

extraordinary results.

With such omissions the book matches neither the aim of Butler and his revisers nor the needs of present-day English Catholics. What we have in effect is an unperceptive abridgment of Butler-Thurston-Leeson-Attwater. Although in many articles scissors and paste have been wielded deftly enough, there is little evidence of incorporating scholarly work on a number of saints over the last thirty years. It presents the mixture as before with many omissions and few additions. Articles on Elizabeth Seton, John Neumann and the Uganda martyrs are specially welcome, but many will regret that no space was found for Maximilian Kolbe.

The articles are often flat in style; occasionally they betray their dependence on the Martyrology. Most saints die, but a few still fall asleep in the Lord. Abbreviation of pious phraseology could with advantage have been more ruthless, but quotations from saints' writings have been all too drastically curtailed. Well chosen words of the saints themselves sometimes reveal them far more effectively than paraphrases or summaries.

The absence of a historical or theological introduction also renders this volume much less useful than it might have been. Some psychic phenomena which fascinated Thurston are included, but no attempt is made to show how unimportant they are in the investigation of candidates for canonization. His conclusion about Christina the Astonishing (24 July) is that 'there is little in her recorded history to make us think she was other than a pathological case'. Yet this important comment is absent from the relevant entry. Is there really any advantage in this day and age of hearing how this Belgian lady (d. 1224) flew up to the roof of the church from her coffin when her Requiem mass was being offered or that she subsequently crawled into ovens to escape the smell of humans? Such stories do little to foster a genuine idea of holiness.

Not for the first time the English-speaking faithful have been fobbed off with the rehash of a book which needs replacement rather than revision. The best elements of Butler-Thurston-Attwater should be incorporated in a new work. This would follow and enhance the Liturgy by underlining the significance of the saints chosen. In certain cases more than one entry could be provided on the same day; in others groups of saints could be treated in a single article such as Dunstan, Ethelwold and Oswald; Thomas More and John Fisher; Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen. Both of these last saints, important Doctors of the Church, are omitted from this work (2 January) in favour of Caspar del Bufalo (d. 1837), whose followers used to take the discipline in public and burn books which they considered obscene. Is this really thought more important than the unique contributions to Christian doctrine on the Trinity and the Incarnation of the great Cappadocian Fathers?

This volume in short seems hasty, ill thought out, lacking sound overall direction, unfaithful to the aims of its author and earlier revisers and ill adapted to the needs of 1985. While the research of its predecessors and the geographical and temporal spread of the saints chosen should be praised, overall it fails, one may think, to provide a truly constructive look at the lives of the saints in the way needed by present and future generations.

D.H. FARMER

**A HISTORY OF PROPHECY IN ISRAEL.** Joseph Blenkinsopp. *SPCK*. 1984. 287pp., £9.50.

Joseph Blenkinsopp's *History of Prophecy* looks like little more than a detailed report on the state of the question; but appearances deceive. It is indeed a comprehensive guide to the major issues in current discussion of Old Testament prophecy, together with a detailed introduction to each of the prophetic books within a chronological framework. At many points, however, the author makes distinctive contributions of his own to the debate. The characteristically modest and tentative way in which he does this should not be allowed to blind the reader to the originality of many of these

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suggestions. The book's primary quality may be usefulness rather than originality, but originality there certainly is.

In any attempt to cover the whole of a subject as vast as prophecy in ancient Israel much of the discussion is bound to follow lines that by now are more or less conventional. The only alternative would be a programmatic essay radically redefining the whole field, and Blenkinsopp clearly has no aspirations of that sort. He therefore begins, as one would expect, with a survey of the history of the subject, bringing the reader right up to date. Subsequent chapters examine each major period in the development of prophecy in Israel, integrating each of the great prophets into his proper historical context. Particularly welcome is the seriousness with which he handles the redaction of the prophetic books: careful distinctions are drawn between the prophet himself and the traditions about him. An additional advantage of this is that Blenkinsopp has considerably more to say about post-exilic prophecy than most of his predecessors. He is able to deal, not only with the 'named' post-exilic prophets (Haggai, Zechariah, Joel, etc.) but also with the post-exilic additions to the books of pre-exilic prophets which his redaction-critical study covers. The treatment of these late 'prophets' or prophetic commentators is less comprehensive than that of the canonical prophets whose names we know: he proceeds more by sample studies (e.g. of Isaiah 24–7) than by exhaustive surveys. Nevertheless this represents a considerable advance on anything available elsewhere. The story breaks off at the end of the Persian period, with an interesting study of Jonah, here seen as a 'sapiential critique of prophecy'. He does not deal with Jewish prophecy in the Hellenistic age, of which there is now an interesting survey in D.E. Aune's *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Eerdmans, 1983).

Blenkinsopp is particularly anxious to avoid over simplified contrasts, such as those often drawn between pre- and post-exilic prophecy, between prophecy and apocalyptic, between 'ecstatic' and 'classical' prophecy, and between eschatology and theocracy. Thus he avoids many of the over schematic pictures of prophecy and its development or decline with which popular text-books often operate, and he produces a more nuanced (though inevitably also less memorable) outline. In particular, his respect for Torah-centred Judaism leads him to reject the sharp antithesis between 'prophetic' and 'priestly' religion which used to be so common; he sees this antithesis as a way of anachronistically importing the concerns of liberal Protestantism into the study of the Old Testament. I am not sure that this does full justice to the fundamental insight (which we owe ultimately to Wellhausen) that the religion of pre-exilic Israel was in an important sense not 'Judaism' but much more a variant of a far less distinctive type of ancient Near Eastern religion, and that the claims of later Judaism to derive from remote antiquity are therefore largely a fiction. Nevertheless his discussion is a wise caution against more recent, and cruder, versions of Wellhausen's thesis. I particularly enjoyed the excellent treatment of Amos, Second Isaiah (where he has actually found fresh things to say about the Servant!), and Isaiah 56–66, the last of which has been generally neglected in English-speaking scholarship except by adherents of the very idiosyncratic theories of P.D. Hanson. Justice is also done to the 'cultic' classical prophets, such as Habakkuk and Joel.

The presentation is generally clear, but sometimes the reader would be grateful for better sign-posting. There is a tendency to plunge into fresh topics without any indication of where the discussion is going; the lack of any concluding chapter is one especially puzzling example of this tendency. The book as a whole, like its individual chapters, has a lot of middle but not a very clear beginning or end. At times I found the style dense and hard to follow. There are few misprints, but read 'Joshua' for 'Josiah' on p. 238 line 23. A thoroughly useful book which should soon establish itself as a standard work.

JOHN BARTON