

On page 156 the authors Pollard and Maitland whom Moorman quotes in his discussion of benefit of clergy, do not seem to have appreciated the easily discoverable fact that if offending clerics escaped the heavy hand of the civil law for serious crimes, they could not hope to escape the severe penalties of the clerical code. Episcopal and monastic prisons enjoyed no good reputation. In the following century, in the year 1396, a Dominican Provincial, Thomas Palmer was denounced for his severity to recalcitrant friars to the General of the Order, who reports in his register that the horror of the dungeons had driven some to suicide. (Reg. Raymundi de Capua, Rome 1936, under *Anglia*.)

Other debatable points will doubtless catch the eye of the careful reader, nevertheless I think that we are justified in considering Moorman's work as a valuable contribution to the history of medieval England.

WALTER GUMBLEY, O.P.

INSPIRATION AND REVELATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. By H. Wheeler Robinson, D.D. (Oxford. Clarendon Press; 15s.)

THE RE-DISCOVERY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. By H. H. Rowley. (James Clarke; 10s. 6d.)

These two works represent the same religious belief, but they are much alike and treat roughly of the same matter, but in different ways that can be seen as complementary. Wheeler Robinson, late Principal of Regent's Park College, whose recent death is lamented by a far wider circle than that of the religious body of which he was so noble a representative, writes here for scholars, or at least for those who can benefit by the findings of scholarship. He provides an abundance of detailed, partly technical information and discussion—historical, exegetical, linguistic, etc.—and presents it with a patient, generous thoroughness that quite offsets the sometimes rather ponderous and obscure style of his writing. The other book is more popular, keeping more to matters that are of general introductory importance. Nevertheless it is a work of high intrinsic value, rich and vital in its thought, and providing a good measure too of concrete information and exposition, of the same scholarly quality.

Both books are concerned with the content of the Old Testament revelation; not, however, directly with its theological import, but with the forms in which it found expression, historical, literary, psychological, etc. Wheeler Robinson planned this present work, in fact, to provide the Prolegomena for a further strictly theological treatise. Both books treat therefore of such fundamental questions as the relation of the Old Testament to the New; the interplay of factors like those of the priesthood, of prophecy, of the cult of Wisdom; the meaning of basic conceptions such as those of holiness, of personality, of immortality. And both authors pronounce vigorously on the necessity for reconciling the critical or scholarly and the formally religious ways of understanding the Bible. The treatment of all these and of

various other hardly less fundamental matters is truly enlightening. These are books to be grateful for; though one cannot in the least accept what Wheeler Robinson has to say about the authority of the Bible in relation to the Church. And there is also this criticism that one would make of his work: that for all the author's unmistakable depth and generosity of mind, and all allowances being made for restriction of purpose, one finds his exposition of the Bible to be somewhat bleakly scholastic, somewhat puritanical. He concentrates on the spiritual factors, the higher formative concepts, while ignoring the positive value that they extracted from the crude, natural or pagan material upon which they worked. One gets the final impression of the Old Testament as of a work of divine pedagogy, couched in Semitic terms needing to be translated by laborious scholarly effort. Whereas it is the Mystery of the redemption of man and possesses an inner, imaginative language that is Catholic and that (even humanly speaking) is immediately intelligible to the heart of man, however unscolarly he may be. RICHARD KEHOE, O.P.

TALK OF THE DEVIL (*La Part du Diable*). By Denis de Rougemont. Translated by Kathleen Maine. (Eyre & Spottiswoode; 8s. 6d.)

M. de Rougemont introduces the devil as the Bible introduces him, in full disguise, a subtle psychologist engineering the Fall. And then, in order to convey the ultimate spiritual significance of the devil, he gradually draws upon the revelation of the Gospels, of St Paul, and of the Apocalypse. In the technical process of sin the devil can only work incognito; for he must operate in the unconscious. And for this it is simply necessary that his victim should disbelieve in his existence, or else should be capable of recognising him—in effect—only in other people, as a danger from outside. It is easy, therefore, to show what scope he enjoys in our democracies. But the full powers of the author are brought into play to convince us that some of the most characteristic moral deficiencies in our democratic order, in our democratic lives, which we only think of as the weaknesses of a civilisation dedicated to righteousness, do in fact exhibit all the characteristics of devilish evil, and follow the same pattern and trend that were fulfilled in Nazi Germany. The tragedy is that whereas in Hitler we had the chance of realizing the mystery of evil, we only saw evil as in him; and so the devil acquired the most perfect alibi of his career. At the best we appreciated Hitler as an external punishment for our sins; but we did not see him as 'the exact negative of our optimistic ideals in so far as they were unrealistic, utopian, blatantly egotistic, and expressive only of a mild desire . . . for a promethean divinisation'. That we should see evil in others, and for ourselves only fear the impact of it—that is the gist of the devil's monstrous, anti-creational purpose towards us. Whereas 'the whole meaning of Christianity is expressed in three acts essentially tragic: to take upon the self the evil that is in the world, die of that evil, and rise again in purity'.