

# Book Reviews

## THE UNITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

By Archibald M. Hunter, B.D., Ph.D., D.Phil. Student Christian Movement Press. 5/-.

It is interesting, and it is encouraging, to see in a book like this the reaction from what has too generously been termed "Liberal" theology and criticism. The reaction is not complete: this very book opens with two ominous indications of that; for within its first two pages we are told that there are "at least a dozen" contributors to the New Testament, and "John" is pointedly enclosed within inverted commas. But there can be no question about Professor Hunter's vindication of Christian doctrine in highly important respects; and his insistence upon the dangers of the analytical method in study of the New Testament, and on the importance of recognizing its essential unity, is more welcome. The method of "the scholars," he says, has been largely centrifugal hitherto; now it is becoming more and more centripetal. Except for its unfortunate tacit assumption that the former tendency applied to all "scholars", this is a statement for which we may be thankful.

It is certainly true of his own book. The unity of outlook and teaching which he sets himself to prove is abundantly manifested, in terms which, speaking generally, must commend themselves to the most conservative of New Testament students. The subject is clearly and logically divided under three main headings—Christology, ecclesiology, and soteriology: one Lord, one Church, one Salvation. Under each of these, two chapters examine the substance of New Testament teaching; first on the "Kerygma" and "Kyrios Jesus"; secondly on "Jesus and the Church" and "the Apostles and the Church"; thirdly on "Sin and Salvation" and "the Atonement." Not quite all the New Testament books are included in the examination; but presumably, Dr. Hunter does not mean to imply that those omitted would wreck his main contention, and he himself says that "no claim is made that all the evidence has been collected." The books included for detailed examination are the Synoptic Gospels; Acts; the Pauline Epistles except (regrettably) the Pastorals; First Peter; Hebrews; and the Gospel and First Epistle of St. John.

The reaction, especially in doctrine, and (as was said above) speaking generally, is very clear. It is markedly seen in what is said regarding sin and salvation, the Atonement, and the "Kerygma". It is pointed out, for example, that each of the chief New Testament writers, when he comes to speak of the Cross, "employs the language of Isaiah liii". A section on the true preaching of the Cross is admirable. An incidental remark on the Old Testament is highly suggestive—"For, *pace* Marcion and all his successors who would like a religion of *one* Testament, it is the same God Who speaks in both the Old and the New Testaments." The section on the Church leads up to two practical reflections: that the New Testament knows nothing of unattached Christians, and that disunion is clearly contrary to God's will—a point very topical at the moment.

To take a balanced view of the book, however, it is necessary to note that it betrays evidences that the taint of the "Fall" from the established Christian outlook on the Scriptures is not easily removed. We find, for example, the assumption that Matthew, Luke, and John have in places varied, or "shaped" the words of our Lord; and the confident assertion that the Pastorals are "non-Pauline in their extant form"; while the extraordinary theory is upheld that the earliest preachers' representation of the Second Advent is changed in the eschatology of St. John. In view of certain well-known passages in the Gospel and the First Epistle, this too familiar contention provides one of the clearest instances of the employment of what Dr. Hunter himself calls, in a telling phrase, "dead seas of critical ink".

This leads us to the remark that the Second Advent, which is one of the most obvious examples of unity in New Testament teaching, does not occupy in this volume the place to which it is entitled. In view of the especially numerous references to the subject throughout the New Testament, the author's allusions to it are by no means proportionate to its importance, especially considering the express purpose of his book.

One other matter for criticism arises the more unexpectedly, both because of the author's general attitude to Christian doctrine and because of its particular setting. Following a pointed warning that many professing Christians do not yield to Christ the place He held in the faith of the New Testament writers, to whom He was not merely Leader but Lord, it is surprising to find it suggested that it may not always be wise to insist at first on full confession that "Christ is God", and that "men must creep before they walk." Whatever exceptional cases Dr. Hunter may have in view, and granting that the presentation of Christ as Saviour and "Hiding-place" is the primary appeal, this matter is at all events worded in too general terms. Half-way houses are perilous abodes in matters of saving faith.

W.S.H.

#### THE SCHOOL OF PRAYER

By Olive Wyon. S.C.M. 6/-.

This book is by a lady who has studied theology at King's College, London, as well as in Edinburgh and at Selby Oak. She did preparatory work on the literary side for the Conference on "Church, Community and State," at Oxford in 1937. She is on the Council of Friends of Reunion and is now doing pastoral work among students in Cambridge. She has translated several important works by continental theologians, including three by Brunner, *A Scholar's Testament* by A. Harnack, and *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* by Troeltsch. A year or two ago she gave us *Radiant Freedom* which was the story of a woman who did a great deal for Poland, and most people who read missionary books will recall her fascinating study of the changing conditions among women in Africa and the East—*The Dawn Wind*.

