

think how we may do better. It is to a certain extent our fault that he makes films like this, and we would do well to think about it.

MARYVONNE BUTCHER

Reviews

THE STUDY OF THEOLOGY, by Charles Davis; Sheed and Ward; 30s.

Few theologians in England can have done so much as Fr Charles Davis to introduce this country to the renewal of theology on the continent and to draw the attention of dogmatic theologians to the perspective of the historical dimension in Revelation. Here is the challenge to dogma from the field of biblical, liturgical, and patristic research, and this challenge is reflected throughout this collection of essays published on various occasions. Perhaps it is especially the essays on 'The Christian Mystery and the Trinity' and 'The Resurrection and the Atonement' that reveal how much has been lost in the past through an insufficient understanding of the biblical and the liturgical approach. But the author most interestingly suggests that we should go further than simply stating biblical theology as it is given to us in the bible and that we should attempt a transposition of biblical thought to meet the contemporary intellectual development. This opens up the further question as to whether some of the present philosophical trends are not particularly suited to explain and illustrate the historical dimension of Revelation as in the past the classic philosophy has explained and illustrated the metaphysical problems of Revelation. For instance Fr Cornelius Ernst in his introduction to the 'Theological Investigations' of Fr Karl Rahner compares Heidegger's conception of man, not as what he is in his eternal nature but as what he is directed towards in the future, with the biblical view of man as orientated towards his future as revealed in Christ. This is not eclecticism but an integration of these truths from contemporary philosophers into the *philosophia perennis* of Thomism. Moreover Fr Davis rightly refers to the need to counter what might become a too exclusively biblical, liturgical and patristic theology with a renewal of speculative theology following the lead given by Fr Bernard Lonergan, the great exponent of the classic metaphysical tradition.

We must have 'a vision of the whole' as Fr Davis says and the problem is basically that of a synthesis of the historical and of the metaphysical aspects of Revelation. I am inclined to think that Fr Davis' stimulating essays 'On introducing the theme' and 'The dangers of irrelevance', in their stress on the need to be apostolic and to meet the contemporary mentality, tend to obscure the more

fundamental question as to the nature of theology as such and of the intrinsic demands of theological method. But our difference is, I think, mainly one of emphasis. My point is that we should not look primarily for relevance to the present situation. The principle work of theology is to join an integral synthesis. Then this synthesis will of its very nature be relevant to our situation. Fr Karl Rahner gives the clue when he says 'But in fact the strictest theology, that most passionately devoted to reality alone and ever on the alert for new questions, the most scientific theology, is itself in the long run the most kerygmatic'. Fr Davis in fact recognized the first claim on the theologian when he quotes from Mgr Guardini (p. 9). 'The deepest significance of dogma lies not in its practical applications but in safeguarding the fullness and freedom of sacred truth'.

ODO BROOKE, O.S.B.

THE NIGHT BATTLE, by J. M. Cameron; Burns and Oates; 25s.

If one took the author's epigraph and the publisher's blurb together, as indicating the nature of this book, one might conclude that it was primarily a contribution to a private Catholic controversy 'where each fights for himself and friend and foe stand together' (Newman) and in which the author ('a Catholic of the Left') indulged a common habit of left-wing Catholics: namely bishop-baiting and the flogging of horses best left to die a natural death. It is therefore important to discuss how, in this book of essays, Professor Cameron handles controversial Catholic questions. For him, such controversy is simply the natural outcome of a firm grasp of what Catholic faith involves. In so far as it is evident from these essays that the author is a 'Catholic of the Left', it is also evident from the same sources that there is a strong *prima facie* case to be made out for holding that to be 'of the left' is the *natural* consequence of a faith which is deep, learned and alive to contemporary problems. How is this case made out by these essays? In combining items of an unmistakably radical and controversial kind (e.g. *Catholicism and Political Mythology*) with others of a more academic and literary kind (*The Justification of Political Attitudes, Mr Tillotson and Mr Pope*) Professor Cameron exhibits in his own work those things most worthy of praise, he believes, in The New Left. The New Left policies and attitudes, 'because they aspire to a complete vision of our social condition are not strictly comparable with the policy and outlook of the supporters of the traditional parties' (p. 66): similarly Professor Cameron's breadth of view and interest and the stability of his fundamental convictions naturally lead him to positions very different from those held by more conformist or traditionalist Catholics. He is uncompromisingly unilateralist; he is a strong supporter of the contemporary style in philosophy (see *Words and Things*); he believes that the view of Communism held by most prominent Catholic publicists, especially in the U.S.A., is both false and dangerous; he recommends a dispassionate study of Com-