

religions. These jewels will be carefully cleansed from the dust and exposed to the brilliant light of the Gospel. And it implies, in the second place, peeling off from Catholicism her Graeco-Roman skin and straining the dregs of Western culture from it."

I think one ought to distinguish here. The European inheritance in philosophy is one thing, its inheritance in literature and the rest of the arts is another; and much needless confusion has been caused by the humanist supposition that Graeco-Roman civilisation is a homogeneous whole in which Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes, Cicero, Horace and Dante are all in one line and stand for the same thing. The tradition of metaphysical thought which leads from Plato to St. Thomas is a permanent possession, though Plato and St. Thomas both learned from the East in their time and I think their successors should learn from it anew. But in other matters, Graeco-Roman habits of mind have been a narrowing and anti-intellectual influence, fostering views and attitudes which Plato, for instance, despised and condemned. And here the assimilation of Eastern thought should mean not only a deepening grasp on truth but the discarding of provincialism and error.

This position doubtless needs elaboration, but I have time for no more than two examples (mine, not Father Straelen's). Even so great a man as Allò is taken aback by metaphors in the Apocalypse which do not conform to Graeco-Roman rhetoric and by such symbolism as that of the seven eyes and seven horns of the Lamb. But to an oriental the metaphors and symbolism are convincing and illuminating.

In discussing the natural virtues, it is often gratuitously assumed that anything unattained by Greeks and Romans must *a fortiori* be unattained by other non-Christians. Thus it is said that natural reason might in theory recognise humility as a virtue; but that since Aristotle did not, it is obvious that no non-Christian in practice would. Yet in the *Kuan Tzu Book* we read: "Men all make for the high places; water alone makes for the low. This is its humility; and humility is the very house of the Tao, the very instrument of true kingliness, so that the true king makes it his capital."

WALTER SHEWRING.

BACK TO THE BIBLE. By Cuthbert Lattey, S.J. (Burns Oates; 5s.).

Fr. Lattey's recent book will prove a very useful work of biblical apologetics. He draws our attention to four important principles. First, we are not committed to believe in verbal inspiration. Secondly Pius X wrote, a propos of recent research in biblical matters, "the attitude of those is not to be approved who dare not break in any respect with the biblical exegesis in vogue up till yesterday, even when, without prejudice to the faith, wise progress in studies invites them to do so." Thirdly, we are reminded that the principle of compenetration is an important key to a number of passages especially in the Old Testament. And lastly, many of the so-called 'errors' in the Bible are not 'formal' error.

The apologetic scope of this book is best seen in connection with this last principle concerning formal error. The following is a fairly representative list of important alternatives to formal error, all of which alternatives are explained and used in the course of this book. Thus, ignorance in itself does not imply formal error, as when St. Paul did not know whether he was in or out of the body in his ecstasies. Similarly, poetic, allegoric, and apocalyptic forms of language must be interpreted according to their own laws and not according to the laws of prose. Nor is writing under an assumed name an error in formal sense, so we need not worry that Wisdom was not written by Solomon. Nor should the presence of historical fiction in the Bible confuse us, even if we find that what before we thought was pure history is better interpreted as 'Midash', or fiction under the literary form of history.

Nor is there formal error when bad or imperfect morality is related in the Bible, because such morality was not being taught. In spite of this distinction, however, problems in this matter remain; as for instance the problem of the sacrifice of Isaac, Jacob's lie, the imprecatory psalms, to mention a few. Fr. Lattey mentions these and others, but does not attempt to deal with them as being outside the scope of an introductory work of this kind. I think that if these points had been attempted, even at the expense of the first two chapters of the book, the nature of the book as a whole would have been more homogeneous. That is to say: the fact that no formal error can be found in these admittedly difficult matters is a better proof of the revelation of the Bible than the *a priori* proofs of chapter two which will only appeal to those who have the faith.

DANIEL WOOLGAR, O.P.

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