Miss Wyon's mastery of languages is evident in her preface. She writes: "The extracts from the works of Père de Caussade have been translated by myself; I have not consulted the English translation. The quotations from Tersteegen have been translated from a modern book of selections, probably unobtainable in this country." The last sentence is suggestive. There is much, very much, about prayer that ordinary readers will not be able to find elsewhere for themselves, but they will find it here. Is it then a very "highbrow" book? No! After a beautiful prologue the chapters deal with the nature and object of Prayer; Prayer and the Will of God; Prayer and Life; Fundamental and Practical Hindrances to Prayer; Prayer and the Bible; Prayer and the Spirit of Worship; Other Ways of Praying and Prayer and the Purpose of God.

The quotations are most numerous and reveal a wide knowledge of the subject. They begin, in the foreword, with Luther and end in the last paragraph with John Woolman. In between, the quotations are by no means all from Evangelical Reformers or Quakers. Yet there is no jarring note. Evangelicals will be introduced to some "Catholic" guides, but, Miss Wyon's purpose always seems to be in full harmony with the Evangel though she recognises the great differences in temperament, taste and outlook when she recommends some spiritual books. She says: "To sum up, Spiritual Reading is a kind of daily invitation to look beyond earth to God, and the thiugs of God." We think that describes her own book.

A. W. PARSONS.

#### DIVINE JUDGMENT IN HUMAN HISTORY

By D. R. Davies. *The Sheldon Press.* 1/6 net.

This is No. 18 of the Christian News-Letter Books, 'designed to assist thought upon the relation of the Christian faith to present problems', under the general Editorship of the Warden of St. Deinol's Library, Hawarden. It takes a worthy place in a series that no student of our times can afford to neglect. It is composed of the annual York Diocesan Lecture, together with an Appendix, and comes to us with a brief but significant foreword by the Bishop of Hull. From this, two sentences may be quoted: "For the non-Christian, history ever ends in a dead humanity on the Cross. For the Christian life begins there."

Mr. Davies' purpose is clear. He is in the prophetic succession, and is conscious of, and rejoices in, his sense of vocation. 'Prophetic interpretation' he regards as 'the distinctive contribution of the Church to the process of 'social changes.' The prophet's task is to pierce beneath the confusions of the hour, and to declare the everlasting verities to a fearful and bewildered, perhaps also to a blind and errant, people. He proclaims without hesitation, "Thus saith the Lord". Mr. Davies believes he has a decisive message to give both to the Church and to the

world. That message is not, nor could Mr. Davies expect it to be, beyond the scope of criticism, but the 'burning dialectic' of the spoken word may well, as the Bishop of Hull implies, have produced a deep impression on his hearers, and the written word read in the cool light of reflection, pulses with the sense of urgency and points with no uncertain finger at what the author considers the fatal weakness of our time, and the way of our salvation.

As this writer sees the world situation, the last twenty years have "witnessed the triumph of two opposed systems of thought—Marxism and Neo-Calvinism." He himself, as is well known, claims to be a Neo-Calvinist, though he writes appreciatingly of Marx. He finds them at one in emphasizing the fact round which his book is written, that of Judgment as a process in history, continuous, inevitable, moving towards its final climax. That is the theme of his first chapter. It involves the working out of what Mr. Davies calls unhesitatingly (*pace* Brunner) a Christian philosophy of history. In his view 'man's creative power is inevitably self-destructive. The story of past civilizations, each based on a fatal illusion, shews that "history itself is an impossible experiment." "To perceive in history the futility of all history is the work of the Holy Ghost in the heart." To-day the Western capitalist system is passing the way of all the rest. It has had its rise, and now is passing to its doom. What system will succeed it? Socialism? It too, will as surely fail, and more swiftly than its predecessors, in so far as it fails to overcome 'the basic contradiction of human nature'.

Under the intriguing title of "The Mechanics of Judgment," Mr. Davies proceeds to attempt to shew how this process works, how the principle of self-destructiveness matures and judgment becomes visible to the world, considering this question first from the institutional and then from the personal point of view. Submission to God or perishing is the alternative reached in the first consideration, and in the second the conclusion that "man becomes, in spite of himself, the instrument of God's historic judgment, the unwitting agent of his own destruction."

If it is the Church's responsibility to interpret events prophetically, that message must be proclaimed, and this is the Good News for the world. It means that man, powerless in himself, cannot be reformed or socially improved but only redeemed. Nothing less will meet the fact of the radical corruption of the human will. Barth is criticised as reducing the human agent to passivity, and an analysis of the nature of repentance given that seems in some conflict with Article X. The chapter leads up to insistence on the call to Repentance, which must be the burden of the Christian message to-day.

In an Appendix Mr. Davies describes the rest of the Social Service State—a "new State of Manager-power is clubbing both capitalist and proletariat." The State is absorbing more and more of the functions of home and parent, and the area of personal responsibility accordingly is steadily shrinking. Vast power will be concentrated in limited minorities. The universal problem, which is primarily also the Church's problem, is how in a machine-age to preserve the freedom of the individual, especially as, in the writer's view previously expressed, freedom and security cannot be reconciled. That man, having fought for freedom, and won it, should not know how to use it, and should sell it again for the sake of material abundance is the supreme peril, as it would appear to be a supreme tragedy.

