

REVIEWS

THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF GRACE. By C. Ryder Smith, D.D. (Epworth Press; 22s. 6d.)

This reviewer, as a dogmatic theologian, is not qualified to criticize this work on its own ground of Biblical exegesis and philology. He can only be grateful to the author for another volume of his meticulous scrutinies of leading Biblical conceptions, and therefore of the primary sources of all theology. But he may be allowed to remark how this objective, scholarly and unprejudiced examination of the sources indirectly but surely testifies to the conformity of Catholic dogma and theology with them. Dr Ryder Smith is not, of course, concerned with such things, but a Catholic theologian cannot fail to see that his work in fact does much to vindicate the Church's fidelity through the centuries to the written Word of God, both in her affirmations and in her condemnations, whether of Pelagian or some Reformed theology.

Dr Ryder Smith is perhaps too scholarly and meticulous to be exactly exciting, but his insights are often illuminating. Special mention may be made of his treatment of St Paul's troublesome analogy of the potter and the clay, and with it of the whole biblical revelation regarding Grace, Election and Freedom. His few pages on Satan, and his whole chapter on the co-existence of Grace and Sin (though here Catholic theology would add some qualifications) are especially stimulating.

Only briefly and at the very end does he try to vindicate his Methodist doctrine of Assurance. And here, significantly, his appeal is beyond the Bible to existentialist 'self-authenticating experience' which 'posits the *reality* of two "subjects"'. Unquestionably the Bible also knows of such experience; but to proclaim it as a norm, even as a necessity, is to fall dangerously short of the Bible doctrine of God-given hope in God alone, even in spite of all appearances and experiences to the contrary.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

THE ALL-KNOWING GOD: Researches into Early Religion and Culture.

By Raffaele Pettazzoni. Translated by H. J. Rose (Methuen; 60s.)

Fr Wilhelm Schmidt has argued for a 'primitive monotheism' (more like a full-grown natural theology) for which omniscience was an attribute contained in an articulated conception of the unique Supreme Being; Jung has proclaimed that this attribute 'more or less regularly accompanies' the divine archetype; Max Muller, on linguistic grounds, 'discovered' that one all-seeing Heavenly Father, *Dyaus*, *Theos*, *Zeus* or *Deus*, was the ancient and common heritage of all Indo-Europeans. Notwithstanding the evident fallibility of familiar

Greek gods, it has become difficult to dissociate Divinity from the All-Seeing Eye.

Professor Pettazzoni, painstakingly pursuing his factual researches into every corner of the globe, will have none of this. Only *some* gods, originally mostly sky-gods, are believed to be omniscient. They differ widely from place to place, and in their function in the societies in which they are venerated—or in practice ignored. It will hardly be contested that, given his method, his 'fundamental conception that religion is a form of culture, organically related to the culture-complex of which it forms a part', and his restriction to *early* religion and culture, he has more than proved his point, and collected an abundance of interesting information on the way. But only incidentally does he tell us how these 'high gods' of light and the day, who at first seem to have been unrelated to the chthonic powers of darkness and the night, come to be related to them, and often to 'conquer' and absorb them. 'Primitive monotheism' may indeed, so far as the factual evidence goes, be 'the monotheistic idea torn from the concrete world of its historical growth and arbitrarily projected into an abstract world of origins' (p. 370). But later monotheism is a fact, and while the author suggests much about its beginnings, he does not satisfy our curiosity about its growth. We hope he will do so. VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

DIX ANS DE DECOUVERTES DANS LE DESERT DE JUDA. By J. T. Milik. (Editions du Cerf.)

The only point to regret about Fr Milik's superb book is that it did not appear sooner. As things are it is so painfully obvious that the ill-qualified, the irresponsible, and the sensationalists have arrived first and shouted loudest. Already the 'origins of Christianity' have been eagerly sought and 'discovered' in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and lasting damage has been done to the cause of truth. Amid the welter of incomparably inferior literature which has thus grown up round the subject, Fr Milik's book is all too likely to go unnoticed. It will not be realized widely enough that this slim unpretentious volume is the work of one of the three or four greatest experts in the world, one who has been, from the first, a leading member of the editorial team working on the Qumran manuscripts.

Fr Milik begins his book by telling once again, briefly but vividly, the story of how the scrolls were discovered. In the following chapter he describes the scrolls themselves, dividing them into Canonical Books, Apocrypha, and Writings proper to the sect. Examples are provided in which extracts from the Dead Sea manuscripts are set out in parallel columns with the corresponding passages from the septuagint and masoretic text, to illustrate the similarities and variations. The essential material has probably never been described at the popular