

Griffith's somewhat similar Community found that it was only when it was transplanted to Kerala, where Catholics and other Christians already exist in sizeable numbers, that it could flourish. In other words, the Religious Commun-

ity needed to be *geographically* inside the larger Community of the Church.

But as a venture for God, an attempt to make Catholicism really Catholic, it is full of inspiration and interest.

WILLIAM P. WYLIE

VITAL WORDS OF THE BIBLE, by J. M. Furness. *Lutterworth Press*. 13s. 6d.

CONCISE DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE, ed. by Stephen Neill, John Goodwin, Arthur Dowle. (*World Christian Books*). 2 vols. *United Soc. for Christian Literature (Lutterworth Press)*. 17s.

The Catholic biblical *aggiornamento*, after a century of stop-go and of cold feet in high places, has at last acquired a momentum that should ensure its continuance. The problem now is to communicate its insights to the man in the pew and the man in the presbytery, who in England at least seem to know little more about the movement than the Ephesian elders did about the Holy Spirit. The best hope lies perhaps in the proliferation of Bible study groups, as already fostered with success by some few Catholic organisations. There is a great need, felt by such groups as I have encountered, for more works of *haute vulgarisation*, and any nourishing pabulum that publishers have to offer the hungry sheep, such as the Jerusalem Bible, with its excellent introductions and notes, and the word-books, of which the most remarkable instances to date are perhaps the Kittel word-books and X. Léon-Dufour's *Vocabulaire de théologie biblique*, 1962, deserves a warm welcome. Unhappily the two works under review are remarkable chiefly for their deficiency in vitamins.

The contents of Mr Furness' little book first appeared in article form in the journal *Advance* as a guide for local preachers. The significance of fifty-one Greek words common in the NT, from *agapan* to *zoe*, is explained, and their OT Hebrew counterparts indicated. It is surprising to find that *soma* (body) is not included in the list, and that the articles on *sarx* (flesh) and *pneuma* (spirit) do not attempt an adequate explanation of human nature as understood by the NT writers (the reading of the NT is, notoriously, often vitiated for the beginner by the importation into the text of preconceptions based on the modern usage of these terms). Scant attention is also paid to the co-existence of

different literary traditions and outlooks in both Testaments; I hope I do not do him an injustice in saying that Mr Furness seems to think in terms of the old Evangelical slogan 'The Bible Says . . .' The fact is that the Bible does not, on many, many issues have one, straight-forward, take-it-or-leave-it line; often the real message of the Bible is to be divined through studying the tension between various divergent positions (priestly and prophetic, synoptic and Johannine, Pauline and Jacobean, and so on). One could wish also that Mr Furness had taken more pains to show how the OT background constantly controls the meaning of NT words, clinging to them on all sides and giving them a theological quality which in many cases just cannot be defined without reference to the OT (take as an example the way OT *kabod*-theology pervades the Johannine idea of *glory*).

The *Concise Dictionary of the Bible* casts its net much more widely over key Bible themes. That is the trouble. It discourses very informatively on how parchment was made, and glass, and bricks; it gives excellent potted biographies of OT personages; unlikely headings, such as 'Cucumber', prove – as, to one's delight, is often the way with dictionaries – a mine of useful knowledge (I was always puzzled as a child by Isaiah's cucumber garden); unfortunately, though, the articles on Bible themes are, though usually good as far as they go, so brief as to be of little use. The editors have fallen between two stools: either they should have omitted theological terms, or they should have given them the more extended treatment that their greater importance than cabbages and kings demands.

BERNARD ROBINSON

JUDAISM, by Stuart E. Rosenberg. (*Deus Books*). *Paulist Press*, New Jersey. \$0.95.

This little book can be warmly commended to the attention of anyone who is looking for a

simple exposé of what it means to be a traditional Jew. Rabbi Rosenberg's method is to give a very

brief history of Jewish religion from Biblical to modern times (too brief perhaps; one could have wished that he had said something of the development of *haggadah* and *midrash*, and had told us something of movements such as the Karaite, the Cabbalistic and the Hasidic), and then to show how from day to day – from Rosh ha-shanah to the end of the liturgical year – and from year to year – from his birth to his death – a Jew's life is moulded and formed by his Jewish heritage. A final chapter gives a thumbnail sketch of basic Jewish beliefs. Christians, and they are legion, who have got no further than wondering at the divine oddness in choosing the Jews and who use the word 'Pharisee' as a term of reproach would do well to read this book.

The 119th psalm – the very, very long one, which rings innumerable changes on the theme of the Israelite's love of the law, precepts, statutes, commandments, etc., of the Lord – was, surprisingly, one of Rose Macaulay's favourite Biblical passages. To most Christians, however, the legalistic element in Judaism is its least attractive quality, and the fact that a religion so very much centred on the observance of hundreds of legal prescriptions could be so fruitful,

and such a joy to its adherents, is a permanent mystery; it is a pity therefore that Rabbi Rosenberg did not devote more space to the basic task of explaining the motive power of Jewish Torah-religion. It would perhaps have helped if he had quoted more Rabbinic texts, for they often give the real flavour of Judaism better than mere exposition can, and give one an insight into how it was that the *halachah*-religion could produce so many magnificently spontaneous and noble people who provide the Christians with so much to admire. Like their Christian brethren the Jews of today are moving away from the religion of law (Rabbi Rosenberg is very fair and honest on the present parties within modern Jewry), but the history of Rabbinism, which was an authentic continuation of an important element of the OT Heilsgeschichte, remains a convincing memorial to the fact that rules of conduct *need* not be cramping and destructive of genuine responses. I say this not by way of a plea for reaction in this matter, but out of fairness to a system which is undoubtedly one of civilisation's high water marks.

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