In the course of his argument, there occur several phrases that further reflection might lead the author to modify. Instances are: "God is becoming impatient. The Holy Ghost is in a hurry"; "History (*i.e.*, trying to live in defiance of God's will) is a mug's game." He has a condemnatory or disparaging word for "Catholic" and "Protestant", for the Puritan and the Liberal. "Exeter Halls, Clapham Sects and Nonconformist consciences" (a queer mixture!) are described with singular indifference to dates and most unfairly as "never at a loss for a word to disguise the evils on which they batten and prosper," the "word" being in this case "the iron law of wages." Mr. Davies himself seems to be aware of the criticism that might be made, not only of his analysis of the whole world situation, but also of his reading of current events, when on p. 25 he refers to over-statement and over-simplification.

But the great value of the book remains. It lies in the drawing out of the element of Divine Judgment in all human history and in our own changing civilization, in the awakening of a lost sense of the presence and working of God in human affairs, in the reiterated insistence of the absolute inability of man to save himself, and in the call to repent. That we can leave sounding in our ears, for it is truly the prophetic word of God to our age.

#### CHRISTIAN COUNTER-ATTACK

*By Hugh Martin, and Others. S.C.M. Press. 6/-.*

Books and pamphlets telling of resistance movements against the Nazis in the occupied and satellite countries have come into our hands previously, but this present volume differs from those which have preceded it, for it is devoted to the story of the *Christian* counter-attack. The book is in eight parts, together with an index. The Introduction, entitled most aptly "The Broad Picture," is a valuable piece of work, crammed with information. After this chapter, the narrative takes up the story of Church resistance in Germany itself, in the martyred countries, in the Northern lands, in the overrun countries of the West, and then turns to those areas where the Orthodox Churches have taken up the struggle. The next chapter is headed "Germany's Uneasy Allies."

The Introduction states the aim of the book as an attempt "to tell in brief outline the story of what the Churches of Europe have done and suffered and learned in their struggle with Nazism"; and so it is the story of spiritual rather than of political resistance. It is recognised that some observers believe that ultimately the choice in Europe will lie between faith and Nihilism, so the question is asked: "Can we believe in man's destiny if we do not believe in God?" The rest of the book provides a demonstrated answer to that question. Whilst the position is stated frankly, recognising strength and weakness, one fact is clear, "the strength of their resistance must, however, be measured not by armchair criticism, but by the vigour of the Nazi reaction to it." We Protestants need have no doubts about the vigour and spiritual power of our fellow Protestants on the Continent, even in Germany itself. "The Nazis have realised that these Confessional critics were striking at the heart of their system." A remark on the resistance movement in France is most illuminating in its candour and honesty, and it illustrates the approach of the whole book to its subject. "An unfortunate trend in Continental theology which is apt almost to welcome disaster as a call to penitence (forgetting that disaster may be in the first place a call to action), and you have the reason why in the first anxious days the Protestants (of France) had no clear word to speak to their country about the importance of spiritual resistance."

The book ends with an Epilogue, asking some pertinent questions which demand adequate answers. Here is a book to be read and studied. E.H.

#### THE GREATER VICTORY. BROADCAST ADDRESSES

*By Rev. Ronald S. Wright, S.C.F. Longmans, Green and Co. 3/6.*

Many years ago your Reviewer attended some lectures given by the late Dean of Gloucester on Sermon Preparation and Delivery. At the end of the series, Dr. Gee gave to each member of the class, a copy of Liddon's sermons with the advice that they should be studied carefully for in his judgment they were the best preaching model for the average clergyman in the Established Church. There can be no doubt about their appeal when they were delivered but when Dr. Gee gave the copies to his theological students they were almost out of date and one wonders what sort of a hearing they would get to-day. In the past fifteen years an entirely new technique of preaching has been discovered which is to be found in most modern Evangelical churches. This book of Addresses by the Radio Padre ably exemplifies this new method of preaching the gospel to the thoughtful seeker of God in action in the world to-day. It contains seventeen talks on such subjects as The Sin that Can't be Forgiven, a Language we can all Understand, On Finding Yourself, Three Groups in a Train, The Blind who See and Youth of To-day. The great Evangelical truths are presented clearly and definitely and one is not surprised to read that Mr. Wright during one week, recently received over 1,000 letters from those who had "listened in". This remarkable response is surely an answer to those pessimistic clergy and laity who are always talking about empty churches and assume that the people generally are "no longer interested in religion". The vicar of a thickly populated town parish well known to the present writer, has an average congregation of forty

people each Sunday and in a recent issue of his parochial leaflet, he bewails the intense indifference of his parishioners to the Gospel message. He makes no secret of the fact that he takes as his model the sermons of the great Evangelical preachers of fifty years ago and this book can be strongly recommended to him and to many others who are conscious of the same sense of failure to grip the people under their pastoral care. The new technique is easily acquired for it consists mainly in relating the petty details of the common round and the daily task to the Author and Giver and Sustainer of Life Everlasting.

