

Book Reviews

THE WAY OF LIFE.

By C. J. Barker. Lutterworth Press. 21/-.

In lecturing on Christian Morals for the General Ordination Examination, it has been interesting to see how the type of examination paper has gradually changed. The "orthodox" approach to Ethics, in which it was easy to cover the ground with the help of standard text-books, has given place to papers that are as wide as life itself! From being a formal, cut-and-dried science, Ethics has become the art of living, and can no longer be regarded as an academic study.

The Rev. C. J. Barker is Vicar of Great Torrington, and his book shows by its title that his approach is the modern one. He definitely refuses anything like a legalistic approach to his subject. Morals must be life manifesting itself, as it manifests itself in other spheres also.

But those who look for them will find that the perennial subjects that concern the moralist are dealt with. To find them it would be a great help to have an index—if that would not be too great a concession to the legally minded! In fact, an index of subjects is a surprising omission, which is not compensated for by the summary of the contents of each chapter at the beginning of the book. There is, however, a full index of Scripture references.

The chapter on "The Art of Life" says from the Bible standpoint what so many non-Christian books and magazines are trying to say to-day. "The Christian ideal is of a balanced life, with justice done to every side of man's nature" (p. 119). And this piece on page 117 is extremely well expressed: "One feels that when our Lord, in the calm of the Galilean hills at night, looked back on the day and its occupations, He saw, as it were, a perfect picture in which everything had its appointed place and value. It is noteworthy how He filled each day with masses of work, concentrated on each duty or opportunity as it came, whether the healing of one sick man, or a conversation with some individual, or teaching the masses, yet kept all in the unity of a supreme purpose. In His rigorous life He equalled any ascetic, yet 'He let no flower of spring pass Him by.' So were apparent contradictories harmonized in that unique personality."

It is, of course, easy to let this "art of life" degenerate into a self-centred Eudaemonism. It is here that eschatology comes in, and eschatology is kept in the forefront in this book. Only he who loses his life, finds it, and the Kingdom is not to be brought in by pleasant methods of self-development.

There are plenty of problems for the Christian to solve if others, as well as himself, are to have the opportunities for the art of living. Conditions of labour may make work a crushing and monotonous burden. Poverty and riches create their own difficulties. And what about the criminal who needs to be dealt with by his fellow men? What relation do his forgiveness or his punishment bear to this art of living? The relations of the individual Christian and the Christian Church as a whole to such problems as these are well handled in this book, and handled in the light of Scripture. It is the New Testament solution that the author is concerned to find. Our particular problems may not admit of a "single-text" solution, but the principles are there in Scripture. In fact, it may often be necessary for us to state the principles even when we cannot say precisely how they can be worked out in detail. One merit of this book is that the author does not profess to have his cut-and-dried solutions for everything, but is often content to indicate the general principles that apply.

One criticism must be made. The chapter on Forgiveness, while excellent from the standpoint of man's forgiveness of man, argues too much from human forgiveness to divine forgiveness. The author has a horror of God's forgiveness being cheapened, and in consequence has failed to appreciate the full extent of the free gift of God. Moreover, in discussing future punishment, he passes too lightly over the Scripture evidence for the destiny of the wicked, and clearly inclines to something approaching universalism, which the weight of Scripture does not warrant. A footnote on page 100 is significant, where a discussion

of 2 Thess. i. 9 is concluded by the words, "In such circumstances exegesis is forced, in the last resort, to bow to philosophy." The Evangelical position is that the exegesis of one passage must be checked by the exegesis of another.

But this is an excellent book, and well worth buying and reading. Those students who can afford 21/- will find it useful for examinations.

J. STAFFORD WRIGHT.

THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES.

By C. H. Dodd. 168 pp. + lxxi. Hodder and Stoughton. 10/6.

Professor Dodd's previous contribution to the Moffatt New Testament Commentaries—that on the Epistle to the Romans—has been generally recognised as one of the outstanding works of biblical exegesis to be published in recent years. This volume on the Johannine Epistles, also in the Moffatt series, exhibits the same distinguished qualities: unrivalled scholarship, keen spiritual insight, and a brilliant gift of exposition. Yet for all its learning the book is marked by a style so direct and clear that it may be commended to the attention of any sincere student of the New Testament and not exclusively to the scholar.

