

(1948); *Job* by J. Steinmann (1947); *Evangile et Évangélistes* (1944), *Paul, apôtre de Jésus-Christ* (1942) by Père Allo; *La communauté apostolique* (1943), *L'église des Corinthiens* (1946) by L. Cerfaux. Other works, apart from "Collections" intended for the same public are: *Perspectives bibliques*, by R. Leconte (1946), a collection of addresses delivered from Radio-Vatican on introductory Biblical subjects, according to the directives of the Encyclical Letter *Divino Afflante Spiritu*; two works by Daniel-Rops which have had a great and deserved success among believers and unbelievers alike, namely *Histoire sainte: le Peuple de la Bible* (1943), and *Jésus en son temps* (1945); *Le livre de Job et l'Écclésiaste*, translation and commentary by Mgr. Wéber (1948); *L'Evangile spirituel de St. Jean* by Père Allo, who sets out the main themes of the fourth Gospel, its symbolism, its realism and its historical value; a very fine translation of the *Épîtres de St. Paul* by E. Osty (1946) with notes, unfortunately too short; lastly, *L'Apocalypse de St. Jean, vision chrétienne de l'histoire*, by Père Feret (1946).

Two "Collections" intended for the Catholic public in general, are *Verbum Dei*, instructional booklets treating of Biblical questions with special reference to the contemporary background, thus for example, *Vie de Notre Seigneur Jésus Christ* and *L'Eglise naissante* by A. Tricot (1947)—secondly, *Bible et Missel*, intended as an introduction to the liturgy through the explanation of the Biblical material on which the liturgy draws.

One should also mention the large number of articles in periodicals, e.g. in *La Vie Spirituelle* or in *La Maison-Dieu*. All this shows the vigour of contemporary Bible study, stimulated and guided as much by the Encyclical Letter *Divino Afflante Spiritu* and the new Latin Psalter as by the need of souls for that Divine Word which shall not pass away.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How is Isaiah vi, 10, "Blind the heart," etc., to be understood? God seems to be willing their blindness—not merely permitting the evil.

Hebrew is a simple and impressionist language—quite unlike Greek—partly owing to its very defective character. It is short of adjectives (using genitives instead, e.g. "mountain of holiness" for "holy mountain"), and has no degrees of comparison for what adjectives it possesses. The tenses of the verb do not of themselves signify past, present or future, but only completed or incompleted action, it uses the same conjunction for "and" and "but," and so on. It is in keeping

with this general character of the language that the Old Testament makes sweeping statements that seem at times almost to contradict one another, without any attempt to "tidy up" in the manner dear to scholastics, and even exegetes. The New Testament follows in the main the same style, no doubt because of its Hebraic and Aramaic background. In this connexion I may perhaps be allowed to refer to an article on "The Prophets and Sacrifice: a study in Biblical Relativity," which I published in the *Journal of Theological Studies* for July—October, 1941 (Vol. XLII, pp. 155—65).

Holy Scripture emphasizes strongly the truth that Almighty God is the ultimate author of history. He does not *merely* permit the evil, but chooses out of innumerable dispensations that particular one in which the evil will happen. We have this emphasized in Romans ix: He chooses (*e.g.*) to have a Pharaoh, and a Pharaoh who will harden his heart, whom therefore God is said Himself to harden (17—18). This is the problem of evil, which can never be solved completely, and least of all in the small space available here; but in Rom. ix, 22—3 we are given some indication of a solution, as indeed St. Thomas shows in his commentary on the chapter. The end of creation is to show forth God's attributes, which appear more clearly and fully if His wrath and power against evil are manifested as well as His mercy and glory in the good. This question also I have treated at some length, in *Theses Paulinae*, published at the Biblical Institute, Rome, reprints from *Verbum Domini*, which are now out of print (Thesis VIII: *de reiectione Iudaeorum*).

The passage from Isaiah (vi, 9—10) is quoted by our Lord in connexion with the parables, as reported in all three synoptic gospels (Matt. xiii, 14—15: Mk. iv, 12: Lk. vii, 10): verse 10 is quoted by St. John (xii, 39—40) in a very strong passage ("They *could* not believe, because Isaiah said"), and almost as strongly by St. Paul at the end of Acts (xxviii, 25—7). No doubt it was necessary to show that God's plan had not failed (*cf.* Rom. ix, 6); it must have been a tremendous shock to Jewish and even non-Jewish Christians to find the people of the Old Testament rejecting the New. On the other hand Old Testament and New both bring out no less strongly that man is responsible for the evil that he commits, and is justly punished for it, though Almighty God in His mercy is always ready to forgive the repentant sinner. The terrible invectives of the prophets (to take one example out of many, in Jer. v) and of our Lord (*e.g.* in Matt. xxiii) evidently suppose guilt; but there is always an invitation to repentance and promise of mercy (*e.g.* Jer. xviii, 8: Matt. vi, 14—15).

C. LATTEY, S.J.

What is the meaning of Is. vii, 8-9? The passage is addressed to Achaz, who is told, "If you will not believe, you will not continue." How is this fulfilled? It does not seem to be fulfilled in Achaz. If the subject is changed to the house of David, there is no indication. Achaz is mentioned in verses 3 and 10.

The words quoted are in the plural, whereas the words addressed to Achaz (vii, 4, 5, 11) are in the singular; there is therefore an indication of a change of subject, and the words quoted are addressed either to the house of David (cf. vii, 2, 13, 17) or (as I should think rather more likely) to the people in general (vii, 2, 17). The warning seems quite general.

Some further notes may be helpful. (1) *The text.* After "believe," the Hebrew has *ki* ("because," etc.), which does not seem to make sense; probably we should read *bi* ("believe me," or better, "trust me": see below). *k* and *b* are very similar in Hebrew. (2) *The translation.* "Be established," confirmed, supported, is better than "continue." (3) *The play on words.* The two verbs are almost identical in writing and pronunciation, being in fact different conjugations (Hiphil and Niphil) of the same Hebrew verb, though the two conjugations (as sometimes happens) have rather different meanings. The word *amen* comes from the same root. (4) *The historical context.* The northern kingdom (Israel) and Syria (= "Aram," capital at Damascus) had combined against the southern kingdom (Judah) and King Achaz (742-725 B.C.). God promises an early deliverance (vii, 16: viii, 4) in the form of an Assyrian invasion of the two attacking kingdoms. But upon vii, 14ff. I have already commented in an answer in *SCRIPTURE* (July 1947). (5) *fides, fidelitas, fiducia* (faith, faithfulness, trust or confidence) should be carefully distinguished in Holy Scripture, though it should be no less carefully noted that the second and third presuppose the first. In the Old Testament the great mysteries of the Christian faith, the Blessed Trinity, Incarnation, etc. had not been revealed, so that the emphasis is mainly on *fidelitas*, though with much encouragement *fiducia*; there can hardly be said to be a Hebrew word for *fides* as such. In the New Testament our Lord chiefly requires *fiducia* in Himself, to which *fides* however is essential. In St. Paul there is mainly question of a living faith, *fidelitas*, but in I Cor. xiii, 13 we have faith distinguished from hope and charity, which must therefore be *fides* as such, as indeed is illustrated by the preceding verse.

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What is the explanation of Jn. i, 51? "Amen, Amen I say to you, you shall see the heaven opened, and the Angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man?"

Our Lord's first words to Nathaniel (Jn. i, 47ff.), surprising him with the hidden knowledge they manifested, awakened such deep faith