J. W. AUGUR.

#### REDISCOVERING THE LOCAL CHURCH

*By Alan T. Dale. S.C.M. Press. 2/6.*

It is not always easy to arouse in the average Christian a sense of the Universality of the Church. He may be interested in the local body to which he is attached, but his pulse is not quickened by the adventures of his fellow Christians who live in conditions widely different from his own.

There is also that type of Christian who, because his lot is cast in a country where the Christian tradition is familiar, resigns himself to a dull routine and finds no thrill in the activities of his local church.

This book insists upon Churchmanship, not based upon any mechanical conception of order but upon the fact that the whole church, and each part of it, is a Divine Creation. There is something in each local Church which differentiates it from any other society in the world but which it has in common with every other local Church. Each local Church is a microcosm of the One Holy Catholic Church. Every Christian is a Churchman and has been placed in the Church by God's "mighty act". A very useful set of suggestions for study and discussion with full references is appended. The writer, whose outlook may be described as S.C.M., is a Sheffield Methodist Minister.

#### PLANNING FOR FREEDOM

*By Leyton Richards, M.A. G. Allen and Unwin, Ltd. 2/6.*

This book is the Swarthmore Lecture for 1943 and in accordance with the Trust Deed, it is concerned with "some subject related to the message and work of the Society of Friends." Mr. Leyton Richards is well qualified for his task and this book can be strongly commended to all who are engaged in thinking out plans for the establishment of a new and better world after the War. It deals with the following subjects—The Pursuit of Liberty in the Nineteenth Century, the Confusion of Liberty with "Laissez-Faire," The Confusion of Liberty with Nationalism, The Meaning of Liberty under the three headings of Freedom through Obedience, The Freedom of the Christian and Freedom in Community, The Organization of Liberty—Economic and National and The Purpose of Liberty.

The kernel of the book is to be found in the three chapters which deal with Liberty in all its aspects. Mr. Richards rightly condemns the popular illusion about the meaning of liberty—"nothing is more common than to imagine that freedom means, 'doing as we like'"—and drives home his point in an illustration from John Milton's sonnet about those who "bawl for freedom in their senseless mood" and then

... revolt when Truth would set them free;

Licence they mean when they cry Liberty!

The book is full of similar apt quotations from innumerable standard authors and its careful study will provide many excellent illuminating thoughts for inclusion in sermons on present day problems and discussions on post-war world reconstruction.

J. W. AUGUR.

#### THE CATHOLIC CONCEPTION OF THE LAW OF NATURE

*By Joseph Dalby, B.D. (S.P.C.K. Price 2/6).*

"The demand for a Christian ordering of society . . . must . . . mean a demand for an ordering of the life and institutions of the world in accordance with natural law." In these words, the author of this small book of some fifty-four pages expresses his sociological faith, and in order to commend that faith to others, he has traced the development of the idea of the law of nature in the early and the mediaeval Church, after first noting how it took its rise in the thought and philosophy of the Stoics. He has done his work well, and all who cannot read larger works on the subject of *Lex Natura* might with profit read this smaller work.

On its critical as distinct from its historical side, however, this book is very defective. No mention is made, for example, of the criticism passed by the Reformers on the 'catholic', that is, the scholastic conception of the law of nature. Our author points out that "natural law" is that part of "eternal law" which is manifested in human reason, but he fails to note that, as Dr. Niebuhr has pointed out, "this unconditioned claim for an essentially universal reason" is "merely another of the many efforts which men make to find a vantage point of the unconditioned in history." The fact is that the whole Thomist conception of the law of nature implies an impossible fusion of Stoic ontology, Aristotelian teleology and Christian revelation. The conception of a law of nature can be serviceable for sociology, but not in its scholastic form. To seek to go back to that form is to enter a sociological *cul de sac*. E.S.

### THE STRUGGLE OF THE SERBS

By K. St. Pavlowitch. *The Standard Art Book Club. Price 5/-.*

There is one good thing this war has done, it has made the Balkan States and their condition better known. A few years ago the countries of Eastern Europe were a closed book to most people, but we hope in the very near future, when peace is restored amongst the nations, that we shall know a great deal more about them.

Great Britain and her Allies will then be called upon to do all in their power to reconstruct the Nations of Europe, and especially these in the Balkans. The Church of England will have a great part to play in the development too.

Having travelled in these areas I can testify to the very great respect the Christians of all Churches have towards the Established Church of England. They were looking to us for leadership before war broke out, and they will expect it from us when peace is declared.

It is up to us, therefore, as far as possible to get to understand these most interesting people who have withstood all the hate and murder of Hitler and his satellites. Serbs, Croates, Slovenes are little more than names to most of us. We are all interested in the Missionary enterprise of the Church, and have helped the Gospel to be taken to the ends of the earth, but we have not sought or given fellowship to our fellow Christians in Eastern Europe. Now is the time for us to enter into real and close union with our brothers and sisters in Christ in these lands.

