

GOD WHO ACTS. By G. Ernest Wright. (S.C.M. Press; 8s.)

This is one of the series of 'Studies in Biblical Theology' that includes a number of short works by distinguished non-Catholic scholars. Here the author contends that biblical theology should not, or rather cannot, be presented as a system of 'propositional dogmatics'. It is and must be a recital of God's acts, and of inferences from them. His acts are known by the interpretation of the historical events, and can be described only in the concepts of the biblical history. Biblical theology is defined as the confessional recital of the redemptive acts of God; the Bible is neither history for its own sake, nor a dogmatic system; but revelation in a particular historical medium.

The author himself objects that revelation must needs be given a logical, coherent form; he quotes with respect and affection the fine, orthodox and scholastic doctrine of God in the Westminster Confession, which is that of his own communion; but, he complains, 'it does not quite introduce us to the biblical God'. He then produces a system of his own: a doctrinal scheme given in historical terms. He makes the good point that Old Testament and New Testament must be taken together; Christ is the culminating point in the redemptive history.

One has much sympathy with the author's contention, and there is a great deal that is valuable in his book. Among Catholics the faith is too often taught in a merely schematic and abstract way. We need to present it far more 'in the round', with the action of life, as in so much of the Bible. But all the same, the author does not find that certain parts of Scripture fit well into his theory, for instance the Wisdom books; and he has a somewhat irrational horror of those categories, Hellenic and abstract as they are, thanks to which the Church has come to understand God's work of redemption.

JOHN HIGGENS, O.S.B.

GRAVITY AND GRACE. By Simone Weil. Translated by Emma Crauffurd. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 15s.)

There is no need at this date to spend time in recommending the work of Simone Weil to the English-speaking world; she has rightly become established as one of the most powerful religious thinkers of our time. Might I, however, mention two facts about her which are related in *Simone Weil, telleque nous l'avons connue* by P. Perrin and Gustave Thibon (who also contributes a fine introduction to the work reviewed here). The first is that Simone Weil's notebooks contains many sentences which do not represent a considered judgment, but were set down as ideas that had occurred to her and might later serve as material for further reflection. When we are aware of this I think we read her work with more understanding. Secondly, even her fierce asceticism had not removed her from the level of human frailty: she needed her cigarettes!