

ZEUGNIS FÜR CHRISTUS. By Eucharius Berbuir. (Herder, Freiburg, 1949; DM.8.50.)

This book of 218 pages is an intimate study of the prologue of St John's Gospel (1, 1-18). It is the text, it would seem, of notes for the guidance of a study-circle given by a young Franciscan Father during the summer of 1946 at a German prisoner-of-war camp in France. As was done about the same time in England, a camp was set aside for theological students and priests who had been conscripted into the German army to enable them even as prisoners-of-war to continue in some way their studies. Such a camp was that at Chartres, and here Fr Berbuir, himself a prisoner-of-war, guided the theological studies of his 'Kameraden'. And this book, which bears his Provincial's *imprimatur* of 1947 but has only just appeared in print, is the result of this work. They were of course short of books of reference and the author gives in a preface a touching little bibliography of what was to hand. The absence of books compelled them to trust simply in the guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead them to 'the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God', for as the author writes, 'the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God . . . we have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God: that we may know the things that are given us from God'. The method then was 'simply to try and understand and explain what was there in the text' (p. 1), a method sure to find much in a subject like St John's prologue. So they take each word (in the Greek) lovingly in turn, each phrase, each sentence, and plumb its depths as far as they are able. They are strict and not fanciful, they interpret Scripture by Scripture, and all the time they are intent on understanding the full meaning, on seeing Christ, and bringing him through the Holy Word into their own souls and so bringing him into this wrecked world—a wreckage that was physically and poignantly present to them all the time. Thus they were trying to learn how to give 'testimony of Christ' in the world—these words being adapted from the prologue to form the title of the book. The whole book is dedicated to the French priest Abbé Le Meur, who had been put in charge of the spiritual welfare of the prisoners-of-war in France, and the dedication is made in the name of all his companions. The fact of this dedication by a German ex-soldier to a French abbé is a treasure indeed. And apart from the value of its intrinsic devotion, this book is a lovely memorial to the piety of the Catholic German soldiers, which those of us who worked among them came to know so well.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

ON ENGLISHING THE BIBLE. By Ronald A. Knox. (Burns Oates and Washbourne; 6s.)

In course of the years spent in producing his translation of the Old and New Testaments Mgr Knox published a number of articles

dealing with his work of translation, chiefly in *The Clergy Review*. The most important of these were 'Some Reasons Why' in 1945 at the time of the publication of the definitive edition of the New Testament, and 'Farewell to Machabees' in 1948 at the conclusion of the work on the Old Testament but before its publication. These are among the essays (eight in all) republished in the present volume. Of the other essays some were written while the work was in progress being prompted by problems that arose as he came to them. There is the essay on biblical translation originally read to the Higher Studies Conference at Upholland and hitherto never printed in its entirety but now published under the title 'Thoughts on Bible Translation'; others reprinted here are on problems dealing with particular words and phrases as in the *Clergy Review* articles 'Some New Testament Problems' and 'Justice and Scandal in the Gospels'. 'Some Reasons Why' is a *locus classicus* and an apologia for many renderings in the New Testament, prompted by the criticisms of a friend, and including many very important principles which guided Mgr Knox in the course of his work. The corresponding *locus classicus* with regard to the very different problem of Old Testament translation is 'Farewell to Machabees'. This last is hardly an apologia or defence since not only was it written before the Old Testament was published but so far there has not been anything noteworthy in the way of reasoned attack upon his work. There was, however, an important attack on Mgr Knox's Psalms which appeared separately in 1947. The rendering was criticised by Dr Bird in the *Tablet* and Mgr Knox made a spirited defence in a *Clergy Review* article entitled 'Morsu Amarissimo' (being a reference to the birds in the Canticle of Moses). This is reprinted in the present book. There is also a short sketch originally contributed to a memorial volume on Bishop Challoner in 1946 entitled 'Challoner and the Douay Version'. The most recent of all these essays is that here entitled 'Nine Years Hard', which is the text of a talk broadcast on Radio Eireann early this year (1949) which outlines the whole task.

Mgr Knox's own translation of the Bible is, very naturally, frequently and often keenly discussed, and it is right that he should have in this way provided us with an exposition of his principles and an apologia of his methods. Very many of the biblical translators of the past (including St Jerome himself) did so. St Jerome's remarks on the subject are scattered in his letters, and Mgr Knox's were scattered about the pages (principally) of the *Clergy Review*. An article in an ephemerides easily escapes our notice and after the passage of a year or two it becomes laborious even to search through the indices. One is therefore grateful to have these articles collected in a single book. The *loci classici* of 1945 and 1948 are important as permanent memorials to Mgr Knox's methods. Some of the other articles are of ephemeral value though they are always worth reading, especially if one had not come across them before.

One wonders whether the second volume of the Old Testament, containing the prophetic and poetical books of the Old Testament, will not perhaps call forth some interesting criticisms and so perhaps in return some equally interesting rejoinders. In that case the present volume has been issued too soon, but at the same time its appearance now is welcome.

Unless one happens to know the course of the history of the production of the Knox Bible, as outlined at the beginning of this review, or happens to have read these articles when they first came out, one is perhaps a little lost in this collection where the essays are undated and the immediate circumstances of writing not always instantly obvious from internal evidence. There is one personal detail that comes through almost every page and that is Mgr Knox's great love of the Holy Word of God and his joy in his task of translating it. This very impression for its own sake gives a special value to the book. On the first page he speaks of 'the ideas which have been simmering in my brain continuously these last three years; the ideas which, unless I am carefully controlled, I pour out freely in conversation. There is a great deal to be said about translating the Bible . . . and I am furiously interested in it'.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT. Vol. I. By Aage Bentzen. (G. E. C. Gads, Copenhagen, 1948; Geoffrey Cumberlege, O.U.P.; 25s.)

The author is Professor of Theology at the University of Copenhagen and published his book in Danish in 1941. He himself translated it into English and it has been printed and published in Denmark. The style is somewhat germanic, occasionally peculiar but always intelligible, and the general material, treatment, lay-out and typography are reminiscent of the older German 'Einleitungen'. The book is written with elaborate apparatus of scholarship and footnote documentation and is a mine of useful information. The thesis emerges at the outset in the course of an interesting study of the history of Old Testament criticism: the author is going to continue the line of 'Formgeschichte' inaugurated in 1906 by Hermann Gunkel, whose method is 'not analytical-critical "Introduction" but synthetical-creative "literary history"' (p. 14). This history of the literary forms, with its discernment of 'Gattungen' or categories of literature, together with an examination of their connection with life and worship among the various peoples of the ancient East, succeeded with Gunkel to the older scheme of the 'critical introduction', which reached its highest point in the work of Wellhausen (1878) and S. R. Driver (1891). The second part of Professor Bentzen's book consists of a methodical examination of the various forms. It is these pages that are the working out of the main thesis.