

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 reconsideration 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

appointed hour', which is the hour of the church, when temptation and trial return), and wherever our Lord is, there the devil is driven away; but neither on the one hand, nor on the other, is there any mention of a soteriological value in Christ's death—he does not 'win' salvation; he brings it.

In our Lord's life there are three stages. The first is the period of manifestation to Israel; the second is the progress to Jerusalem; and the third is the final events in Jerusalem. These final events mark Israel's rejection of its Messiah, and therefore its rejection of its own claim to be the chosen people. From Jerusalem, then, the centre of Israel, the new chosen people spread out—in the power of the Spirit, Christ's 'substitute'.

This book is not light reading, nor is it even spiritual reading. The difficulty is by no means only due to the somewhat crabbed style adopted. It is due even more to the fact that the author has set himself the task of writing a very technical work of biblical theology. It is significant, for example, that quotations are rarely given in full; references are given, and the reader is expected either to be thoroughly familiar with the text, or to be prepared to read it with the text open at his side. The author is uncompromising in his demand on our attention if we are to appreciate the range, complexity and subtlety of his thought (of which the brief outline given above conveys only the merest hint).

The method of this type of work is not unlike that of the physical sciences: a hypothesis is formed, which is then tested against the facts. This method always involves something which can appear to be close to a vicious circle: the facts play a double part—on the one hand they contribute *to* the hypothesis, and on the other hand they are illuminated *by* the hypothesis. It is not altogether unexpected, then, that occasionally we have the feeling that the facts are being rather forced—that the hypothesis is taken as a proof, and the facts read in such a way as to fit with it. Certainly, it is rather an easy way out of a difficulty to say, as the author does more than once, that 'the writer's intention is all the plainer because the scheme—Luke's plan, his theology—does *not* harmonize with his material—the facts which he has received from tradition'. The reader may feel that this is sometimes true of the 'theology of geography' which is here urged on us: Luke, we are told, had no idea of the real physical geography of Palestine, and merely used places in a way which would express his theology: Capharnaum, for example, is for him not by the sea-side; the sea is the place of manifestations which demonstrate the power of Jesus—just as the mountain is the place of communication with the secret world of heaven, and the desert is the abode of the devil.

In its extremest form, such a manner of argument will lead to the rejection of passages which do not harmonize with the thesis; and the author presents us with more than one example of this ruthless systemisation. For example, he argues that Luke's doctrine of election and his theory about the chosen 'witnesses' to our Lord leads him to make an opposition between those who were with our Lord from the beginning as chosen witnesses, and those who were with him merely as natural relations. This, he says, explains our Lord's 're-

jection' of his physical kindred in Luke 8. 19-21: 'Who are my mother and my brethren? They are those who hear the word of God and do it'. Catholics have other grounds for knowing that this cannot be the true explanation of this passage, at least as regards our Lady; but in addition, it seems to conflict with Acts I. 14, where Mary, the mother of Jesus, and his brethren are associated with 'the chosen witnesses' after the Ascension. Conzelmann is aware of this difficulty; and deals with it quite easily by saying: 'It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that Acts I. 14 is an insertion'.

But in such a coherent and cogently argued synthesis, it is easier to detail and specify the occasional points of disagreement than to give due credit to the book as a whole. We can merely say that this is an important and valuable work to which the student will return repeatedly, though critically, for illuminating comment on individual texts based on an awareness of the full range of Lukan thought.

L. JOHNSTON

PAULINE MYSTICISM: Christ in the Mystical Teaching of St Paul, by Alfred Wikenhauser; Herder-Nelson, 25s.

The only thing that is liable to be misleading about this book is the title. The word 'mysticism' is notoriously vague and ambiguous, but most people would take it to refer to something beyond the normal Christian experience. David Knowles, for example, in his recent book on the English mystics, describes it as a third kind of knowledge of God (superior to natural knowledge and the knowledge of faith) in which the truths of Christianity are directly known, accompanied by an equally immediate and experimental union with God by love. In the present work, 'mysticism' is not used in that sense. It is used to describe the peculiar nature of the real but spiritual union between a Christian and his Lord. The use of this term results from the very special context of discussion that the author is engaged in: a discussion in which one side would hold that Paul teaches a real, physical, pantheistic identification such as was envisaged in the Greek mystery religions; while another school would hold that it is a purely subjective relationship, by which the Christian's whole life is changed by virtue of his faith in Christ. In other words, 'mystical' is used here in the same sense in which it is used in the phrase 'mystical body'; it is, therefore, a question of what might in other contexts be called the spiritual life—justification—salvation—so many words to convey some idea of the *res Christiana*; and 'mysticism' is no less legitimate than these others, provided we know what it means.

And the author makes it perfectly clear what he means. He points out that Paul himself never uses 'mystical' or 'mystery' in our sense; and therefore seeks out the terms which Paul does use to describe this mysterious vital union. The commonest expression is the phrase 'in Christ'; and this is carefully analysed to see what exactly is implied in each case. Next, he deals with the means by