

SCRIPTURE

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EDITORIAL

For a long time past there have been encouraging signs of a more balanced approach to the study of the Bible, among Catholics and non-Catholics alike. The change over is naturally more noticeable among non-Catholics for they had travelled further. This new direction to Biblical study is very largely a reaction to the excesses of Biblical criticism which have been so familiar a feature of our intellectual landscape, for the past century and a half. It is not difficult to understand both tendencies. Our knowledge of Semitic languages and literature increased so rapidly during the nineteenth century that the study of the Bible centred largely on its philological and literary aspects. Inevitable as this may now seem, nevertheless it brought in its train the serious decline of the theological study that, after all, is or should be the chief aim of the student of the Bible. This decline seems to have come about in two ways, at least in non-Catholic circles. The Bible was considered more and more on the level of any other ancient literature and interpreted according to the same principles. Much that once had seemed to be supernatural was now seen to be capable of a natural explanation, and the principle was very reasonably formulated that the supernatural ought not to be invoked where a natural explanation would suffice, and was warranted by the context. But critics went much further than this. Those with rationalistic tendencies soon reached the point of excluding the supernatural altogether and with it nearly all the theological doctrine of the Bible. A second reason for the decline in theological interpretation may be found in the absorption of the critic in his textual and literary analysis. The material to be studied soon became so vast in volume that it required a lifetime of study to master it. No doubt the critic often intended to pass on to the theology, but too often that time never came and the means became an end. The effect on the pupils of such men was what one might expect. Either they acquired an interest in criticism for its own sake, or accepted it with apathy, or reacted violently against its religious aridity. This is substantially the analysis of the situation among non-Catholics as presented by Dr. Lowe, in *The Interpretation of the Bible* (ed. C. W. Dugmore), p. 108, and to a lesser degree it is true also of some Catholics.

There can be small doubt that the over-emphasis of the textual and literary side provoked a distaste for it and a desire to return to the reli-

gious doctrine of the Bible. This was chiefly noticeable in regard to the Old Testament. It began to be studied once more as a whole instead of being regarded as a collection of ancient documents. Its deep significance in relation to the New Testament came to be better appreciated. The spiritual or mystical sense, which Catholics for so long had been almost alone in recognizing, was rediscovered, as it were, by non-Catholics and recognized as an essential method of interpretation of the Old Testament. Catholics, too, deepened their knowledge of this method of interpretation by a study of the Fathers, the Liturgy and in general the Tradition of the Church. For many, this has been in effect a rediscovery of the Old Testament as well as a deeper knowledge of the New. It has meant further a much better appreciation of the Liturgy for nowhere do we find so extensive a use of the Scriptures and so much light thrown on its traditional interpretation.

Are we then on the way to a genuine Biblical revival? As far as Catholics are concerned, the signs appear to be most prominent in certain Continental countries. But as already indicated, the revival is by no means confined to Catholics. It is common to all who appreciate and study the Bible.

An interesting, and, we think, encouraging feature of this in England recently has been the extensive study by certain Anglo-Catholics of the mystical or spiritual sense of Scripture, in which they are returning to an appreciation of a traditional interpretation of the Church. May the Holy Spirit lead them further towards his Truth.

Back-Numbers of SCRIPTURE. A member would be very glad to obtain copies of *SCRIPTURE*, First Series, for October 1944, January 1945. Has anyone copies to spare? If so please communicate with the Editor, stating price.

Lending Library. In the last number we appealed for certain books and the generosity of our members was not found wanting. Within a week or so the following works had been presented: By Rev. T. Bird, D.D., MacRory, *The Epistles of St Paul to the Corinthians*, Boylan, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*; anonymously, Ricciotti, *The Life of Christ*, Harnack, *The Date of the Acts and of the Synoptic Gospels*. We sincerely thank the donors.

Books and Periodicals Received.

From Kath. Bibelwerk Stuttgart:

Straubinger, *Job, Ein Trostbuch*, 1947.

From Ch. Beyaert, Bruges, Belgium:

Gorce, *Petite Introduction à l'Etude des Pères*.

Gorce, *Newman et les Pères*.

- Aelred de Rievaulx, *L'Amitié Spirituelle* (Présentation, Traduction et notes par J. Dubois).
- Poelman, *Plongées dans les Actes*.
- Hoornaert, *Le Bréviaire, Prière de tous*.
- Les Psaumes et les Cantiques du Bréviaire Romain* (Text of the new Latin Psalter with a French translation by Van der Waeter). From Sands and Co. :
- Messenger, *Two in One Flesh*, 3 vols. 1949.
- Analecta Lovaniensia et Orientalia*.
- Cerfaux, *La Charité Fraternelle et le Retour du Christ selon Jo. xiii, 33-8*. 1948.
- Van den Busche, *Le Texte de la Prophétie de Nathan sur la Dynastie Davidique*.
- Coppens, *Miscellanées Bibliques*, xviii-xxiii. 1948
- Collectio Hebraica Hierosolymitana* xv. *Histoire d'une Ame de Ste. Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus*. Traduction Hébraïque, sous la direction du R. P. J.-M. Paul Bauchet, O.C.D.
- From S.C.M. Press :
- Hunter, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*. 1949.
- Catholic Biblical Quarterly*.
- Pax*.
- Cultura Biblica*.
- Verbum Domini*.
- Theologisch-praktische Quartal Schrift*. Linz a. d. Donau. Austria.
- Collationes Brugenses*.
- Bibel und Kirche*, 1949. Kath. Bibelwerk.

"THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED"

WITNESSES TO CHRIST. III. ST JOHN THE APOSTLE

"That which existed from the beginning—that which we have seen with our eyes, what we have watched, what our hands have handled . . . we are speaking of the Word of Life . . . yes, that Life was manifested and we have seen it and are bearing witness to it and are proclaiming to you that Eternal Life . . . what we have seen and what we have heard, that we are proclaiming to you too !" (I John i, 1-3).

With these words, almost breathless in his earnestness, St. John begins his First Epistle. He is determined to bear witness to a fact—a physical fact, not only a mystical experience ; his eyes have seen—his ears have heard—his hands have touched That which was eternal and yet as truly man as he himself was. There were already those who were "anti-Christ,"