

problem is political. Anyone who doubts this should consider the vast areas of Brazil, U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. *within* which wars—of normal type—do not occur; religion has certainly not been the factor in this development.

JOHN NIBB

THE SCRIPTURES AND THE SPIRIT

I HAVE much appreciated your double number on the Scriptures and the Spirit, and it made me more than ever regret that I was unable to attend the LIFE OF THE SPIRIT Conference at Bishton Hall in September 1953. We all have at heart the fostering of a yet greater love of the Scriptures, knowing well that these 'were written that we might believe, and believing have life in his name'.

Let us note, however, that what we yearn for and need is a greater love of the Scriptures simply. Two points, I feel, should be urged: (a) the English word 'spiritual' is too often used in these contexts, equivocally; (b) in the minds of many, the literal sense of Scripture is something arid and jejune, compound of grammar and criticism, giving nothing of spiritual nourishment. Many commentaries on Scripture might give grounds for such a thought; we must pray, and look for, better commentaries: they do exist!

Yet if, as we should, we take 'literal' in the sense of 'literary' (as Fr Vincent McNabb used to say), then we are much nearer the truth. The Scriptures are a whole library, written in many varying literary styles. But, whatever the style (poetic, narrative, dramatic, proverbial, etc.), that which is expressed by the words and intended by the human author is the literal (or literary) sense. The words may be woven into plain prose narrative, or expressive of colourful, daring imagery, and so we have a plain literal (or literary) sense. It can hardly too much be emphasized that symbols, images, figured speech are not necessarily expressing anything more than the literal (or literary) sense of Scripture.

As some articles in the double number have admirably pointed out, we do need to know the vivid imagery, mind pictures and symbols of the biblical writers; we shall never understand the Scriptures sufficiently until we do—but (and

this must be added) having that understanding of the writer's language, symbols, etc., we shall have, for the most part, and in the first place, better equipment for the grasp of the literal (or literary) sense of Scripture. The typical, spiritual, mystical, 'real' (whatever we call it) sense is of another order. However, this is not the place for a treatise on the senses of Scripture; and there is no need for it, as the basic principles are succinctly and clearly set out by Fr Sebastian Bullough in his article on 'The Spiritual Sense of Scripture' (pp. 343-353).

The word 'spiritual' is the villain in all discussions of this sort. It may mean (i) spiritually nourishing. This is true of Scripture whenever read or interpreted in *any* legitimate sense. (ii) It may be used as a synonym for 'typical' or 'mystical' (the sense conveyed by the *res* in St Thomas's treatment).

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.



STUDIES IN THE LITURGY

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

HERE ARE four books,¹ published last year, all giving evidence of the considerable wave of deep study and interest in the history of the liturgy, which is characteristic of the present time. After the first pioneers like Abbot Guéranger and Dr Daniel Rock, we find modern studies taking a definite form about sixty years ago with the publication of Mgr Louis Duchesne's *Origines du Culte Chrétien*, first published in English under the title *Christian Worship* in 1903. This book is a landmark of its period. About the same time there was Edmund Bishop's *The Genius of the Roman Rite* (1902), followed by the work of Dom Cabrol, Dom Leclercq (the

¹ THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP. An Outline of Liturgical History. By Dom Benedict Steuart. (Longmans; 30s.)

L'ORDINAIRE DE LA MESSE. Texte critique, traduction et études. By Dom Bernard Botte, o.s.b., and Christine Mohrmann. (Cerf, Blackfriars.)

LE SACRIFICE DE LOUANGE. By Dom Jean Juglar, o.s.b. (Cerf, Blackfriars.)

HOLY MASS. Notes on the Liturgy. By Dom Eugene Vandeur. 5th and Revised Edition. (Burns Oates; 15s.)