

HISTORY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. By Paul Heinisch. (The Liturgical Press, St John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota.)

The ordinary Christian who discovers for himself the fascination of Old Testament history does not want jejune accounts of stories that are much more excitingly told in the Scriptures themselves, but he may very well feel the need of a companion volume which will help him to get a general view of text and context, to sort out dates, genealogies, and geographical details, and to guide him to more specialised studies of particular points of interest. For this purpose Dr Heinisch's volume is the best we have so far received from a Catholic publisher. It covers the ground briefly and simply, giving in each section summaries of the views of different scholars, assessing their value, and relating the books to their cultural and religious background. The bibliography, necessarily an important feature, has wisely not confined itself to Catholic writers, but gives a genuinely representative cross-section of the available literature, its weakness in this respect being the great preponderance of studies in foreign languages. The section on the Flood, for instance, does not list a single article in English, a fact which must to some extent limit its usefulness for the general reader. One may well ask why the technique of the admirable little decorative map on page 354 was not more widely used in other parts of the book, which is amply illustrated with symbolic pictures in a style familiar to readers of *Worship*. A short commentary on these is provided at the end and serves to draw together some of the Old Testament typology. As compositions the drawings are occasionally not very unified, but others are extremely successful and give the book a most refreshing appearance. We do not raise here our one serious doubt which is how far it is wise to endeavour to isolate Old Testament theology in a separate volume.

A.S.

FRED OF OXFORD. The Memoirs of Fred Bickerton. (Evans Bros; 18s.)

There are times when even the most stalwart need to warm themselves by the company of a reassuring personality, and in the case of Fred Bickerton, until recently Head Porter of University College, there can be no question of the personality or the reassurance. He has named his memoirs from the fact that, years ago, a parcel addressed simply to 'Fred of Oxford' reached him quite safely, and the incident speaks for itself. Undoubtedly those who had personal contact with Fred during his more than fifty years of service at the college will derive most pleasure from this book, for at times the glow of genuine enthusiasm, with which the whole thing is lit, has to do duty for a more direct communication. What does, however, come across vividly is the joy of a lifetime spent in work that always implied personal relationships, where class and status were only the incidentals. Its loyalties were never abstract, yet neither were they indiscriminating. The engaging chapter on Masters of University College contains the