Casterman; 63 francs belges.)

When a professor abandons the outward evidences of learning and refuses to quote a single authority, one may expect something unusual and startling. Canon Leclercq does not disappoint us in these almost lyrical reflections: the professor of morals is evidently behind the work, but only because he sees so much more penetratingly than others the wonder of virtue and the utter stupidity of being bad. And when he does condemn evil he goes straight for the fundamentals and is particularly severe on self-deception. The chapter on society is especially powerful: without any illusions about the possibilities of a Utopia, he yet shows the appalling gulf between man's attainments and his capacity. Complacency is not the worst hindrance to a solution of the social problem, but it is the only hindrance: in fact, the problem is insoluble; if it were, we could expect a community of saints. 'The danger to the Church in our day is no longer in brutal corruption but in the naturalism which empties it of all that which is properly Christian.' Saints thrive on persecution, but not amidst casual worldliness.

EDWARD QUINN.

THE REVISION OF THE PSALTER: An Essay in Liturgical Reform.

By Harold Riley. (S.P.C.K., 1948; 8s. 6d.)

To appreciate the present work it is necessary to have some knowledge of the history of the English Psalter in use in the Anglican Church. In 1535 Miles Coverdale, a former Austin Friar, produced a translation of the Holy Scriptures, based not directly on the original text, but on Latin and German Protestant versions. His Psalter, revised meanwhile by himself, was adopted for the Book of Common Prayer of 1549 and that of 1552, which, though

changes were made at the accession of Elizabeth and at the Stuart Restoration, is substantially that still in use. Coverdale was at least as great a master of English as was Cranmer himself, and his version of the Psalms is among the classics. It became familiar to the majority of Englishmen before the end of the sixteenth century; and, by long use, gained such a hold on their affections that neither the more faithful Authorised Version of 1611, nor the scholarly but somewhat pedantic Revised Version of 1884, was able to displace it. Its shortcomings, however, as a rendering of the Hebrew, have long been recognised. In recent times attempts have been made at its revision, while leaving it substantially unspoiled; and Mr Riley's is the latest of these. His aim has been to combine the beauty of the prayer book version with the accuracy of the Revised. He considers that small, hardly noticeable, changes in language are justified by small gains in accuracy; but greater changes, only by greater and more significant gains. His principles are excellent, a model for liturgical revisers. That he has always succeeded in attaining the maximum increase of faithfulness and clarity with the least loss of the original felicity is open to question; but there is no doubt that for Anglicans he has carried out a useful task; and it is clear he would be the last to claim finality for what he has done. In passing, it is interesting to learn that his rendering forms the basis for that used in studio broadcasts by the B.B.C. Besides revising the text, Mr Riley has suggested certain rearrangements in the assignment of Psalms, both in the ordinary course (a monthly one in the Church of England) and for Sundays and other special days. The details of his system are hardly of interest to Catholics. In general, it has in view the putting an end, in the limited field of Psalmody, to the prevailing anarchy of Anglican worship. On the whole this suggested scheme represents a return towards Western Catholic tradition: the use of the Psalter in its integrity, and of a fixed number of Psalms or divisions of Psalms at each Office; as against the limited and selective use common of late years among liberal Anglicans.

DOM J. HIGGENS

EUCCHARISTIC CONSECRATION IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH. By G. A. Michell. (S.P.C.K.; 2s. 6d.)

This pamphlet of thirty-four pages is addressed primarily to the expert in liturgical origins, and therefore will not be readily understood by the reader who is not already familiar with the main lines of the subject. Indeed to such a one it might prove a misleading guide. Before approaching the study of early liturgical formulæ it is essential to have an extensive knowledge of the religious beliefs of those who used them: more, of the varying moods of religious feeling in a period and in lands so far removed from us. Otherwise there is grave danger of misinterpreting words wrested from the context of their authors' meaning as expressed in their