

make it possible to open it here and there, and everywhere to draw deeply from a well which has the full depth and content of true Catholicity.

If the language is a little turgid and perhaps heavy, it is but a very small price to pay for being given that of which there is so much need. An earlier *cri-de-coeur*<sup>2</sup> for something which takes both God and man really seriously is here in this book superbly answered.

Father Hamman's book<sup>3</sup> thus comes at a very opportune moment. It is a superb anthology and presentation of the early prayer of the Church, covering scripture itself, the apostolic and early Fathers and martyrs of the Church, together with a great deal of early liturgical prayer. Presented with skill and pleasantly translated, it is a witness to that living spirit of the Church which is perpetually handed on—its tradition. If we approach this volume coming from Dr Balthasar's book or with a similar outlook we should be able to see these prayers as bearing that unmistakable mark of perfect authenticity—not so much timelessness but living 'modernity', or let us say more happily in French: *actualité*. It has been well worth the waiting.

<sup>2</sup>*Life of the Spirit*, May 1961, p. 523.

<sup>3</sup>*Early Christian Prayers*, by A. Hamman O.F.M.; Longmans, 35s.

## Reviews

THE BIBLE IN THE AGE OF SCIENCE, by Alan Richardson; S.C.M. paperback, 5s.

Our growth as Christians is often choked by what appear to be fixed forms, a point which has recently been stressed in this periodical (Jan. 1962) in the sphere of religious education. It is common enough experience that in learning about the faith our *human* experience has frequently been trivialized because we've been given the answers before ever asking the questions, the objective formulation without the movement, the expression without the pre-supposition; the catechism, for example, without the scriptures. Yet the formulations, whether it be of catechism, preaching or books, are meant to lead us to the revelation—reality, Christ himself, and so often they merely obscure him. But, within the living Church, there are two privileged ways through which we may meet

Christ, namely the eucharist and the revelation-word in the Bible. We can be sure that this word will lead us to the reality and that it will be an apt, though not exhaustive, expression of that reality. In spite of this, it might be asked how many people go to this word for their life. One of the reasons Professor Richardson accepted the invitation to give the Cadbury lectures in Birmingham last year, of which this book is the collection, was 'to set in order my reflections upon a theme which must constantly be present to the mind of a theologian whose own teaching work is carried out in the context of life in a modern university' (Preface). The theme is an important one, the growth of biblical criticism in the world of scientific method and not, as the title might suggest, on the religion versus science controversy. There can be no substitute for 'the careful and prayerful study of the words of the Bible' (pp. 151-2), but many people feel the need to achieve some kind of historical perspective, to 'place' themselves in relation to the past, in order to see the present more clearly, yet have neither time nor money to spend on the considerable amount of reading which such a 'situating' might entail. Secondary sources have their value. This book is very instructive and worth attention, for at least three reasons: it is by Alan Richardson, who deserves to be better known; it is on a relevant topic; and it is both small, cheap, and not too technical. The first two chapters, the least rewarding of all, are devoted to the period which succeeded the disintegration of the medieval world-view in the sixteenth century, and the scientific importance of the seventeenth—the account of Aristotle is a bit unfair here (p. 13). The nineteenth century saw the move out of nature into history (ch. 2), an event which had so profound an effect on all later biblical and theological thinking. This influence in England is traced up to the time when, after the first world war, Barth began to make himself felt. It is interesting, incidentally, to see that while Hort was delivering the Hulsean lectures he was also acting as examiner in the Natural Science Tripos examinations at Cambridge (p. 64). Westcott, Lightfoot and Hort are discussed here, for they 'probably . . . more than any other three British theologians who could be named, guided the course of the theological revolution which was taking place in their days and shaped the future of theology in the Anglican communion and perhaps in the English speaking world' (p. 63). 'From Schleiermacher to Barth', the title of the next chapter, is an account of the great wealth of Protestant theology during the corresponding period in Germany, tracing the growth through Ritschl and Harnack to Barth, who more than any other single figure has dominated the European theological scene since 1919 when *Der Romerbrief* appeared. There is a useful summary of Barth's work, contrasted in the following chapter with Bultmann, whose theological defects become most visible on the question of history and the biblical 'kerygma', and introduce perhaps the best chapter, entitled *The Heilsgeschichte Theology*—the author does not hesitate to group theologians of varying outlook in this way, to be free in his use of the word 'revolution', as opposed to (say) 'renewal', and to refer (p. 164) to Ecclesiastes as 'that devastating existentialist thinker of Old Testament times'. This is an

examination of three very important Biblical theologians, Dodd, Cullman and Wright, the last of whom is the least well-known but whose insistence on the value of the Old in understanding the New Testament is worth attention. The two final chapters are concerned with the difficulties to be encountered in our 'banaisic civilization' in the face of the poetic language of the Bible, and show that the scriptures are being continually fulfilled, that the biblical history is *our* history. The book is well annotated and indexed.

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OUR LADY AND THE CHURCH, by Hugo Rahner, S.J.; Darton, Longman and Todd, 13s. 6d.

It is difficult to say enough in praise of this glorious book. It is the re-discovery, in and through the Fathers, of devotion to Mary as devotion to the Church, and *vice versa*. The introductory chapter sets the theme: 'Mary essentially a symbol of the Church'. This is not just a new way (or old way) of looking at our Lady, that may happen to appeal. It is *the* way of looking at her. The next chapters, 'Immaculate' and 'Ever Virgin', show us these two Marian doctrines as finding their true significance in what the Church is: she who is redeemed, made immaculate; and she who is the faithful bride, uncorrupted by heresy. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 develop the pattern Mother Mary—Mother Church: Mary, because Mother of Christ, therefore our mother; the Church, because our mother, therefore mother of Christ. Then in 'Growth in Holiness' and 'Mulier Fortis' Fr Rahner outlines a devotion to our Lady relevant to daily living which makes sense. It has nothing to do with that superficial theme of direct, ultimately quite artificial 'imitation' (I remember a devotional book telling me, for an example to me, that 'her blue veil was uncrumpled'; and the story of the Irishwoman, mother of ten, bursting out after a typical Holy Family sermon, 'Her *one!*'). Here, the important text is 'Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?'. We turn from realising that the Church is the mother of Christ as being our mother, to realising that we ourselves are the Church, and hence must be the mother of Christ. But, as St Ambrose says:

Not all have brought to birth, not all are perfect, not all are 'Mary': for even though they have conceived Christ by the Holy Ghost, they have not all brought him to birth. There are those who thrust out the word of God, as it were miscarrying. See to it therefore that you do the will of the Father, so that you may be the mother of Christ.

As Fr Rahner comments, 'When we come to look upon sin after baptism and the threat of the loss of everlasting life in this context of the Marian mystery of the Church, we begin to see the problem of striving after spiritual perfection in a new light'. There is indeed all the difference in the world between an artificial exhortation to be *like* Mary and a real summons to be Mary.