I would strongly urge everyone to get this book *The Struggle of the Serbs* by K. St. Pavlowitch, in which he outlines something of the history of the Serbian States, their glorious past, and their cultural background. It is full of information that we all should know. The Serbs are a magnificent race, of strong, virile spirit, and have suffered terribly of recent years at the hands of the Nazis, and the Italians and Hungarians.

There are in this nation nearly four million Christians, of whom nearly three million belong to the Greek Orthodox Church, and nearly two hundred thousand are Protestants. The Greek and the Anglican Church could easily be brought nearer to one another. We have much to give them, and I think there is much we can receive from them. It is therefore to be hoped that in some way or other the Christians in Great Britain shall be brought into a closer fellowship with the Christians of Eastern Europe, and this book will awaken interest and create a desire for this fellowship and union.

### BIBLICAL POLITICS. STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN SOCIAL DOCTRINE.

By Alexander Miller. *S.C.M. Press. 2/6. 1943*

For a book of this kind this book is good in its emphasis on the indispensability of the theological approach to men's practical problems—because only the Christian Gospel can reveal to man the real nature of his problems. The Christian Gospel provides the diagnosis as well as the remedy; it alters our questions before it answers them. The writer appreciates the significance of the O.T. preparation for the Gospel. We must take the doctrine of the Fall seriously; it is a doctrine of history integral to Christian teaching; history is the history of a sinful race. Justice is "love at a distance." God's Law is the instrument of God's Love. Repentance is indispensable. The Gospel can only help those who sincerely want to be different and to advance heavenward. It is impossible to divide the spiritual from the material. The Incarnation as well as the Fall affirms the significance of this material world. It is here that redemption is to be wrought

out. So the writer lays a deep foundation for his assertion—"it is clear that the Christian man has a very obvious and inescapable political calling."

Mr. Miller then attempts a Christian estimate of the Marxist version of social change. He suggests not only that it is in measure possible to state Christian doctrine in terms of dialectic, but also that only by using such terms can we speak to men whose whole mental make-up is coloured by the influence of Marxist thinking. On the other hand, if Marxism describes the dialectic within history, it knows nothing of that dialectic in which history is only one term. The Christian is not promised victory in this world, but vindication at the last day.

The duty of the State is next discussed and the Christian criteria by which States may be judged. The two extremes of Hildebrandism and and sectism are both alike deviations from the Biblical doctrine. The Christian should show both complete detachment and active participation. He will conform to duly-appointed authority so long as it does its divinely appointed work. This does not pre-judge the issue between pacifist and non-pacifist. Here every Christian man must make his own decision. Every Christian political judgment must be made on the basis of the faith and the facts. It is part of the calling of Christian men so to bear themselves that they will not be found unprepared for any eventuality, however tragic.

Mr. Miller concludes with an outspoken appeal for some drastic practical Christian action in relation to prevailing economic inequalities. The Church cannot expect God to honour its witness until as a community it orders its life in conformity to the Gospel. The failure to surrender economic privilege is the major denial of the Gospel in the Church of our day. Christians should anticipate inevitable social change by putting their own house in order.

#### NOT BY BREAD ALONE

*By Angus Dun. S.C.M. Press. 5/-.*

This is a most thoughtful and thought-provoking approach to worship, contemplation, prayer, Bible reading, and Holy Communion. The author is a leader of the American Episcopal Church, and possesses a remarkable power of drawing close and telling analogies between the material things of everyday life and the spiritual facts of human existence. *Not by Bread Alone* is a book to be meditated upon and not one to be read quickly. The opening chapter on worship is first class. Contrast these two sentences and note the author's incisive terms. "We have met rather discouraged and not too convinced church people and ministers who have made us feel that their worship is something we ought to help them support so as not to let them down." That is the false approach. Here is the true: "Worship is the answer called out in man by the self-disclosure of God." Under the title "Looking unto God" Mr. Dun speaks of the contemplative approach to prayer and shows how the initial words of the collects help us to realise God's Presence. Giving God our attention is the next step and the author has some helpful suggestions to lead us towards the Vision of God, and its transforming power. The chapter on "Talking with God" is a powerful plea for verbal prayer, while at the same time a warning against mere forms of words which Mr. Dun calls "magical prayer." "The words of prayer are not a combination that lets us into something nice." "Magical prayer is a crude kind of fake science which hopes to get something by pressing the right button." The author's definitions of the many kinds of "conversational prayer"—Thanks-giving, praise, complaint, confession, petition—are remarkably clear, and the problems involved in faith in objective results from prayer are convincingly tackled.

