

The author covers Psalms 1-50. I know of no better meditation book on the Psalms and of none that helps us to pray the Psalms so well. May it soon be translated into English!

RICHARD J. FOSTER

THE TWO-EDGED SWORD. By J. L. McKenzie, S.J. (Bruce, Milwaukee; \$4.50.)

'The Intelligent Modern Man's Guide to the Old Testament' would be a just sub-title for this supremely competent book. The author succeeds admirably in translating scriptural modes of thought into modern categories. He has at his command all the technique of a most persuasive debater. Particularly effective is his chapter on revelation and the 'otherness' of the God of the Hebrews, and his elaboration of a most useful distinction between history and story.

But the critical reader may perhaps gradually begin to feel a certain reserve, such as a skilful debater is always liable to build up against himself; a feeling, hard to justify in detail, that it is all a little too neat to be true, that reality is being tailored slightly to fit this smart suit of clothes. The author says excellently that 'we cannot say that the thoughts are from God, the language from man; for God uses both the thoughts and the language of the man through whom he writes'. But later on he says, 'it is, we think, sufficiently clear that the details of the account (of creation) are the work of the creative imagination, not of divine revelation'. This can of course be piously interpreted without difficulty to square with the former accurate statement of biblical inspiration. Yet the dichotomy has been introduced, the way is open for us to treat the details of any passage as so much literary decoration contributed by the writer with no direct relevance to the divine revelation. We are absolved from the effort of trying to discern a divine meaning even in the details, to grasp revelation through the very words of Scripture; from the effort, that is, which constituted for the patristic tradition the very essence of exegetical labour.

Indeed, the one serious limitation of this book is that the author can really find no room at all in his armoury for that typological or allegorical method which dominated Christian exegesis for so long. This means that there is a whole authentic line of the Church's tradition which his interpretation fails to assimilate. He is aware himself that he is liable to be criticized on this score. Allegory (or typology) opens the door to fantasy, he fears; but it may well be fantasy disciplined by tradition, and playing over a field clearly demarcated by tradition. We cannot nowadays, he declares, seriously treat Old Testament exegesis as a treasure-hunt for clues of Christ; but these are very loaded terms.

It seems eminently theological to treat exegesis as an effort to read the signs, to find and understand as many as possible of what St Augustine liked to call sacraments of Christ lurking in the letter of Holy Scripture.

EDMUND HILL, O.P.

THE BRIDGE: A Yearbook of Judaeo-Christian Studies. Vol. I and II.

Edited by John M. Oesterreicher. (Pantheon Books Inc.; \$3.95.)

The purpose of *The Bridge*, according to the statement of the Editor and his collaborators, is 'to serve the dialogue between Christians and Jews'. Since this dialogue is, we consider, of major theological importance (important to theology as a vital activity, moulding the Church's life here and now), we hope fervently that Fr Oesterreicher will be successful in his purpose. The two volumes before us give a fair promise that he will.

What is especially encouraging is that the second volume does appear to be a marked improvement on the first. The field covered in both volumes is a wide one. There are contributions on the Scriptures, informative articles on *causes célèbres* affecting the Jews, such as the Dreyfus affair and the Finaly scandal, essays on literary and artistic subjects germane to the theme of *The Bridge*—worthy of special mention are an essay on 'Shylock: the Quality of Justice', and on 'Marc Chagall, Painter of the Crucified'—brief descriptions of features of Jewish rites and worship, and some excellent book reviews. But in the first volume the nobility of the master idea seems to have so awed some of the contributors, that they deemed it necessary to primp out their style with furbelows which prove only too detrimental to their matter, whose substance is aerated to the point of evanescence. Whether the Editor has exercised a sterner discipline over the contributors to the second volume, or has been able to show more discrimination, we do not know, but at any rate this defect has been largely purged out of it.

It would seem that *The Bridge* is intended for a wide public of the educated Catholic laity, and that one of its prime functions is to act as a prophylactic against the virus of anti-Semitism, from which sad experience teaches us that the Church of God is by no means immune. It is realist in that it seems to pre-suppose a lower level of biblical and theological culture than of literary education. Perhaps, indeed, it is just a little too realist. One would like to see the Editor inviting his illustrious contributors on biblical and theological topics to offer, in suitable quantities, some portions of rather stronger meat, of more detailed and specialist scholarship.

The Editor, in the 'Word of Thanks' which introduces the second