

simple devotional quarterly magazine? To turn to St Paul or the Gospels after an hour with this book is like moving out into the country from the oppressive heat of a big city. Apart from a few passing allusions there is very little on Christ the living Person of the Gospels, and the essays on the Sacred Heart give the impression of talking about a heart and not about a man. Significantly enough there is not a word anywhere about preaching. Given the circumstances and the occasion for the writing of the individual essays it would be unfair to criticize them too severely, but one cannot praise the decision to present them in the form of a book. It is the sort of book that 'busy pastors' tend to misuse.

MURDOCH SCOTT, O.P.

THE GOSPEL PRIESTHOOD. By Dom Hubert van Zeller. (Burns and Oates; 10s. 6d.)

This book is a collection of twelve monthly articles from *Emmanuel* of 1954 and so is loosely hung on the high points of the liturgical year. They are intended as reflections on various aspects of the priest's life on the parish and point the attitude of mind with which the priest must approach them. That is good—for it is useless to attack the surface symptoms and not rather the attitude that produces them. Dom Hubert is always stimulating and he calls these articles 'jabs from the short sword' to awaken the conscience, but sometimes one feels the jabs may produce only flesh-wounds, for there is a curious remoteness about it—very different from such a book as *Vessel of Clay* or *A Man Approved*.

It certainly cannot be due to lack of imagination, for the author's other books show he has plenty of that. Perhaps it is due to lack of context, not sufficiently down to earth. There is no mention of the loneliness of the secular priest's life, the burden of finance and form-filling, discouragement from leakage, stupidity of others and consciousness of one's own limitations. His spiritual advice is sound but lacks punch. And even today when book prices have soared, ten-and-six seems rather a large sum for a slight book of scarcely a hundred pages.

BRUNO DONOVAN, O.S.B.

THE NEW MAN. By Ronald Gregor Smith. (S.C.M. Press; 10s. 6d.)

This book, which bears the sub-title, *Christianity and Man's Coming of Age*, consists of five lectures originally given in Australia. At the beginning of his first lecture the author tells us that on the groundwork of a study of the biblical teaching about the main content of the religion of Israel he is attempting to present a view of the christian understanding of man in history.

This 'main content of the religion of Israel' is, for the author, the belief in the transcendent God as encountered in the actual history of this people. In the N.T. and the early Church this belief continues and is indeed intensified through the supreme moment of encounter in Christ. Later, with the development of the medieval Church the sense of history is smothered under the all-pervading metaphysicizing of the time. The Renaissance is seen as essentially a recovery of the sense of history, of the Hebrew idea of this-worldliness. True, one aspect of that great coming of age, the Reform, did not sufficiently free itself from the medieval metaphysical trend, while the other, humanism, deviated into a closed self-sufficient autonomy of man, the implicit transcendence of the original impulse 'tending to give way before a naïve immanentism'. But the original impulse is there ready to be developed and fulfilled in the present age.

Such a bald summary as this is, of course, an inadequate description of this book; but it should at least give an indication of the line of argument. The author is not at pains to disguise his likes and dislikes. Catholicism, Barthianism, fundamentalism, liberalism, modern biblical theology and the present trend of the ecumenical movement are each in turn found wanting. 'The Church', says the author, 'cannot stand over the world with a whip nor can it get behind it with a load of dynamite. The whip and the dynamite, where available, would be better used upon itself.' And he is ready enough in this book to perform this service for the Church, his whips and high-explosives being mainly drawn from such writers as Bultmann and Bonhoeffer.

It is the last-named who is singled out from the 'many'—mainly contemporary German—writers to whom Mr Gregor Smith is so much indebted for these lectures; and indeed most of the last chapter consists of a commentary on a few intuitions of this Lutheran pastor executed so tragically near the moment of deliverance in a Nazi prison. Nevertheless the main intellectual influence behind this book is the more fully-formulated position of Bultmann. *Entmythologisierung* is the author's method of choice in bringing the new man who came of age so long ago somewhat belatedly into the full enjoyment of his inheritance. One wonders. Bultmann, he says, has traversed the gulf between conventional christianity and unchurched modern man, but the traversal has been solitary. One is not surprised. The fact is that this particular theological movement is fast developing into an arid existentialist scholasticism much more incomprehensible to the modern non-christian mind than anything from the Middle Ages. Through the attempt to rid the *kerygma* of what is called Myth, it is the Word that suffers. And by entering so thoroughly into the closed non-sacramental universe of modern man and so completely at the latter's level of

experience, it is perhaps paradoxical, but also little wonder, that these *dernier cri* parsons, so frantically almost hysterically set on deparsonizing themselves, should appear to the secular mind only more futilely 'parsonical' than ever. *The New Man* is indeed an eloquent book; but one is left wondering: Eloquent precisely of *what*?

RONALD TORBET, O.P.

OTHERWORLDLINESS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT. By Amos N. Wilder.
(S.C.M. Press; 7s. 6d.)

The theme of this book is that the resistance of the modern world to the Christian message may be traced to a misjudgment on the part of Christians themselves as to the precise nature of the otherworldliness of their religion. 'We all realize', the author writes, 'that the Scriptures and the Christian faith have their crowning glory in that they relate us to God, admit us to the life eternal even here, and answer questions that have to do with Alpha and Omega. If to believe these things is to be otherworldly and escapist, we plead guilty. But we also know that the Gospel has taken on many distorted forms of otherworldliness. We can well generalize and say that the one great and telling accusation made against the Christian religion in our modern period is . . . that it evades responsibility for the problems of our life in this world. Here indeed our faith is really vulnerable.' Christianity, in fact, must be 'incarnational'.

Much that Dr Wilder has to say is of importance, but his book suffers from ranging rather wide. It might have been better if he had stuck closer to his title and give us a more thorough-going examination of the biblical data, instead of spending so much of his space discussing in rather secondary and not very illuminating terms the situation of modern man and the trends in recent protestant thought. In this way we might have had a more objective account of Christian otherworldliness. As it is, so much zeal against one distortion has rather led him to distortion in the opposite sense.

RONALD TORBET, O.P.

ST BERNADETTE. By Henri Petitot, O.P. (Trans. from the French.)
(Mercier Press; 3s. 6d.)

For those who have the courage to face the fact that they are not using the means at their disposal in everyday life to practise holiness, this book will prove very helpful. It is an abbreviated portrayal of the life of St Bernadette, unspoilt by religious sentiment, which often carries the reader to the heights and leaves him with a transient admiration for the unobtainable. As Petitot says, in bringing his narrative to an end, Bernadette lived the thirteen years of her convent life with-