

THE OLD TESTAMENT AND CHRISTIAN FAITH, ed. Bernard W. Anderson, *Herder & Herder*, New York, 1969, xii + 271 pp. £2.95.

THE CHRISTIAN MEANING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, by Norbert Lohfink, S.J., trans. R. A. Wilson, *Burns & Oates*, 1969, x + 169 pp. 35s.

These two volumes tackle the problem of the relationship between the Old and the New Testament in very different ways.

The former title, edited by Professor Anderson of Princeton, is a reissue of a volume first printed in 1963, and is a welcome 'sign of the new ecumenical atmosphere in which discussions of biblical interpretation are carried on'. It is in fact a symposium in which the various participants, belonging to differing theological traditions and faiths, were called upon to respond to the thesis set forth in Dr Rudolf Bultmann's leading essay, 'The Significance of the Old Testament for the Christian Faith'. The importance of the volume is guaranteed by the names of the participants who form a distinguished circle of scholar friends around the central figure of Rudolf Bultmann—Brunner, Cullmann, Dillenberger, R. L. McKenzie, Michalson, Richardson, James M. Robinson, Vischer, Voegelin, Westermann, G. Ernest Wright. Perhaps the most important essay is that of Voegelin, whose article 'History and Gnosis' demolishes Bultmann's thesis that today practically speaking the Old Testament can have very little significance for the Christian Faith, except under crippling limitations. He not only disagrees with Bultmann's criticism of scriptural proof and allegoresis, but holds that at the core of his thesis is a 'reliance on a gnostic existentialism that wills the annihilation of nature and history'. For Voegelin, the reality of Scripture is much larger than the reality admitted by existentialism. And whatever the truth of the matter, there is no doubt that the immensely clever verbal gymnastics in which Bultmann indulges leave one in the end with a sense of frustration and bewilderment as to what it all amounts to. His theology of history is certainly suspect as to its validity.

To go from Bultmann to Lohfink is like coming down out of the clouds into a region

where things are not merely what they seem, but where an original, powerful and scholarly intellect throws new light on familiar things. The first chapter gives us a splendidly clear and convincing exposition of the views generally accepted today regarding the formation of the Old Testament writings over a period of more than a thousand years, and leads us discreetly through the jungle of the relations between the four documents J, E, D and P. Yet the value for a Christian of a national literature created in such an involved manner depends entirely on its inspired and inerrant character; and so in his second chapter on 'The Inerrancy of Scripture' he sets out to answer the question in what sense the Scripture can be said to be inerrant. He establishes that the problem can only rightly be envisaged from the standpoint of the whole Bible, and not from the position of a particular text nor even of a particular book, nor even from the point of view of one or other of the Testaments, but only from Scripture as a whole. 'The whole Divine Scripture is one book and this one book is Christ'; and hence he concludes that in practice one will reach the inerrant sense of scripture only in biblical theology.

In subsequent chapters, Fr Lohfink takes a number of passages and topics from the Old Testament, and with the aid of a thoroughly modern scientific exegesis he shows that the Old Testament has indeed a great deal to say to us today. In the opinion of many scholars this little work, originally published in Germany in 1965 under the title *Das Siegeslied am Schilmeer*, is one of the most important works on the Old Testament to have appeared during the past ten years; and though the translation is not without some minor defects, we must be truly grateful to the publishers for making it available to the English-speaking world.

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THE PARABLES OF JESUS IN MATTHEW 13, by J. D. Kingsbury. *S.P.C.K.*, London, 1969. 180 pp. 40s.

A sub-title describes this work accurately enough as 'a study in Redaction-Criticism', and the substance of the work was a dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Theology at the University of Basel in 1966. 'Matthew' is

repeatedly referred to, but quite independently of any particular theory of authorship. The name Matthew simply denotes the person who is responsible for drafting the first Gospel as it has been preserved and handed down to us