The section on the Church as "a community of faith" "a community of worship" and "a community of charity," while not offering anything very original does well, in speaking of the church's function and mission, to bring out the exact parallel between her Lord's work and her own. Perhaps the best chapter in the book is that on the Bible as a vehicle of the Real Presence. "That is the Word of God which bears God's thought to us and so shares God's life with us, making Him present. The section on formal prayer might well have formed a separate chapter. It is original and clear but has no real organic connection with the rest. One feels that the author is not quite so sure in his touch when he deals with the Holy Communion, and though himself apparently loyal to evangelical truth in most respects, he dallies with such phrases as "Holy Sacrifice" and "altar" and tries to give them a harmless meaning.

The connection between worship and ordinary life is convincingly dealt with in the short concluding chapter.

*Not by Bread Alone* is an American production but is remarkably free from "Americanisms," and—being American—its size and format is luxurious by English war-time standards.

H. J. B.

#### AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A GERMAN PASTOR.

By *Hans Ehrenberg*. S.C.M. 6/-

Pastor Ehrenberg was born in Altona, of Jewish parents, in 1883. From early youth he was a student and a great reader, particularly of philosophy, in which subject he was first lecturer, and then assistant professor in Heidelberg University. These early studies colour all his thoughts and writings. His frequent references to continental literature, and his philosophical way of looking at things, make his book in places by no means easy reading; but in some ways all the more interesting.

Through the influence of Christian friends the writer was baptised at the age of 26, but confesses that through inadequate instruction, he "failed to be a practising Christian" for a time; but after his marriage to the daughter of some earnest Christians, in 1913, his thoughts steadily turned towards theology, and he was ordained to the Lutheran ministry in 1924, accepting a pastorate at Bochum the following year.

From 1927 on he was in fierce conflict with the Nazi party, neither sparing them nor expecting to be spared. He shared with Pastor Niemöller and others in the struggles which led to the formation of the "Confessional" group of Churches, spent 5 months in a concentration camp, and in May 1939 came to England with his family, being kindly received by the Bishop of Chichester and others.

The author draws frequent contrasts between the outlook of the British and German peoples, and particularly of the churches. He describes the "British attitude" thus: "the religion of tolerance and decency, of Humanism and Civilisation, the preference for a natural theology which can be found in all religions: and Unitarianism, although actually only the creed of some of the intellectually-minded, has become the religion of English public opinion." There is little reference to the definite evangelicalism which is exerting a growing influence on the youth of this country, and this is apparently because the writer's contacts have been chiefly with Christians of the more liberal school. At the same time he agrees with Karl Barth in his opposition to a humanistic view of Christianity, and in placing the "Word of God" in the forefront of his teaching.

Those whose thoughts travel beyond the confines of this country, and beyond the present into the future, will find much to learn from his comparisons between Christianity as seen through British, German and Russian eyes; and will be stirred by his enthusiasm to see Christians from Western, Central and Eastern Europe all taking their share in the task which God is laying upon this generation. The book is not so much a biography as a series of studies by a man who has passed through critical times, and who is at once a very fearless Christian, a capable philosopher, a German and a Jew.

#### THE COMMON LIFE IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

By *L. S. Thornton*, C.R. Pp. xiii. + 470. Dacre Press. 30/- net.

This is an outstanding book of real importance for every student of the New Testament. So much can be said at once. The Rev. L. S. Thornton has already established his reputation as a Theologian by his previous work, "The Incarnate Lord" now, unfortunately, out of print. He has now added to his reputation by just the kind of work that is needed at the present time. The fact that it is written by one occupying a very different ecclesiastical standpoint from that of the majority of the readers of this Magazine, should not be allowed to prevent a most careful perusal of this really valuable work.

The principal aim of the volume is to make clear what exactly is intended by the word "Church" in the New Testament. Compared with much that has been written on the subject in recent decades it represents a very definite return to the study of the theology of the New Testament which is both encouraging and refreshing. We have had so much critical investigation of the books of the New Testament, with endless discussion of dates and authorship, that the real message and teaching of the books have often been almost ignored. This is not to belittle



the value of this kind of study, but the reaction had gone too far, to the serious impoverishment of the Faith. The kind of work now under review will do much to restore the balance. It is essentially a work of exact scholarship and yet a real devotional atmosphere pervades the book. To the mind of the Author a return to the primitive source of Christian theology is vital for every believer. "From the beginning," he writes, "it has always been true that the Christian way of life and the convictions with which it is bound up are sustained only by a perpetual and ever renewed return to the sources of purification and illumination which are in Christ," and quoting John xv. 7, he continues: "The conditions which are here laid down govern, not only the life of prayer, but also our understanding of the Christian revelation."

The work is divided into two parts. The first is entitled "The Common Life, Human and Divine"; the second, "The Divine-Human Life and the Body of Christ." Thus the conception of the Church as the mystical body of Christ is central to his teaching. In this volume, in contrast with the author's previous one, "attention is concentrated largely upon the Church and, therefore, upon the human aspect of the divine-human organism."

