

Mighty God : but not all are agreed on this interpretation. The Wisdom of God is described at great length in the 'Wisdom literature' of the Old Testament. In the Book of Wisdom, especially, the description is such (cf. chap. vii) that the notion of personality is almost attained. Nevertheless, it is not clear whether we are to identify this Person as the Word of God or the Holy Spirit, though it may best be regarded as a preparation for the doctrine of the Word of God expounded in St John's Gospel. The references to the Spirit of God in the Old Testament are less clear, e.g. 'The spirit of God moved over the waters' (Gen. i, 2); 'The spirit of the Lord came upon him (Saul)'. Nothing could be concluded from such texts as to the personality of the Holy Spirit.

There are of course solid reasons for this obscurity in the Old Testament regarding the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity. The people of Israel were always prone to idolatry as may be seen from their history, and God, through his prophets, was always insisting on his One-ness, as distinct from the multiplicity of gods that distinguished the beliefs of the Gentiles. It took the Israelites all their time, so to speak, to learn this lesson. It would have been utterly beyond their comprehension in their then state of spiritual childhood to have grasped the sublime and profound doctrine of the Trinity. Moreover, the usefulness of this doctrine, if one may so speak, is essentially a Christian usefulness : it is bound up with the whole of Christ's revelation of God become Man and with the life of grace in particular which we owe to the Incarnate Word. Hence it is that Jesus reserves to himself to explain the mystery of the Trinity to men.

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Is not the Catholic practice of calling priests 'Father' contrary to the words of Christ, 'Call none your father on earth', Matt. xxiii, 9 ?

This passage, like any other should be studied in its context and against the New Testament background. Our Lord is speaking with special reference to the Pharisees. They had so flagrantly abused their position of authority that he felt it necessary to warn the people against them. There was no contemporary custom of calling anyone *living* 'father', but there was a custom of appealing to 'the Fathers' on a point of tradition. The 'Fathers' were prominent authorities now dead who were responsible for much of the Pharisaic tradition, so rigid and set and doing so much harm to the people. Our Lord is denying to these deceased 'Fathers' the authority they had arrogated to themselves and which was still accorded to them by the people. Hence Jesus does not say 'Be not *ye* called Father', but 'Call none your father'. He is urging the people to stop appealing to them as authorities. Our Lord is therefore speaking of men who had either falsely taken to themselves authority or who had abused such legitimate authority as they may have possessed.

There is no evidence that Jesus is giving a universal command. There are many such commands or exhortations which can only be properly understood in their context. All would agree, for example, that it would be a wrong inference to conclude from this text that one should not call one's own father by that name. Yet this is as logical an inference as the other, if one takes the passage literally apart from its context.

The use of the title 'Father' is very ancient in the Church. It dates back to the beginning of monasticism, for of course the very name 'abbot' means 'father'. In other words the title was in use at a time when religion was in its first fervour and there could be no question of widespread abuse. Indeed what could be more natural than to call one's religious superior 'Father'? Our Lord said that all fatherhood on earth is named after our Father in heaven, just as all authority on earth is delegated by God and is a sharing in his authority. R. C. FULLER.

BOOK REVIEWS

Bellarmino Bagatti, O.F.M. : *Gli Antichi Edifici Sacri di Betlemme (Pubblicazioni dello Studium Biblicum Franciscanum N.9)*. Gerusalemme, Tipografia dei PP. Francescani, 1952. Pp. x, 279, 56 plates and 4 plans. Price not stated.

Our readers are already acquainted with the excellent work of the Franciscan Fathers in publishing detailed accounts of the shrines of the Holy Land. The volume on the monuments of Emmaus-el-Qubeibeh was noticed in Volume III (1948) 23f. and those on the sanctuary of the Visitation and on the discoveries at St John's, both at 'Ain Karim, in IV (1949) 29f. and 64f. The present work follows the same general scheme, full historical notices being followed by archæological descriptions. A regret may be expressed that, for the former, in many cases references are given only to secondary sources, which is inconvenient for those who do not happen to possess them. The first two chapters deal with the Basilica, the third with the Grotto and its adjuncts, the fourth with the buildings of the Byzantine period around the Basilica, the fifth with the Crusaders' constructions around the same, and the last with the village and neighbourhood. There are 65 illustrations in the text and in addition 119 photographic reproductions in the appendix of plates. There are copious references in the notes to the relevant literature. In a word everything has been done to make the work as useful as possible including the provision of a general index of sixteen columns and a list of biblical quotations. To the latter should be added Micheas v, 2, and Amos viii, 9, p. 67, II Paralipomenon xi, 6, p. 264; and the reference for Psalm cxx, 7 should be p. 268.