

essays follow which show that the theme is older than Brandon, and even than Reimarus. W. Horbury deals with "Christ as brigand in ancient anti-Christian polemic" and Bammel with a version of the Josippon.

At this point the book moves on to a discussion of gospel sayings and incidents which are evidently relevant to its theme: Bammel on the feeding of the multitude; Bruce on "Render to Caesar"; Horbury on the Temple tax; M. Black on "Not peace but a sword" (the "holy war" is against the cosmic powers of evil); W. Grundmann on the decision to put Jesus to death (John 11. 47–57); D.R. Catchpole on the "triumphal" entry; Lampe on the Two Swords; Bammel on the *titulus*; K. Schubert on the Markan report of Jesus's examination before the Sanhedrin; G. Schneider on the political charge against Jesus (Luke 23.2); and Bammel on the trial before Pilate. Interspersed are a note by H. St. J. Hart on the coin of "Render to Caesar", and a discussion of Romans 13 by Bammel. Finally the late J.A.T. Robinson writes under the heading of "His Witness is true", arguing that John gives a true interpretation, and an essentially true account, of the trial of Jesus.

It will appear from this summary that the backbone of the book is by Bammel, whose contributions are considerable in extent and of the highest quality. There is however no weak link. I have never seen the logic of the *argumentum e silentio* analysed as clearly as it is by Styler, and Lampe's patristic essays are a worthy memorial. The two by Horbury are of great interest; so are those by Grundmann and Schneider. But I have enjoyed and profited from every piece in the book, though it is anything but easy reading. A reviewer, however will count himself lucky, notwithstanding the hard work involved in his task, to get a copy of this book for nothing. Not everyone will be able to afford it, but those who cannot should make sure that it is acquired by their libraries.

C.K. BARRETT

ZOHAR: BOOK OF ENLIGHTENMENT (Classics of Western Spirituality), translated and introduced by Daniel Chanan Matt. SPCK. 1983. pp. xvi + 320. £11.50.

The Zohar, a large collection in Aramaic of short exegetical statements and homilies on the Old Testament, is perhaps the most important work of the canon of Jewish mystical literature, the Kabbalah. It is ascribed to Simeon bar Yohai, a Palestinian Rabbi of the second century A.D., but critical scholarship has established beyond reasonable doubt that it was written by the Spanish Kabbalist Moses ben Shem Tov de Leon in about 1280. It has been massively influential among Jews, especially (but by no means exclusively) in Hassidic circles. Christians influenced by it as early as the fifteenth century include the Florentine prodigy Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–94), the German humanist Johannes Reuchlin (1455–1522) and Cardinal Egidio da Viterbo (1465–1532).

The name "Zohar" bears connotations of clarity and light—it means "brightness", "splendour" or "enlightenment". It is far from being clear and lucid, however. Its symbolism is extremely intricate, its style is elliptic, it is riddled with Aramaic neologisms and is often ungrammatical. There is an English translation of the entire text (Sperling and Simon, *The Zohar*, London, 1931–34, five volumes), but this is without significant annotation and makes very difficult reading. Gershom Scholem, whose name, more than that of any other modern scholar, is associated with the scientific study of Kabbalistic literature, edited a small selection from the Zohar (Scholem, *Zohar—The Book of Splendour*, New York, 1963). While judicious selection makes Scholem's book more easily comprehensible than Sperling and Simon's translation, it too is without notes, and it therefore fails to unravel the Zohar's symbolism. The excellent two-volume extensively annotated selection by Tishby and Lachover is in Hebrew (*Mishnat Ha-Zohar*, Jerusalem 1961, 1971), and awaits a translator. Tishby and

399

Lachover's selection gives a systematic account of the doctrine of the Zohar. Matt's selection is not meant to be systematic, but his translation and copious glosses form as good an introduction to the Zohar and its symbolism as any non-specialist could desire.

Matt's translation of the difficult Aramaic of the Zohar is competent and readable. Matt has broken with tradition in that he sets his translation out in poetic form. Editions of the Aramaic text and most translations are a dense prose, but Matt argues cogently for his choice of genre, which he believes to be closer to the character of the text. The translation does not make elegant English poetry, but I found it much easier to follow than the Scholem selection or the Sperling and Simon translation (not to mention the original). The "poetic" form has the added advantage of making it possible to refer to the glosses without interrupting the flow of reading. The glosses, which unravel the symbolism of the text, and which include useful references to Rabbinical and scholarly literature, bring the text to life. The translation is deliberately rough. It successfully communicates much of the flavour of the original Aramaic and the play of question and answer so characteristic of the Zohar. There is little overlap between Scholem's selection and that of Matt, though many of Matt's glosses illuminate passages in Scholem's selection.

Matt's volume includes a scholarly introduction, a useful glossary of terms, and an extensive bibliography of works dealing with the Zohar and Kabbalah in English, French, German and Hebrew. Matt has included a key to the passages he has selected, as well as an index to the preface, foreword, introduction and notes. In all, it is an attractive and useful volume, and while it is geared to the needs of non-specialists, readers familiar with Rabbinical literature will also find it interesting and useful.

SELWYN GROSS OP

LIVING BY FAITH by Stuart Blanch. DLT. 1983 £3.95.

It is difficult to see what audience the Archbishop of York has in mind in writing this recent book. Some sections of the book are rather banal, others might appeal to those seeking an introductory course in biblical study, while others seem to require theological knowledge far beyond the scope of the average layman. Throughout the book there are hints of the author's discomfort in the face of any rapprochement between *Canterbury and Rome*.

The most telling criticism of the book arises from the limited vision it displays in relation to people's contemporary problems over faith. Nowhere is this more evident than in the chapter on faith and fear, where the author speaks of the nuclear threat. There is no mention here of the theological and moral issues relating to the use of nuclear weapons, no apparent recognition that in dealing with the fear occasioned by the nuclear threat we are into a completely different ball-game from any situation that has existed before. These issues are very relevant to the question of faith at the present day. This omission seems to reflect the limited nature of his understanding of faith. He cites Mk. 4:35—5:43 as providing examples of faith in which saving and healing by Christ follows on each individual's *avowal* of faith that Christ can act. He fails to connect the saving/healing that takes place with the *action* taken by these individuals in their positive approach to Christ. His static view of faith involves only, as he puts it, "a confident affirmation of the loving providence of God".

He admits the church is subject to criticism without being able to put his finger on why in contemporary society people find traditional attitudes unsatisfactory. He concentrates rather on distinguishing two kinds of faith, protestant and catholic. In an age when christians of all denominations need to work together for their common faith this book seems to be sadly out of touch with the needs of the times.

RONWYN GOODSIR THOMAS