It is obviously impossible to review such a book in any detail. We can only point out some of its salient features and points of special interest. It states the Scriptural and theological basis of the Christian life. Its exegesis is exact to the point of a meticulous accuracy which shows how precise scholarship can minister to the needs of a profound interpretation. A good example is the Author's discussion of Rom. v. 5, or his very careful treatment of the word *homonía* itself on page 158. One of the main items of the book might be stated as the identification of the Christian with Christ through the fellowship of the Church which is Christ's body. In so far as we are members of the Fellowship we are members of Christ and fellow-heirs with Him. "The common life of Christians, concerning which this book is making enquiry, is a life shared by God with man and by man with God. It has its source in God, and He has taken steps to impart it to man" (*cf.* the whole of ch. vi). Hence the importance of that great little phrase of St. Paul "in Christ" of which the Author goes so far as to say, "To be 'in' the risen Christ is the whole of Christianity."

There are many passages of outstanding value to the devout student of the New Testament, particularly the following to which we would like to draw special attention: The Author's discussion of I Cor. xv. 3, 4. (*cf.* p. 278) on p. 257 f. His remarks on the Resurrection on p. 282, on the doctrine of man on p. 310, on Prayer on p. 358; and the really beautiful passage on Christ and the world on p. 365. These will give the casual reader some idea of the excellence of the work and prompt him, we hope, to make a serious study of the whole. And such a task will be a wholesome discipline, for it is impossible to read this work without constant reference to the text of the New Testament. It is, therefore, by no means a book for odd moments.

No doubt on particular points of exegesis and interpretation many will be disposed to make their own individual criticisms. For ourselves we prefer to express gratitude for a really massive work on the New Testament itself which is bound to be of the greatest possible help to preachers and teachers alike.

CLIFFORD J. OFFER

#### DARWELL STONE: LIFE—LETTERS—PAPERS

By F. L. Cross. Pp. xxiv. + 467. Dacre Press. 30/- net.

A life of Dr. Darwell Stone was to be expected, not because he was a man who rose to great eminence in ecclesiastical affairs or because he was a great or original scholar whose work and writings marked a distinct epoch in the apprehension of revealed truth. But Darwell Stone was of the type who prefers to wield an influence behind the scenes, quietly but effectively. He built up a reputation based not upon originality of thought or brilliance of expression, but upon soundness of judgment and depth of learning. This, and much else, is made clear in the present Biography which is marked by deep sympathy and understanding unspoiled by eulogy or exaggeration.

Certain things stand out clearly in this valuable appraisal of a man who was one of the outstanding personalities of the Anglo-Catholic world of the last generation. Darwell Stone was most conspicuously the retiring scholar deeply versed in patristic lore. He obviously regarded it as one of the main tasks of his life to maintain and preserve the Faith. And to him the Faith was a body of revealed truth embodied in unalterable dogma to be accepted or rejected but in no way to

be modified. It was for him to endeavour to keep the Church in the old paths. He based everything upon precedent and tradition, speculation of any kind appears to have been anathema to him. He was the learned judge, whose function is to interpret and to apply existing laws rather than to originate them; he was not the speculative theologian endeavouring to commend the eternal Gospel to a critical and questioning age. He was deeply learned, but it was learning that was steeped in the past and seemed comparatively indifferent to any such thing as modern theology or modern thought. He certainly believed that the Holy Spirit had guided the Church in her apprehension of the truth, but the range of that guidance seems to have been strictly limited to what he regarded as the true Church. And it is just here that we come to the crux of the whole book. Everything must be based on Catholic teaching, principles and ethics. And by Catholic it seems that, to all intents and purposes, the Roman Church was meant. It is true that most stress is laid upon the teaching of the early undivided Church, but in his search for precedent, he did not stop there. And the truth of this can be seen from the fact that Anglicanism, or such, seemed to make little or no appeal to him. The historic *via media* might almost be a cloak for a betrayal of Catholic truth. The peculiar *ethos* of the Church of England had no attraction for him. Yet if this is true, it is not the whole truth. There was much in contemporary Roman Catholicism that repelled him. He knew the power of its appeal to certain types of mind. As he wrote to one of the host of people who consulted him on a vast range of subjects, "a man to whom the emotional is everything" would almost inevitably be attracted by Rome for, "if one is to be guided by the emotions alone, there is a great deal to be said for Rome." As to his attitude towards the Church of Rome on matters of principle he has much to say that is of value on pp. 57-62.

The general impression of the book, it must be admitted, is of one to whom loyalty to the Church of England or Anglicanism made no appeal. It is easy, therefore to see how some can interpret this peculiar attitude as one of disloyalty: if it was, it was unconscious rather than conscious—the attitude of a mind fixed on great unalterable facts of faith. Yet it is easy to see the dangers of such an attitude especially in the case of lesser minds. If there be no loyalty to one's own Branch of the Catholic Church, there can be no enthusiasm; and when there is no enthusiasm the way is open to much that is undesirable and even hostile. The book, therefore, will only make a direct appeal to a limited number of readers, to those, principally, who share Stone's peculiar attitude of detachment from Anglicanism. To them it will be a veritable mine of information on a vast variety of topics. Stone's considered judgment is here embodied in one hundred communications to correspondents who consulted him on almost every conceivable ecclesiastical subject! In addition, ten papers, more substantial contributions, are also included. Many Anglo-Catholics and perhaps some others, will be grateful for this collection.

