

## *Blackfriars*

THE CATHOLIC STUDENT'S AIDS TO THE BIBLE, Vol. II. A critical Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament. Pp. 517. By Fr. Hugh Pope, O.P. (Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 7/6.)

Criticism of this work is not a little disarmed in the case of the present reviewer. Biblical study is a thorny subject, and the courage, to say nothing of the hard labour, required to compress into one small volume a special introduction to all the books of the Old Testament cannot but compel our admiration. A work of this kind in English was certainly needed, and there are not many who possess one very necessary qualification for the task which we find in Fr. Pope and miss in so many of the modern biblical critics; we mean the qualification of a very thorough and first-hand acquaintance with the Bible itself. There is no substitute for that: in biblical study, more than in any other, books about books are a hindrance rather than a help. The Bible is the best introduction to the Bible, as Fr. Pope would be the first to confess, though he gives us formidable—and, in our opinion, sometimes unnecessary—bibliographical lists. In his introduction he confesses that he 'has often felt tempted ruthlessly to excise passages'; we wish he had yielded to the temptation, particularly in the matter of long quotations from the liberal and rationalistic critics. We are left with the impression that at times he has shown us the objection without sufficiently showing us the answer. Not that we take it amiss that in such a short space he has been unable to knock down all the dummies set up by the higher critics. Would it, indeed, be worth while, considering the nature and purpose of this book? The chief purpose is no other, surely, than to lead the Catholic student to read the Bible intelligently for himself; and there is no other way to that than by the acquisition of the linguistic, historical, topographical and ethnological apparatus which goes by the name of the Historical Method. Since we may suppose the Catholic student to possess Catholic common-sense, it is scarcely necessary to add that intelligent reading of the Bible means reading under the direction of that accumulated wisdom of the past which we call Catholic tradition. Hence the copious extracts from Jerome, Augustine and Aquinas enhance the value of this book of Introduction. In the matter of lesser details it is regrettable that more attention was not given to a revision of the text in order to remove the numerous orthographical errors, in Hebrew and Greek words, in German titles of books, and at times in the English where omissions and faulty punctua-

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tion sometimes make reading difficult. On p. 223 notes 2 and 3 seem to be inverted; on p. 399 Saint Jerome is credited with saying that Amos was *imperatus sermone*; and on p. 58 the Torrent of Egypt seems to be referred to the Nile. But surely there is no room for doubt that it is the name of the Wady El Arish!

R.G.

UN ANIMATEUR DE LA JEUNESSE AU XIII<sup>e</sup> SIECLE. (Desclée, Paris; 20 francs).

Marguerite Aron gives us a most attractive life of Blessed Jordan of Saxony, the immediate successor of St. Dominic in the headship of the Friars Preachers. An introduction by Père Mandonnet guarantees the historical value of the book: but it is a real life without any parade of historical research, though the reader will very soon notice how much research has preceded this smooth-running biography. We must confess that the arguments marshalled by Marguerite Aron have convinced us that the imaginative picture of Jordan we had formed for ourselves was altogether at fault. We had thought of him as a youthful recruit, promoted surprisingly to the mastership of the Order at a very early age. It seemed improbable and therefore a tribute to his character. Madame Aron shows us that such a youthful Master General never was. By her dating of the various incidents of his life, we find him identified with Jordan Nemorarius the mathematician (as Nicholas Trivet had already identified him) and a famous professor in the Paris arts schools. Presumably his lecturing on mathematics gave him so much vogue amongst the 'articians' that when he became a Master of Theology at forty his influence over the youth of Paris was supreme. This explains his marvellous influence over the young men of the Universities where he preached and explains too how easily they followed him into the Dominican order. He must have been forty years old when he received the habit from the hands of Reginald of Orleans. From that moment he held a foremost place in the ranks of his brethren. With his friend Henry of Marbourg as his first recruit he began his preaching. It was founded on the style of Henry himself, which the early Dominicans looked upon as the best model for the particular purpose the Order then adopted. Most charmingly interwoven into the narrative, from the point of view of the small literary remains of Jordan left us, Marguerite Aron has given us some of those fifty letters written by Jordan to Diana d'Andolo, from immediately after his election to the mastership