

intimacy in the light of which this present life paled into insignificance? For all the promise of a living and progressive theology, Fr Stutcliffe has given us little more than a series of unrelated and rather mechanical analyses of some aspects of suffering in the Old Testament. Not that this is unwelcome. The science of biblical theology is still in its infancy, and we can only be grateful for any addition to its small bibliography.

The publishers are to be congratulated on the elegance of their production of this book. It is marred only by two misprints in the footnotes on page 30 and page 125, and by the lack of a number for the footnote on page 151.

H. J. RICHARDS

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS. *Studies in Biblical Theology*  
No. 14. By Norman K. Gottwald. (S.C.M. Press; 8s.)

In a notable book the late Charles Williams once put forward the notion that the greatness of Shakespeare, Milton and Wordsworth was due in each case to a crisis in their lives when they saw what could not happen come to be. 'This is, and is not, Cressid.' The prophet poet of the Lamentations held together in his soul the knowledge of loving kindness, the 'covenant mercies', of Yahweh and the experience of the Fall of Jerusalem—and only just.

It is much to the credit of Professor Gottwald that he treats the Lamentations as the great poetry they are. The alphabetic acrostic form is used not as a mere exercise, not primarily as an aid to memorizing, but as an expression of the totality of Israel's sin, suffering and grief. Strictness of form and intensity of emotion are almost perfectly fused. The current types of lament, of an individual or a community over a disaster, the lament over the dead, are too partial to express this intensity, but their forms have contributed to the structure of the Lamentations. This is particularly the case with the theme of 'tragic reversal', the contrast of former splendour with present misery, exemplified so movingly in David's lament over Saul and Jonathan; Professor Gottwald goes on to show how this gives rise in the Lamentations to two variations, of which the most significant is the further (triumphant) reversal, when 'they shall be as I' (Lam. 1, 21). It is an interesting example of the way a literary form may express a theological concept. Israel has been judged and punished, has undergone a 'Day of Yahweh', but a 'Day of Yahweh' still awaits the nations her oppressors; this recognition of it as something which can be realized and yet not exhausted is an important stage in a current of symbolism finally expressed in the Christian conception of the Last Judgment. This, and other ideas of interest to the biblical theologian, are to be found in the two chapters which are the core of the present book, 'The Theology of Doom' and 'The Theology of Hope'.

One may pick out also for notice his demonstration, by style and by theology, of the influence that the Lamentations had on the Second Isaias (cf. Lam. 4, 22 and Is. 40, 2); the later poet can add that Jerusalem has paid doubly for her sin; and Professor Gottwald sees in the third Lamentation an idealization of the Prophet Jeremias, foreshadowing the vision of the Servant of Yahweh. Altogether one is grateful to an author whose historical good sense and literary acumen enable him to show us something of the power of this little-read book. We can turn to it now for our *lectio divina*, and our participation in *Tenebrae* will be correspondingly deepened.

BENET WEATHERHEAD, O.P.

THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF PRIESTHOOD. By E. O. James. (Thames and Hudson; 25s.)

ROYAL PRIESTHOOD. By T. F. Torrance. (Oliver and Boyd; 9s.)

Dr James has produced an invaluable source-book. It would be difficult to find, in English, another work in which so much information on the priesthood of known religions is collected into one volume. The book is therefore a necessity for the student of comparative religion. Yet it is no mere collection of items of knowledge, for a real attempt has been made to interpret the evidence and, as we should expect from a scholar of Dr James's standing, the result is interesting. The task of the historical priesthoods was and is, Dr James suggests, to preserve the traditions of sacred learning and although this function is often associated with a conservative, indeed almost a static, type of civilization, it remains true that priesthoods have exercised an important unifying and cohesive force in society. It is this side of priestly activity that interests Dr James most, though he does give a great deal of information about the essentially priestly function of offering a victim. Perhaps this emphasis explains why the sections on Christianity are the least satisfactory, for in spite of interesting remarks on the sacramental and mediatorial functions of the priest his tendency is to stress what might be termed the scholarly activities of clergymen. It is perhaps inevitable that the student of comparative religion should tend to be untheological, but this leads to a certain flattening of treatment when one is dealing with the subject which, from the point of view of personal religion, is pre-eminently theological.

The same cannot be said of Dr Torrance's *Royal Priesthood*. This is an important analysis of the scriptural doctrine of the priesthood of the Incarnate Word. While there is some matter in it that a Catholic theologian would question and some argumentation which he would reject, the work as a whole is a serious contribution to theological thought and requires careful consideration from dogmatic theologians.

IAN HISLOP, O.P.