

Editorial

The past year has seen the appearance in English of a number of important European works of biblical theology, noted in the detailed survey which is printed below. Incidentally one is bound to be struck by the high proportion of them published by the S.C.M. Press, to whose enterprise Christians of every denomination owe a considerable debt. The books in question are works of serious scholarship, written for scholars; yet they can be read without too much difficulty by the educated lay public—that body of people, growing in numbers and importance, to whom this Review itself is principally directed. This is surely a matter of importance. So often theological writing can only be for specialists, and has to be popularised for use of the general public. There would be a considerable loss if this public had always to be excluded from access to original thought at the growing limits of a subject; there is something very insipid about a constant diet of second-hand ideas, however clearly expressed. The problem is not, of course, unique to theology; science in particular gives rise to a similar difficulty, where to some extent it has been solved by making available cheap editions of classical works by the great scientists of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries.

The growth of biblical theology has now gone a long way towards solving this difficulty for Christian lay people, and one could wish that Catholics in particular were more aware of the material available to them at the cost of the comparatively small initial effort necessary to thinking their way into a world made unfamiliar by their education and training. Those who have already made the effort will witness to the greatness of the reward; the Bible, so formidable when considered as a heavy lump of continuous writing from Genesis through to the Apocalypse, comes alive in a complex interwoven pattern revealing an intelligible content—the plan of God worked out in theologically comprehensible history that in the end gives its meaning to the Christian life of liturgy and work and prayer. English Catholic scholars would do well to pay greater attention to this way of thinking theologically, if they are to make their long-awaited contribution to the renewal of the Church.