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Old Testament Heroes: Introducing The Old Testament

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The true notion of Catholic Action — training lay leaders who will in turn guide others in bringing about the reformation and right ordering of society — is clearly brought out as the ideal of the trained social worker is spelled out. The reader will be convinced that such a worker is carrying on in the finest tradition of supernatural charity while availing himself of the best scientific means to make his charity more meaningful, more effective, more lasting.

G. W. HEALY

OLD TESTAMENT HEROES

INTRODUCING THE OLD TESTAMENT. By Frederick L. Moriarty, S.J. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1960. xi, 253p.

Impact Books' initial offering in its promised series of significant achievements in human knowledge is excellent in every way. Fr. Moriarty has written expertly of the Old Testament once before in his **FOREWORD TO THE OLD TESTAMENT**. But that first essay was a faint harbinger of the labor and pains of the superb scholarship which engendered and brought to fruit the present book, **INTRODUCING THE OLD TESTAMENT**. Bruce of Milwaukee has done a very competent job of publishing, for the print is delightful and the table of dates and the maps are clear and compact. The bibliography is right up to date and the index is competent.

This introduction to the Old Testament, with which Catholics are becoming more and more familiar in the present century, is different in that its approach is through the great protagonists of Hebrew history. Before our eyes in the great story of God's living encounter with his chosen people there march Abraham, the father of all God's children whether Hebrew or Greek or Roman; Moses, the man close to God whose presence was always close to him; Joshua, the successor of Moses whose work he finished by taking possession of the promised land and by uniting all the tribes into a unity based on the common worship of Yahweh. The line of heroes stretches over the whole of Palestine, in the Northern and Southern Kingdom, from Beer-Sheba to Sidon and Damascus. Wider than the spatial extent is the temporal scope, for we meet the patriarchs (2000-1700 B. C.) and the Maccabees (167 B. C.) who draw their courage and inspiration from Daniel and his companions, heroic men who were compelled to choose between apostasy and martyrdom.

But beyond time and space is a central idea: Yahweh's intervention in human history which is a story of salvation. Fr. Moriarty

emphasizes this fact which was so familiar to the Hebrews and so foreign to modern men. History has a meaning and a goal in which two worlds, that of the spirit and that of the material, coalesce in a marvelous harmonious unity. Neither spirit nor flesh is rejected but both are brought into an hierarchical order directed to a supernatural goal, the salvation not only of the Jews but of the Gentiles as well, not only of the men of the Old Testament but of all future ages.

This theme or central idea is developed through the great men who include Saul and David, Elijah and Amos, Isaiah of Jerusalem and the second Isaiah, Job and Daniel. The selection is thoroughly wise. The theme is established by bringing to witness all the best in modern scholarship on such varied problems as the dating of the Pentateuch, the literary forms of ancient writings, the story of Canaanite Baalism, the comparative study of Ugaritic literature, etc. Through Fr. Moriarty's own familiarity with the most recent discoveries in scholarly research the reader finds himself at home with the excellent contributions of Professor Ginsberg, Dr. Albright and a host of others both Catholic and non-Catholic. One sees new meaning in the old saw that "truth is where you find it." It is in this book in a thousand ways. Catholic scholarship can be proud of this addition to the ever growing renaissance of biblical scholarship.

JAMES T. GRIFFIN

IS A "READING KNOWLEDGE" POSSIBLE?

SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR READING FRENCH. By Louise C. Seibert and Lester G. Crocker. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1958.

THE GERMAN SCIENCE READER. By George William Radimer-sky. New York: The Ronald Press, 1950.

A favorite subject of debate among foreign language teachers is the question whether there is really only one effective method of teaching and learning foreign languages, namely, the oral method. Given a limited amount of time and the need to acquire the skill of using certain foreign languages as tools for scholarly and scientific work, is it not possible to acquire a "reading knowledge" of these languages through some other method than the oral method?

Charles C. Fries, of the English Language Institute at the University of Michigan, has gone on record as holding that "no matter if the final result desired is only to *read* the foreign language, the mastery