

were our brethren, prodigal children of our own family. It is a family of which we are the more proud after reading, and hearing read, this fascinating and honest book.

BEDE BAILEY, O.P.

REVELATION AND REDEMPTION: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE THEOLOGY OF ST JOHN. By Dr William Grossouw. (Geoffrey Chapman, London; 8s. 6d.)

This little book originally appeared in Holland during the war, was later translated into French and recently adapted for the English-speaking world by the American Carmelite Martin Schoenberg. Fr Grossouw, Professor at the University of Nijmegen, is one of the leading exegetes in Holland, but does not confine himself to writing specialist literature. Among others he wrote two popular books, often reprinted in and outside Holland, which deeply influenced the growing movement of modern piety by giving it a basis of fresh biblical theology. The present book is in the same vein. It is not the author's intention to give the customary sort of introduction to a book of the Bible, in the form of information about the author, content and division of his work. St John is the most fascinating, but also the most difficult of all New Testament writers, and Fr Grossouw wants to 'lead the reader *into* the sanctum of St John's thought, not merely to bring him to the threshold and leave him there'. He therefore brings him into contact with St John's leading ideas and peculiar way of thought. We think of St John as an abstract writer. This book shows this to be a misleading opinion. Like all Semites he knew no 'concepts', abstract ideas as we do. For them to know a thing is not looking at it from a distance, but to 'handle' it, to experience it in their own life. St John writes about a living reality, which his seemingly abstract words do not so much analyse conceptually as stand for, fully in the concrete. His vocabulary is therefore wider and more fluctuating than is usual in western languages: words we would think rather different (light and truth, e.g.) cover in fact the same reality. After he has given this necessary introduction in a first chapter, Fr Grossouw introduces us to a few characteristic ideas, Light, Life and Love, then gives an extensive treatment of St John's christology, explaining terms like 'Word' (*Logos*), 'Son', 'Saviour', and finally deals with the answer of man to the redemption and revelation offered in Christ: Faith and Love, Hierarchy and Sacraments.

All this is the best of modern exegetical science, presented in a plain and personal way. There is an abundance of parallel texts, to which an index at the end of the book refers; the reader has to work hard, but the reward is that one begins to see something of the greatness of St

John's theology which, once experienced, one will look further for ever after. Only at times one meets some rather unnecessary apologetics, a few misprints and odd translations. I personally regret that Grossouw's telling example to illustrate the relation between Christ's real words and St John's report of them ('If you listen to Reger's variations on a theme of Mozart you always hear Mozart's melody, albeit with a late-romantic harmony') has disappeared from this translation. These little things, however, are not really worth mentioning. It is a pity that in Holland, where of all countries the Catholic background and religious climate are most alike to that of Britain, people speak such a rare language. There is a series of these little books worth reading; perhaps Fr Schoenberg may find the time to translate some more of them.

MARK SCHOOF, O.P.

THE GOSPEL OF JOY. By J. M. Perrin, O.P. (Blackfriars; 11s.)

One is familiar enough with those forms of religion, or rather religiosity, which cultivate a shining morning face and foregather in conventicles labelled Pleasant Sunday Afternoon where folk address one another, self-consciously perhaps, as 'Brother'. It is easy to dismiss them with a sneer, but we should be wise first of all to examine our consciences. Has anyone perhaps been turned away from true religion to this kind of shallow religiosity by my failure to perceive what our medieval forefathers perceived more easily, namely that joy is not only a fruit of the Holy Ghost but a requirement of holiness? It would have been remarkable if English Catholics had remained for the last three hundred years untainted by the various forms of Calvinist Protestantism that have surrounded them and had not occasionally put on a long face and taken not their religion, but themselves, too seriously. However, Christian joy is more than beating the big drum and asserting that we are saved. Its roots are in the Gospel, in the good tidings of the coming of Christ and the transformation of human nature by redemption, a transformation that leaves plenty of room for pain and sorrow beside happiness and joy. Father Perrin in this short book gives us first a brief and sound analysis of Christian joy, and then applies these principles in meditations on the Beatitudes and in explaining the part joy should play in our sanctification. It is fitting that this book should be written by a son of St Dominic, who was notably a man whose intense suffering and hard work went side by side with a joy that radiated to other people.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.