Needless to say that, like all products of the Dacre Press, the book is well printed and produced on almost a pre-war scale of excellence.

CLIFFORD J. OFFER.

#### PREFACE TO BIBLE STUDY

By Alan Richardson. S.C.M. 5/-

This book is not at all like the old books on Bible Study written by such men as Griffith Thomas and Harrington Lees. It is written by a man who obtained a First Class in Philosophy at Liverpool and a First Class in Theology at Oxford. He has been Study Secretary of the S.C.M. since 1938. He is the author of *Credo in the Making*, *The Redemption of Modernism* and *The Gospels in the Making*. He sets out in this book to write about the Bible rather than about biblical criticism. He tells us plainly that "all that follows is written out of the deep conviction that the Bible is the covenanted means of God's self-communication with men, and that because God has appointed it for this purpose it possesses a value which no other work could ever have." He is convinced that "man hears God speaking to him as he kneels with the Bible in his hand." Nevertheless, he holds that "there can be no going back on the positions gained by the discoveries of biblical research. There may be modification here and there, but the broad general conclusions are beyond cavil." However, in the best part of his book on "How to run study groups on the Bible" he says: "There is no need to over-burden the group with a series of facts about, say, Q, or the four document hypothesis, or J. P. E. and D." The leader must be:

"On his guard against thinking that there is any saving value in such knowledge for lay members of groups, who want to know what the Bible says to them in the actual situation in which their life is set." We have to read a number of sermons by deacons who have newly come from College. We wish their teachers were as wise as Canon Richardson in counselling a wise reserve in the pulpit on matters which, we feel, are still under discussion and are by no means "beyond cavil." This book is available for 2/- to those who join the S.C.M. Religious Book Club.

A. W. PARSONS.

#### TOWARDS BELIEF IN GOD

By Herbert H. Farmer, D.D. S.C.M. Press Ltd. 8/6.

Any book from the pen of Dr. H. H. Farmer is sure of a wide and influential circle of readers. Many who read this quarterly will already know his important little book *Experience of God* published in 1929 and now out of print. Dr. Farmer has wisely decided to rewrite this volume while keeping intact the basic plan of the earlier volume. As the author remarks the treatment is quite different and we have here not only "a new book" but also one which is in many ways an improvement on its predecessor.

With the general line of Professor Farmer's argument older readers will already be familiar. It cannot be better stated than in his own words "There are reasons for belief in God which make such belief as well-grounded as any belief which touches upon ultimate issues can ever be. Yet they are not such as to make some adventure of decision and self-commitment superfluous. On the contrary, they are such that the necessity for such adventure of decision and self-commitment can itself be seen to be an entirely reasonable thing." These reasons are given the classification of the coercive, the pragmatic and the reflective elements in belief in God. With the coercive element Dr. H. H. Farmer has strong affinity with the Evangelical emphasis on experience of God. The pragmatic element brings before us that vindication of faith in God in the practical business of every day living. The reflective element in belief in God occupies more than half the book. It will suffice to indicate the admirable clear-sightedness of his argument by quoting his view as to the mutual relations between these elements. "If the coercive and pragmatic elements in belief in God are not present, philosophical arguments about theism will avail nothing; at the very most they may remove some negative hindrances in some minds. If they are present, such arguments will come in more as a subsidiary help and support than as part of the main structure—a sort of flying buttress, necessary for those whose edifice of belief has within it a certain tension or stress, but unnecessary for those whose edifice of belief has no such tension or stress. It follows from this that the important thing for all of us is that a living sense of God should arise and persist within the soul, through its own inevitable compellingness and its own continuous pragmatic verification. Given that, there is for those who are so disposed some point in travelling further; without it, the rest of the journey is likely to be hardly more than mere academic exercise." In this section of the book on the reflective element in belief in God we are given an admirable account of "The Influence of Bias" and criticisms of the attempts of sociological and psychological theories to vindicate religion without God. This prepares the way for the three concluding chapters on "Positive Reflective Confirmations of Belief in God," "Science and Freedom," and "The Problem of Evil."

While this is a book we can unreservedly commend and no one will rise from its perusal without being fortified in "the inner man," we are rather troubled to think that in his desire for fair dealing Dr. Farmer is inclined to give too much away. The assertion "God's Existence Indemonstrable" needs qualification if only in the light of the great and influential modern school of neo-scholasticism. We could also wish that another phrase was found than "pragmatic element". It is a word that has associations with an American school of philosophy that has found few adherents in this country. An Appendix with some guidance on the bibliography of a vast subject would have added to the practical usefulness of a volume that should find its way to every parsonic bookshelf for reading and passing on. It would help many a cleric to speak to the condition alike of youth groups as well as to thoughtful adults. It is ideal pabulum for the general reader on a difficult subject.

A.B.L.