

ESSAYS ON OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY AND RELIGION by Albrecht Alt, translated by R. A. Wilson: *Blackwell*. 42s.

The contemporary efflorescence of biblical studies, nourished by new discoveries, methods and interests, should always remain conscious of its debt to the great scholars of a previous generation. One of the most influential of these in the field of Old Testament was Albrecht Alt of Leipzig, whose work was of immense significance in the first half of the twentieth century. In this valuable collection five of his best known articles and monographs are translated, forming a history of Israel and of some aspects of its religion down into the period of the divided monarchy. The original essays appeared between 1925 and 1951 and were brought up to date when reprinted in the first two volumes of Alt's *Kleine Schriften* in 1953. The studies are the following: The God of the Fathers, The Origins of Israelite Law, The Settlement of the Israelites in Palestine, The Formation of the Israelite State in Palestine, and The Monarchy in Israel and Judah. Alt's work was noted for its

pioneering combination of form-critical analysis of the Old Testament records with extensive comparative use of extra-biblical materials throughout the Near East. From the point of view of illustrating his methods, these essays could hardly have been better chosen. Every student of the Old Testament will be familiar with, for example, Alt's now classic distinction between casuistic law, which the Israelites adopted from the Canaanite civilization in which they made their home, and apodeictic law, in form a direct commandment or prohibition, which he showed was of purely Israelite origin. This excellent translation should make it possible for far more students to read the magnificent essay in which Alt first set forth this distinction. That is only one reason why the book will be a very useful acquisition for anyone seriously interested in Old Testament history and religion.

GEORGE MACRAE, S.J.

THE FOURTH SESSION by Xavier Rynne: *Faber & Faber*. 368 pp. 42s.

I remember during the 4th Session a car ride from the Council to the Beda in which I enjoyed the company of a charming, loquacious, and highly-intelligent Religious, who seemed to have his fingers on every pulse of Conciliar life. 'Who is that man?', I asked the prelate who was driving me. 'Why, don't you know,' he answered, 'that is Xavier Rynne'.

I felt I had missed many opportunities: for I had already enjoyed his books on the earlier sessions more than anything else I had read on the subject. 'The Fourth Session' is just as fascinating as the other three. It has captured so much of what transpired. And although it is essentially gossipy in tone, it is really an effective documentary. Future historians of the Council will doubtless derive many 'slants' from its perusal. Those of us who were present can recapture the excitements and uncertainties, the frustrations as well as the expectations, of many occasions. In the 4th Session, Pope Paul VI emerged unmistakably as a vital and committed element. The 'enigma', if there had ever really been one, was dissipated. He showed from the Session's beginning his deep belief in the Council and its decrees and his determination to see the latter implemented as soon as possible. He urged all the Bishops of the world to make sure that the

Decrees were carried out as effectively as St Charles Borromeo had implemented the Council of Trent.

Here all the Bishops of the world were with him. The progressives were satisfied that a revolution had taken place and the conservatives that the true tradition was fully safeguarded in the decrees. Such a remark may appear to be an over simplification of complicated events. But I think it is fundamentally true that the balanced implementation of the Decrees should satisfy all right-thinking people.

There was a tranquillity about the 4th Session which was a stabilising factor after the earlier and more hectic phases. I am convinced myself that this was the work of the Holy Spirit. If there was one thing of which we were conscious throughout, it was the Presence. And it is certainly not conveyed by Xavier Rynne. It seems important to recall that overall, about one third of the Council's time was given to prayer and spiritual and penitential exercises.

In a final chapter entitled 'Toward Vatican Council III' the author says: 'It has become something of a commonplace to say 'Nothing has changed, even though things will never be the same again'. . . . 'It is not difficult to make out that there have been few radical changes

and to put the stress on continuity. Almost every conciliar statement has its counterpart in the theological literature of the recent past.'

Certainly, the intellectual climate of the Johannes Council owes a great deal to Pius XII. And it is safe to say that it could not have happened without him. This is part of the providential pattern. John's own contribution was charismatic in a sense; and again in the dispensation of Providence, it needed Paul to synthesise and actualise the two. The new pastoral, ecumenical and scriptural techniques constitute a thorough re-appraisal of the Church's life. The great central document,

from which in a sense all the others are derived, is that on The Church. (*Lumen Gentium*). The Church is always redressing balances. But she remains essentially the same though she continually increases her knowledge of herself and in so doing proliferates her image.

'The Fourth Session' then is a book to be read and enjoyed. We have yet to find a book on the Council which conveys objectively the great spiritual force at work. Xavier Rynne could not write such a book. But until it is written, the full significance of Vatican II will never be reached.

✠ GORDON WHEELER

BYZANTINE EAST AND LATIN WEST by Deno J. Geanakoplos: *Basil Blackwell*. 193 pp. 32s. 6d.

The history of the schism between east and west is being rewritten rapidly and a new over-all interpretation is beginning to emerge through the cumulative effect of isolated monographs. The process began when Professor Dvornik first showed that the Photian schism was a passing interlude. Probably most scholars now agree that the significance of the eleventh century schism of Cerularius has been much over-estimated and would hold that the real division between east and west began in 1204 with the crime of the sack of Constantinople by crusaders and the criminal folly of Innocent III in intruding the Latin Morosini on the Patriarchal throne. It was this that envenomed a theological divergence which otherwise might easily have been adjusted within the framework of a common veneration of the Fathers. Even after 1204 the Schism was quite different from the present cleavage. There was constant mutual interpenetration; five of the emperors of the dynasty of Palaeologos died in communion with Rome. Dr Geanakoplos can write of 'the cult of Thomism at the Imperial Court' and the gathering momentum of the Renaissance brought the Greeks a new prestige among the Latins.

The temporary union of East and West at the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1439 was abrogated when the Turks seized Constantinople fourteen years later but as late as the early eighteenth century there are many cases of *communicatio in sacris* between Catholic and Orthodox. Cyril II Kontaris was the last Patriarch of Constantinople to be in formal union with Rome and he died in 1639 but there were Greek bishops and abbots who remained in union both with Rome and Constantinople, like the monastery of St John at Patmos in 1725

or the monastery of Iviron on Athos a year later. It is arguable that the accession of Cyril V in 1748 to the patriarchal throne of Constantinople marks the real beginning of the Schism as we have all known it. But Cyril's denial of the validity of Latin baptism and the acerbity of Greek controversy is only intelligible in the light of the Catholic mistakes of the previous century; the papal nescience of the claims of Orthodoxy, symbolised by the existence of the Latin Patriarchs of Constantinople and the retention of many relics, was combined with the persistent itching proselytism of the Congregation of Propaganda. These had been the backwash of the Venetian conquest of the Peloponnese and the perpetual intrigues of the French consuls. Latin insouciance towards the Orthodox with its undertones of careless contempt was answered naturally enough by Orthodox hatred of the Latins. An appreciative understanding of Orthodoxy among Catholics must be the first step towards a return to unity. We have need of a much closer study not only of Greek patristics but also of Byzantine mystical theory. Our monologues must be replaced by dialogues and the task of this generation is the creation of mutual charity.

This personal interpretation of the history of the Schism will provide the context for an evaluation of *Byzantine East and Latin West* by Dr Geanakoplos. For it consists of two quite different studies. The most important of these deals with the interpenetration of east and west in the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and consists of chapters on the Cretan theologian Maximas Margounios, on Cretans in Western Europe and on the Greek colony in Venice. These are subjects on which Dr Geanakoplos is the chief living authority and taken together