

tension between grace and nature. The permanent discord between politics and religion which a Christian has to accept disappears when Buber makes the land of Palestine out to be a sacrament, the geographical sign of grace, the field of faithful obedience. The kingdom is to come in the husbandry of that privileged patch of earth. But the first members of the Church were fishermen, and their mission was a complete break with the land—and, after the ascension, with locality at all. The whole idea of evangelisation is absent from Israel.

This is a small book but an important one. If it is true that we are the only other people who understand what the Jews are, it is equally true that it is only if we understand what they are that we can understand what we are ourselves. The Church must one day rejoice with Israel: 'For if the loss of them be the reconciliation of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but *life from the dead*'?

FERGUS KERR, O.P.

LIFE AFTER DEATH, by Maurice and Louis Becqué, c.s.s.r.; translated by P. J. Hepburne-Scott; Burns & Oates, Faith and Fact Books, 8s. 6d.

The editors of the series were certainly right in having a volume which deals with life after death. It is curious that Catholics tend to discuss this subject too little; it is a very important aspect of Christian doctrine, and by emphasising the Christian view of death perhaps the most effective impact may be made on modern materialism. This book begins with chapters on the future life in contemporary literature and philosophy. These are useful, but suffer inevitably from the drawback that they are directed to French readers, and the French outlook is not quite the same as the outlook here. Much, however, that is said is naturally of general application, as about the despair caused by unbelief. 'What is the ideal offered to youth? To live wildly in the despair of life, to live a life already dead, worse than death. At this point, anguish has become a god, a god of hell. Man is angered, but the believer resolves his anguish in his faith' (page 32).

Next, there are chapters on the non-Christian world religions and the future life, while the second half of the book sets out the Catholic teaching, first on heaven, and then on hell and purgatory. What is not discussed is the connection between God's plan for the human race in the natural order in this life and in the next, the question: What is it that God wishes man to do on earth? What is man to aim at achieving in temporal affairs so as to show his love for God? How does the carrying out of God's plan in this world affect his plan for the next world? This is an aspect of the problem which needs to be worked out, since otherwise the natural order in this world seems meaningless; it seems to have no purpose. The answer, of course, is in some way to bring in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body and of the risen world. We are told: 'The final redemption is our bodily resurrection (Rom. 8. 10). The bodily resurrection and the last judgment are one and the same thing' (page 81). But further explan-

ation is needed to show how there can be a connection between God's plan for this world and for the next.

The discussion of hell is rather disjointed. This doctrine is probably the hardest of all Christian doctrines to explain satisfactorily, but the difficulties are not very clearly expressed here, e.g., the question how the doctrine of hell is compatible with that of heaven; how the souls in heaven can be perfectly happy when aware of souls which are tragic failures; and what is the purpose of eternal punishment, what is the good it effects. Though these questions are not clearly dealt with, hints towards a solution of some of the difficulties are suggested. A very interesting quotation is given from pp. 87-8 of *Les Fins humaines* of Père Sertillanges, concluding with these words: 'In principle, hell is eternal. But with regard to any particular person, whoever he may be, no one can restrict the creator's freedom. God will do what he wills, as often as he will. As to this, we have no revelation' (page 108). This seems reasonable and helpful and it opens the door very wide indeed. The reader may wonder what exactly is meant by 'in principle', and if the extent of God's unrevealed mercy can be limited. The implications of the theory should be faced honestly.

Enough has been said to show that this volume of the *Faith and Fact Series* ought to have many readers. It contains much that is of value, even though so short a book on so large a subject naturally lies open here and there to criticism.

DOM MARK PONTIFEX

THE THEOLOGY OF ST LUKE, by Hans Conzelmann; Faber and Faber, 30s.

As the title of this book indicates, it is not a study of *Acts* or of the third gospel, nor even of both together; but a study of the mentality and trend of thought which produced both—and made it necessary to produce both.

The thesis is that the delay in the *parousia* made it necessary to consider the position of the Church, not as a slight pause or an uncomfortable epilogue to the life of Christ, but as an independent entity. This then involved further a re-consideration of the history of salvation, and even of the position of our Lord himself. The result was that Luke saw the history of salvation in three quite distinct periods—the Old Testament, the time of our Lord, and the period of the Church. Our Lord then becomes, not the end of time, as the prophets and the first Christians thought him, but 'the centre of time' (this is in fact the German title of the present work).

This theology, the author argues, has had its influence on—has indeed determined—Luke's writing in *Acts* and his gospel. The Old Testament is definitely preparatory: this includes everything before our Lord himself, even John the Baptist. Thus, John is not presented as a forerunner but simply as a prophet; he does not preach that the kingdom is at hand, but simply acts like any prophet in giving moral exhortation and teaching. The period of our Lord is simply the 'time of salvation'; after the temptations, the devil goes away ('until the