

**THE OLD TESTAMENT AND CHRISTIAN FAITH**, ed. Bernard W. Anderson, *Herder & Herder*, New York, 1969, xii + 271 pp. £2.95.

**THE CHRISTIAN MEANING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT**, by Norbert Lohfink, S.J., trans. R. A. Wilson, *Burns & Oates*, 1969, x + 169 pp. 35s.

These two volumes tackle the problem of the relationship between the Old and the New Testament in very different ways.

The former title, edited by Professor Anderson of Princeton, is a reissue of a volume first printed in 1963, and is a welcome 'sign of the new ecumenical atmosphere in which discussions of biblical interpretation are carried on'. It is in fact a symposium in which the various participants, belonging to differing theological traditions and faiths, were called upon to respond to the thesis set forth in Dr Rudolf Bultmann's leading essay, 'The Significance of the Old Testament for the Christian Faith'. The importance of the volume is guaranteed by the names of the participants who form a distinguished circle of scholar friends around the central figure of Rudolf Bultmann—Brunner, Cullmann, Dillenberger, R. L. McKenzie, Michalson, Richardson, James M. Robinson, Vischer, Voegelin, Westermann, G. Ernest Wright. Perhaps the most important essay is that of Voegelin, whose article 'History and Gnosis' demolishes Bultmann's thesis that today practically speaking the Old Testament can have very little significance for the Christian Faith, except under crippling limitations. He not only disagrees with Bultmann's criticism of scriptural proof and allegoresis, but holds that at the core of his thesis is a 'reliance on a gnostic existentialism that wills the annihilation of nature and history'. For Voegelin, the reality of Scripture is much larger than the reality admitted by existentialism. And whatever the truth of the matter, there is no doubt that the immensely clever verbal gymnastics in which Bultmann indulges leave one in the end with a sense of frustration and bewilderment as to what it all amounts to. His theology of history is certainly suspect as to its validity.

To go from Bultmann to Lohfink is like coming down out of the clouds into a region

where things are not merely what they seem, but where an original, powerful and scholarly intellect throws new light on familiar things. The first chapter gives us a splendidly clear and convincing exposition of the views generally accepted today regarding the formation of the Old Testament writings over a period of more than a thousand years, and leads us discreetly through the jungle of the relations between the four documents J, E, D and P. Yet the value for a Christian of a national literature created in such an involved manner depends entirely on its inspired and inerrant character; and so in his second chapter on 'The Inerrancy of Scripture' he sets out to answer the question in what sense the Scripture can be said to be inerrant. He establishes that the problem can only rightly be envisaged from the standpoint of the whole Bible, and not from the position of a particular text nor even of a particular book, nor even from the point of view of one or other of the Testaments, but only from Scripture as a whole. 'The whole Divine Scripture is one book and this one book is Christ'; and hence he concludes that in practice one will reach the inerrant sense of scripture only in biblical theology.

In subsequent chapters, Fr Lohfink takes a number of passages and topics from the Old Testament, and with the aid of a thoroughly modern scientific exegesis he shows that the Old Testament has indeed a great deal to say to us today. In the opinion of many scholars this little work, originally published in Germany in 1965 under the title *Das Siegeslied am Schilmeer*, is one of the most important works on the Old Testament to have appeared during the past ten years; and though the translation is not without some minor defects, we must be truly grateful to the publishers for making it available to the English-speaking world.

BERNARD ORCHARD, O.S.B.

**THE PARABLES OF JESUS IN MATTHEW 13**, by J. D. Kingsbury. *S.P.C.K.*, London, 1969. 180 pp. 40s.

A sub-title describes this work accurately enough as 'a study in Redaction-Criticism', and the substance of the work was a dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Theology at the University of Basel in 1966. 'Matthew' is

repeatedly referred to, but quite independently of any particular theory of authorship. The name Matthew simply denotes the person who is responsible for drafting the first Gospel as it has been preserved and handed down to us

(p. 10). Moreover 'widespread scholarly opinion' holds that the Gospel was written in the last decades of the first century to meet the needs of a specific body of Christians living somewhere within Syro-Phenicia.

