

new testament as *Heilsgeschichte* which this book so signally lacks. As it is he dismisses these trends wholesale in a series of sweeping generalizations. '... Modern biblical scholarship enables us to sweep aside the tortuous misunderstandings of medieval unbiblical speculation, and also those of more recent "liberal" theories...' (p. 231)—and so on. Moreover this tendency to over-generalize occasionally lands him in positions which seem to me indefensible. 'Merit is a notion which the new testament entirely discards' (p. 239). (Cf. Matt. xix, 27: '... we have left all and followed thee; *what then shall we have?*'). He also dismisses certain Catholic doctrines very cavalierly, as when, in a single disastrous sentence on p. 172 he replies to an objection of Emil Brunner against the virgin birth, and in the same breath ascribes a Manichaean origin to the doctrines of our Lady's immaculate conception and perpetual virginity. He adds that these doctrines are '... quite alien to the healthy biblical attitude towards sex!' Incidentally, it is to be observed that the important work done by Catholic new testament scholars on the continent is utterly ignored.

For all this it must be recognized in justice that Dr Richardson has managed to convey an immense amount of information in a form that is logical and lucid. He is a past and proven master of the 'theological word-book' technique, which he uses here with effect. Within its limits and in spite of its defects therefore, his book will be exceedingly valuable to new testament scholars.

J. BOURKE, O.P.

THE SILENCE OF ST THOMAS. By Josef Pieper. (Faber and Faber; 12s. 6d.)

Professor Pieper's essays on St Thomas are by now well enough known in England, thanks to Messrs Faber and Faber, to make special recommendation unnecessary. Professor Pieper has style, he has insight, he is sensitive to the needs of the time—a combination of qualities which, it must regretfully be acknowledged, is rare among expositors of St Thomas. No reader of the three essays translated in this volume, all of them concerned with the 'negative' element in St Thomas's philosophy, can fail to be impressed by Professor Pieper's openness to the humane in philosophy; and this again is specially to be welcomed in England today.

This is not to say that the present reviewer has not very definite reserves to make both with regard to the style and with regard to the positive content of this collection of essays. The use of texts from St Thomas is sometimes precisely essayistic; I am not at all sure, for instance, quite how the beautiful text from the commentary on the

*De Causis*, quoted on p. 61, is supposed to support the thesis that 'things are knowable because they are created'.

Professor Pieper maintains that the knowability and the unknowability of things are involved in a kind of circumincession, as it were: an insight which we are grateful to find expressed so lucidly. But it is not easy to see how this unknowability of beings can be so neatly pinned down and explained in terms of the unknowability of the relationship of imitation between creature and Creator. I do not deny that this is true *systematically*; within the 'system' of St Thomas's thought, that is to say, a statement of this sort can and should be made. But the unknowability, the mystery, of beings is what we encounter first in our experience of beings; it is precisely this unknowability which invites the mind to make the ultimate affirmation *that God is*. It seems paradoxical, or at any rate 'dialectical', to bring in the Creator in order to explain or to locate the unknowability of the creature; is the Creator known or unknown, philosophically, except through the knownness and unknownness of the beings with which and with whom we enter into existential intercourse? The mysterious intelligibility of Being is experientially and philosophically prior to the mysterious intelligibility of God. Perhaps Professor Pieper might gain from a re-reading of Heidegger's studies of the Presocratics here.

The translation seems very adequately done, as far as can be judged without comparison with the original. It should however be noted that the reference to a commentary on 'St John's epistle' on p. 38 is erroneous; St Thomas did not write such a commentary, and the text in question is to be found in the commentary on St John's *gospel*.

CORNELIUS ERNST, O.P.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE AND MYTH. By L. Malevez, S.J. (S.C.M. Press; 25s.)

The S.C.M. Press and Dr Olive Wyon have put us still further in their debt by publishing this excellent translation of Fr Malevez's extremely sympathetic and lucid exposition of the theology of 'demythologization' developed by the Protestant scholar Rudolf Bultmann. The present publication has the further advantage of providing a translation (by Bernard Noble) of a later study by Fr Malevez of Bultmann and Barth, which appeared originally in the *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*.

Fr Malevez's great merit as an expounder of Bultmann is his calm detachment. It is not easy to be detached about Bultmann; and in fact his views have stirred up the most passionate controversy among German Protestant theologians. At the same time there is no denying his learning and insight, and his existential impetus; and there is no