

enables them to work patiently and methodically in those small groups from which alone any big enterprise can begin: 'I should not rely on sudden, startling effects, but on the slow, silent, penetrating, overpowering effects of patience, steadiness, routine and perseverance.' Thus Newman in the university discourse already referred to. These are the roots of his theology and of his attitude to the spiritual life: 'men of strong practical sense' are not necessarily inferior, and the results wrought by 'less sensitive minds' may seem to be better only in the short run. This is what a study of this 'tedious' period has to offer us; and as to why our indebtedness to the editor, Fr Stephen Dessain, grows with each volume he publishes, we have Newman's own words for our warrant: 'Biographers varnish, they assign motives, they conjecture feelings, they interpret Lord Burleigh's nods, but contemporary letters are facts . . . the true life of a man is in his letters.'

JOHN COULSON

GOD SPEAKS TO US, an introduction to the Bible, by Hubert Richards; 'Where we Stand' series, D.L.T.; 2s. paper, 6s. 6d. hard bound.

This is the first of a series of at least 48 booklets, each of 64 pages, meant mainly for the sixth forms of schools, but with interest for laypeople generally, since it is to cover all areas of Christian teaching. Such a series is long overdue. C.T.S. pamphlets deal with most questions, but few of them take up a reasonably mature theological standpoint, and their inadequacy has long been a real cause of scandal to many Catholics. There is now *Faith and Fact*; but the books were written for the needs of a French public, and while some volumes are good, so many are of doubtful value that it fails to provide the complete instruction that it sets out to give. Will the present editors, Fr Flood and Mr Olsen, succeed where others have failed? The first indications are most favourable. There is a theologically literate general plan, which follows the pattern of saving history through God's relationship with man in Israel, in Christ, and in the Spirit who forms the Church as sacrament of Christ; the sacraments lead naturally to a discussion of a Christian's daily life and work. Then the contributors are English, or sufficiently nearly so to count as such; for what it is worth, a good half of them are also contributors to this journal. Finally, as the first-fruits of the enterprise, and pledge of good things to come, the editors have given us this splendid introduction to the Bible by Fr Richards.

However men of earlier times managed to come to terms with the Bible, their methods have increasingly failed to appeal over the last hundred years, the Darwinian century. Our thinking is radically historical; things don't make sense to us until we have traced out their development. But this is just what critical studies have done for the Bible; they have made it meaningful once more to modern man. As often happens, the Catholic Church has been slow to use this new approach, especially in English-speaking countries; but unlike the Evangel-

icals, we are fortunately not committed to fundamentalism, and progress has been rapid, once off the mark. Had it been otherwise, the chances of making much headway in the modern world would have been appreciably less. This book of Fr Richards', should it have the use it deserves to have in our schools, is going to contribute substantially to a reduction in the lapse-rate.

His writing is bound to appeal to adolescents. It is downright, clear, and most important of all, he never talks down. For instance: 'If the book of Joshua has given such a complete account of the conquest, why does the book of Judges start the whole story again from the beginning and contradict it so flatly?' I'm not sure that I agree with the answer, which turns on the 'undisputed' fact that 'the same author wrote both books'; whatever may be said, they can't have the same *author* (the first is probably Elohism, the second Jahwism) and while they may have both been *edited* Deuteronomistically (which is to claim much less) even this is in dispute for Judges I. That, however, doesn't matter; what matters is that children are being trusted with searching problems, that the old paternalism is at last on the way out. Nor does it matter that others would have probably picked on different things to include; 64 pages isn't a lot to play with, and I would certainly have spent less time on the tired question of inerrancy, though no doubt some treatment is needed in the present bad state of teaching. On the whole the right things are all said, and in the right way. In short it is an excellent book, and a fine advertisement for the entire enterprise.

LAURENCE BRIGHT, O.P.

OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIAN BELIEF, with an Introduction by A. R. Vidler; Constable, 12s. 6d.

There is no doubt that intellectual and moral honesty is one of the first duties in life, especially in religious life. At the same time one could not safely deny that this very honesty is continuously threatened and seriously endangered by our human callousness and insincerity. We all have tried to escape from an all too strenuous duty into the easy way of prefabricated solutions, either legalistic or intellectual. This is our human tragedy, the *pesanteur humaine* Simone Weil described so rightly. Therefore we can only approve when Cambridge divines think it to be their duty to bring before the court of our conscience the modern objections against our faith, either moral (D. M. McKinnon), psychological (H. A. Williams), historical (A. R. Vidler) or intellectual (J. S. Bezzant). But honesty does not exclude the sense of respect for our fellowmen, especially in such important and delicate matters as our faith in a revealing and redeeming God.

Therefore we read this book, we are afraid, with mixed feelings. Most of the objections are indeed real objections, though some originated from a rather primitive form of theological tradition, and a few were not completely free from a slight touch of hysterics. But objections are to be discussed, it seems, in a dialogue with people belonging to the same faith as much as with people who