These assumptions are followed by a brief investigation of modern trends in parabolic interpretation, from A. Jülicher to A. T. Cadoux, C. H. Dodd and Joachim Jeremias. Structure and content of chapter 13 are analysed, and this is followed by a treatment of Matthew's concept of the Kingdom of Heaven, 'the most important single concept in St Matthew's entire Gospel'. Our author, however, persistently rejects any identification of the Kingdom with the Ecclesia: but this is at least debatable when we remember among other things that the Church of Matthew is a community called to perfection through its understanding or knowledge: and this knowledge is defined in 13, 10 as a knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The main body of this study consists of a critical appraisal of Jesus' Parables to the Jewish crowds by the Sea (13, 1-35), and then of the Parables to the Disciples in Private (13, 36-52). There are some valuable insights and much is rewarding reading.

The observations and conclusions which follow stress how this chapter 13 is a great turning-point in the Gospel, not simply as a matter of past history but as one of immediate relevance for the Church to which St Matthew belongs. Negatively he depicts the Jews as those who do not know and do God's will; positively he depicts the disciples who represent the church of this day as those who know and do God's will (p. 132).

The portrait of Jesus which emerges from this chapter is unusually variegated, yet for the most part Jesus appears as Kyrios and as Son of Man. These two concepts can denote the

present activity of Jesus between Resurrection and Parousia, and his future activity of coming as Judge (p. 133). The Church, portrayed in some detail, incorporates Jews and gentiles and is marked by missionary endeavour and persecution.

Matthew had no theory of parables in the formal sense. He appropriates the Marcan tradition according to which parables are riddles. He then attributes to disciples or the Church an ability to comprehend such revelatory riddles, but no such ability is granted to the Jews who are obdurate in the face of God's revelation (13, 10-13, 16).

However, the most important principle established in this study is that Matthew employs parables of Jesus in order that Jesus Kyrios, who lives in the midst of the Church, can address himself to the situation of the Church in Matthew's day. The underlying supposition all through is that the Church of that day was far from Christ's own time, far enough for the parables of Jesus 'to be exposed to the influences of both an oral and a written tradition' (p. 50). The space of time needed for all this is more easily assumed than proven to have existed.

The other underlying supposition running all through this study, is that Matthew depends on Mark. Yet even this can be debated in the light of some excellent recent work (cf. E. P. Sanders, *The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition*, Cambridge, 1969).

Whatever the truth about the critical problems, the parables of Jesus certainly remain 'a living tradition, for through them Jesus Kyrios brings men face to face with that total grace and that total demand' that are part and parcel of the Kingdom of Heaven, effective today as they were in St Matthew's time.

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.

**GALATIANS: A DISCUSSION OF ST PAUL'S EPISTLE** (Householder Commentaries: No. 1), by John Bligh, S.J. *St Paul Publications*, London, 1969, 544 pp. 90s.

These engaging lectures on the Epistle to the Galatians are too diffuse and too idiosyncratic to make a satisfactory book.

The chief idiosyncrasy is Fr Bligh's conviction that Paul arranged his whole argument and each part of his argument in a deliberate chiasmic pattern; that is, if he said A B C at the beginning of the book or at the beginning of any single section, he would be sure to say C' B' A' at the end. There is, in fact, a beautiful chiasmic structure of words in Galatians 4,

4-5, as Lightfoot has shown, but the economy and verbal felicity of this section is in such contrast with what I can only see as the loose and disorderly correspondences which Fr Bligh finds lying on each side of this section, that Fr Bligh's theory can hardly be right. The man who knew how to write a chiasm like Galatians 4, 4-5 would not have contemplated a chiasmic pattern for the epistle as a whole in which 1, 13-2, 10 is supposed to be balanced by 5, 11-6, 11. When we find that Fr Bligh often