

conclusion from an accurate description of the former. As for the mythical and historical aspects of our knowledge of Jesus Christ, Rowe succeeds in pointing out the difficulties brought up by Tillich's claim that faith does not provide any historical certainty about Jesus' life. Tillich maintains that the only way to knowledge of the factual truths of the past is historical research, which, on the other hand, cannot lead to certainty, but only to probability. The result of Tillich's emphasis on the distinction and independence of faith regarding history is rather the impossibility to know who Jesus Christ actually was.

Is the God of the Christians also a symbol? If so, whom it points to? In answering these questions, Rowe expatiates on the different meanings that Tillich finds in the term "God" as we use it. Since all statements concerning God are symbolic, one has to face the temptation of adopting a mythical interpretation of them, even of Jesus Christ who is also a symbol for Tillich. Everywhere though in different ways the same question arises: since our knowledge of God is symbolic to such an extent, do we really know anything at all about God? Furthermore, since the symbol is supposed to deny itself because it has to point to what it symbolizes in such a way that, if this does not happen, then it becomes idolatrous, how does one avoid man's tendency to create idols? The way in which all religions can become and actually become idolatrous is the matter of the last chapter.

The reader could miss, as he goes through this book, what Tillich himself calls "semantic rationality" in the introduction to his *Systematic Theology*. But, as Tillich also points out such a careful concern for the meanings and nuances of words, which was a characteristic of Scholastic Theology, is unfortunately missing everywhere in contemporary theological literature.

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THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE. By Oswald Loretz. Translated by David J. Bourke. New York: Herder and Herder, 1968, 182 pp. \$4.95.

Sometimes the only way of approaching problems that have attracted centuries of arguments is to take a new and different look at them. But the insight needed to accomplish this is never too common. However, just such a solution for the problem of the inerrancy of Scripture may well be contained in this small, though scholarly book. Should we not, the author asks, talk about the truth which the Bible teaches rather than about its freedom from error? Concerning the latter notion, exegetes in the Augustinian-scholastic tradition had, in some cases, strained to make the facts fit the theory. And it must be admitted that Scriptural inerrancy

did suffer a bit as the result of the Galileo trial. There is no telling how long this idea can last in the face of modern scientific knowledge and research. Actually, Loretz is just asking that scholars take a long, hard look at the Scriptures themselves in order to understand what truth the sacred writers intended to convey. It would seem that inerrancy would be meaningful only in relation to this truth.

However, the truth in question must be God's and not merely man's. If the Scriptures do so thoroughly reflect the age and culture in which they grew up, one has to be careful not to accept just human thought and reflection as divine. In other words, the purely social, cultural or historical in the Scriptures cannot be confused with God's Word, unless, of course, it bears directly on that Word. Scripture and Revelation are not co-extensive. If it is Revelation that is sought, then, how can it be found?

The Scriptures do not easily give an answer to this question. The author, instead, examines a modern idea that God reveals Himself indirectly in the Bible, through His acts in history. Certain Biblical passages are quoted which support the notion that God Himself is revealed in His creative or salvific actions in History. Yet, because this theory does not readily equate every action recorded in the Scriptures with divine self-revelation, it might at first be appealing. Too much stress, however, is put on the *act* of Revelation and not enough on the *word*, so Loretz seeks elsewhere for an answer. He eventually establishes his solution around the term 'covenant.'

This theme of the covenant dominates both Testaments. It is the keystone of God's Revelation to Israel: He is their Covenant Lord. But the term only finds its ultimate realization with Christ, Who established the New Covenant with His Blood. The covenant, then demonstrates God's continued fidelity to His people. The Hebrew word used to signify this fidelity is also the word used to translate "truth." Thus, it would seem that the Scriptural idea of truth was strongly related to the notion of permanence and stability. Mutability would be the characteristic of error. This unchangeableness, the author points out, would carry over even into the Church and the infallibility of her teaching authority. But the basic Scriptural truth that would lie at the base of all this is still God's steadfast will to save His people.

This brief sketch can only give a bare outline of Loretz's arguments. However, his insistence on the few points brought out here make the book worth reading. One value of his theory is its broad base which relates it to other aspects of theology and revelation—one example of which we have just seen: the teaching authority of the New Testament Church. The constant theme of the book is that any notion about Scriptural truth must be solidly based on Scripture and the author follows this principle closely himself. But this point cannot be emphasized enough, for could

the Church seriously teach an idea of truth that was foreign to Scripture itself? I think that Loretz makes his point well enough to give rise to renewed, scholarly debate on the topic.

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THE BIBLE: DOGMA, MYTH OR MYSTERY? By Francis V. Manning.
New York: Alba House, 1968. 315 pp. \$5.50.

Today there is a growing market for books on Sacred Scripture. There is a great need for many more books to explain the many new insights that are obtained on an almost weekly basis. The public at large—by this I refer to the non-scholar who is unable for various reasons to find time or energy to make an intensive investigation into the critical Biblical journals—is hungry for the new “truths” found in the modern and more realistic approach to the study of the Bible. Father Manning’s book is a worthwhile contribution in the effort to satisfy this hunger. For those critics who say that it is dangerous for one’s faith to try to find “new” meaning—which in truth is not new meaning, but a deeper meaning—in Holy Writ, Father Manning quotes the well known Scripture scholar, Father John L. McKenzie: “It would be paradoxical, to say the least, if the more we know about the Old Testament the less it means to us”.

If we understand more clearly the relationship of God to the Hebrews of the Old Testament, we can better understand God’s relationship to us. And to understand this relationship between God and the Hebrews, we have to remove the misleading pseudo-scientific explanations of the past for certain events related in the Old Testament and substitute the faith which pervaded the lives of the authors of the Bible.

After reading well into Father Manning’s book, one wonders whether his true motives are one of Biblical or Moral perspectives in today’s society. Although, he offers much for the Biblical student, he presents many questions—some indeed sound, others somewhat revolutionary, as for example the theory that hell may not be eternal but that references to it are simply hyperbolic, just as other words of the Bible are—regarding moral issues today which have their arguments based on a re-interpretation of the Bible. The fact that Father Manning is currently studying moral theology in Rome gives us greater reason to believe that he may be more concerned with the present moral issues discussed in light of Sacred Scripture—e.g. marriage and divorce, original sin—than in Sacred Scripture itself. However, I leave it up to the reader to make that judgment.

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