

a lively essay by John Bright, 'The School of Alt and Noth', containing a respectful but sharp criticism of the historical method of these two scholars; this is a penetrating and valuable piece of work (dependent, of course, as so often with the work of *Albrihtschüler*, on the leads provided by the master) which it would be foolish to summarize, but whose gist is that Alt and Noth are far too sceptical of the historical value of the early traditions.

Finally comes a miscellaneous section, containing a useful excerpt from Mitchell Dahood's introduction to the first volume of *The Psalms* in the Anchor Bible series; he points out that Ugaritic studies have shown that the text of the psalms is far more correct in Hebrew than was formerly supposed, and that many of the psalms should be dated far earlier than was formerly done. The essay by Robert Gordis, 'Wisdom and Job', is disappointing, consisting largely of a conventional introduction to the genre of wisdom literature, and showing that Job falls within it; there are, however, some interesting pages (229-232) on the upper-class presuppositions of much of the wisdom literature of Israel. Finally we are offered a symposium by the editor, Albert Sundberg and

Roland E. Murphy on the canon of scripture; of the three contributions Sundberg's is the most interesting, arguing for a return to the Catholic from the Protestant canon of scripture, which was forced on Luther as an escape from a tight corner about purgatory in 1519, and rests on the faulty premise that the canon of scripture of Jesus and the early Church was that imposed on Judaism by the Synod of Jamnia at the end of the first century A.D. There are some interesting remarks about the ecclesial dimension of the formation of the canon: 'the process of canonization is a community process' (p. 261), which fit well recent Catholic thinking on the subject (Fr Murphy quotes Rahner's important study, but does not discuss it or seem to appreciate its worth).

The essays in this volume are uneven in worth. This is nearly always the case in such a collection, which are often formed round a central nucleus which give a *raison d'être* for the whole. In this case the nucleus consists of the second, historical part, by Noth and Bright. It is worth having the book, despite its faults, for handy reference to these two articles.

HENRY WANSBROUGH, O.S.B.

THE GOSPELS AND THE JESUS OF HISTORY, by Xavier Léon-Dufour, S.J. Translated and edited by John McHugh. Collins, 1968. 288 pp. 36s.

X. Léon-Dufour hardly needs introduction to students of the gospels. His work *Les évangiles et l'histoire de Jésus* which appeared in 1963 was universally well received. He did not address himself to specialists but simply set out to make available to students the results of recent scientific critical investigation in an area of primary importance.

The historical value of the gospels has been for centuries the focus of attack, but between the wars Form-criticism, with its insistence on the literary forms, formation and sources of the gospels and on the influencing faith which inspired their composition, gave new impetus to the attack and new and disturbing problems saw the light of day. If the gospels have their roots in the primitive preaching about Jesus and reflect an *evolved* stage in that preaching, if they are written by believers for believers, then historians must exercise caution in using them as sources to reach the 'Jesus of history' as distinct from the 'Christ of faith'. On the whole, Form-critics were excessive in their assertions and especially in their scepticism regarding the historical value of the gospels. They failed to distinguish between tradition and redaction,

stopped short of pursuing investigation beyond the primitive community of believers to the preceding period (i.e. the 'Sitz im Leben' of Jesus and his disciples) and of including research into the following stage (i.e. of theological re-interpretation by each evangelist of the existing tradition). The evangelists were regarded as mere compilers, not real authors who worked on a given tradition.

However, in the last two decades there has been a gradual healthy withdrawal from the sceptical position of the radical critics. Making full use of the Form-critical method and principles, yet renouncing all attempts at a biographical portrait of Jesus, critics believe that a scientific critical study of the gospels will lead us surely to the 'Jesus of history'. The idea of 'history' itself and of 'what is historical' has also been revised and the rationalist, positivist conception of the last century and of the Modernist era is no longer taken for granted.

Père Léon-Dufour's work is an invaluable guide in this investigation and one of major importance. It was the first comprehensive study of its kind from the pen of a Catholic, since few exegetes are of his calibre or have been

prepared as he was by years of successful and fruitful labour in this field. His work has been widely acclaimed and appreciated by students of all denominations as a valuable contribution in what is perhaps the most fundamental problem facing Christians today. His work deserved translation and is now available to the English-speaking world.

The translation is assured of inevitable success. It is perhaps regrettable that what we are given is not strictly a translation of the original, but an abridged edited version; hence one cannot expect the English edition to be the same mine of information as the original. On the other hand, Fr McHugh has previously demonstrated his excellence as translator (and editor) and is in his own right a highly competent biblical theologian on whom we can place reliance. Moreover, some reviews of the original criticized it for being too rich, in that it raised so many issues which it could not fully develop within the scope of the volume and so left one with an unsatisfied appetite. The abridgement will naturally obviate some of this criticism—although many issues receive much scantier attention and so will be even less satisfying than the original.

One does not want to be faint in one's praise, and the over-all impression is far from dissatisfaction; what we are given is far too readable, complete and informative and will more than satisfy most readers. Both the translator and the publishers deserve our gratitude.

It would be impossible to summarize the mass of material or even to mention all the aspects of the problem covered in this volume. In such a short review it must remain sufficient to indicate the general lines of the investigation.

In the Introduction the author indicates the literary and historical problems and the

insufficiency of the classical, traditional arguments in favour of the authenticity and historicity of the gospels. He determines the necessity to submit them, their formation and pre-history to critical investigation, working back from the second century to the oral tradition preceding the gospels and thence to Christ himself. He does this in three stages and in each stage *everything* which throws light on the gospels, their authors, their nature, their formation, sources, literary forms and characteristics, the theological purposes and orientations of the evangelists, the synoptic problem, the Johannine problem, the relationship between faith and history, the role of the Holy Spirit and many other questions, is examined; nothing escapes investigation.

Throughout the book the author's treatment is admirable, his information reliable and always up-to-date. His method is the only way to demonstrate the true historical and theological character of the gospel narratives, i.e. by situating them ultimately in the 'Jesus of history'. In the end we are given an extremely balanced panoramic view of a vast problem where neither scepticism nor fideism has any place.

No hesitation is felt in recommending this volume as the best introduction to the study of the gospels. Professors, teachers, students, the average reader will all find it enjoyable and informative. Those who seek further information will be greatly aided by the references in the footnotes and by the appended bibliography, but those who can be recommended to read the original. Priced at 30s. we are given a bargain and Catholic publishers should take note.

THOMAS HANLON

AUGUSTINIANISM AND MODERN THEOLOGY, by Henri de Lubac, S.J., translated by Lancelot Sheppard. *Geoffrey Chapman*, London, 1969. 320 pp. £3 3s.

In 1564, shortly after leaving the final session of the Council of Trent, Michael de Bay, regius professor of sacred scripture in the university of Louvain, published a succinct and lucid work, *De prima hominis iustitia et virtutibus impiorum*, in which he attempted to present the authentic teaching of St Augustine, uncluttered by the complexities of contemporary scholasticism.

Bay's thesis in this work is that before the Fall man was able—in a daring phrase—*pari facilitate Deum agrosque coluisse* (i 9). The restitution of this primal integrity is *supernatural*.

But man's original condition, including his possession of the Holy Spirit, was *natural*.

To Bay's Catholic contemporaries, this simple, perhaps too simple, thesis seemed to place God in the power of his creatures. If the possession of the Holy Spirit was required for the completeness of man's natural state, then the freedom of God's gift of himself to man seemed to be compromised.

Less than a decade later, in lectures delivered at Louvain, and later, in 1587, in the course of a work *De gratia primi hominis et statu innocentiae*, Robert Bellarmine—not yet a cardinal—