The introductory pages trace the history of the Johannine Epistles in the early Church and then examine their intellectual background—the "Hellenistic mysticism" or Gnosticism which was the dominant tendency in the religious life of the time. The inevitable outcome of this teaching, with its view of the inherent evil of matter, was the denial of the reality of the Incarnation and of the Passion. There was a movement in the Church to come to terms with this philosophy—to reinterpret the faith "in the light of modern thought," as we say. Dr. Dodd shows how the writer of the Epistles meets this peril by recalling his readers to the common, original Gospel of primitive Christianity—to "that which they had heard from the beginning." Several interesting pages of the commentary are devoted to an examination of the message of the Epistles in the light of the apostolic *kerygma*. It is further shown how, blended with the "Gospel," is the "Commandment" or *didaché*, resulting in a thorough integration of the theological and ethical aspects of Christianity. "Nowhere else in the New Testament is it made more clear that the evangelical proclamation of the love of God in sending the Saviour (iv. 9, 14), and the commandment 'Love one another' (iv. 11, 21), are aspects of a single and indivisible divine revelation by which the Christian religion is constituted; and nowhere is there less excuse for the reader to suppose that Christian theology can stand apart from Christian ethics, or Christian ethics apart from theology" (p. xxxii).

On the question of authorship, Dr. Dodd maintains the view expressed in his article in "The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library" for April, 1937, *viz.* that the Epistles were not written by the same hand as the fourth Gospel. His argument here will be read with interest, if not with conviction. He points out that while the Gospel is distinctly Hebraic and Jewish in its outlook, the Epistles freely adopt Hellenistic modes of thought and are largely devoid of any Old Testament background. Further, he maintains that the doctrinal emphases concerning the Advent, the Atonement and the Holy Spirit are nearer to those of primitive Christianity than is the case in the Gospel. That there are certain differences between the two writings no one would deny, but it is difficult to escape the conviction that Dr. Dodd has magnified these differences at the expense of minimising the no less striking affinities. He is certainly on more solid ground when he admits the common authorship of the three Epistles, though his conclusion is that the writer was John the Presbyter, not John the Apostle.

The commentary on the text is outstanding. This is particularly true of the elucidation of some of the more difficult passages. A feature of special value is the discussion of the meaning of such words as *hoinonia*, *logos*, *parakletos*, *hilasmos*, *gnosis*, *chrisma*, *sperma*, etc. Brief illustrations may be taken from the last two words mentioned. Thus in ch. ii. 24-27 the "anointing" or *chrism* which Christians have received and which confers knowledge of God is interpreted, not (as is common) in reference to the Holy Spirit, but as the Word of God, that is, the Gospel, or the revelation of God in Christ. This is for the believer both the medium of initiation and the prophylactic against the poison of false teaching. This interpretation makes excellent sense of the passage and also harmonises with John v. 38 and xv. 7. Likewise in ch. iii. 9 the "seed"

or *sperma* which remains in the child of God and enables him to overcome sin is the Word of God—seed having the sense here as in the Parable of the Sower (Luke viii. 11). These are complementary ideas, upon which Prof. Dodd comments thus: "As from one point of view the Gospel is the 'chrism'—that is to say, it is that which when received and retained initiates the believer into the knowledge of God—so from another point of view the Gospel, as the Word of God, is the immanent divine principle producing in men the regenerate nature which does not sin. It was by receiving the Gospel that we became children of God; it is by loyalty to the Gospel that we continue to live as His children, and conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of our divine parentage" (p. 78).

That brief comment must serve to whet the reader's appetite for more. There is an abundance in this volume to satisfy his hunger. It will lead him into one of the richest pastures of the Word of God.

FRANK COLQUHOUN.

THE RIVER JORDAN.

By Nelson Glueck. Lutterworth Press. 20/-.

Books on the Holy Land are numerous, but there are few which are as "friendly" and as easily read by the layman as Dr. Thompson's *The Land and the Book*, while at the same time as scholarly as Professor George Adam Smith's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*. That is precisely what Professor Nelson Glueck, Field Director of the American Schools of Oriental Research at Jerusalem and Baghdad, has achieved. His canvass is, of course, on a smaller scale than either of the works referred to above, because he is concerned only with the Jordan valley and its environs. Even so his book is far more comprehensive than its title indicates, and it is magnificently illustrated by over a hundred full-page photographic plates. Many of these photographs were published for the first time when the American edition of Professor Glueck's work was produced in 1945.

First he provides a lucid description of the whole Jordan Rift and reveals himself at once equally at home in prehistoric investigation, historical reference and geographical examination, while his knowledge of text Scripture continually illuminates his narrative. A chapter on "The Lake District" describes the surroundings of the Lake of Galilee so familiar to readers of the New Testament. There follows a chapter called "A Garden of God," whose title is lifted from the story of Lot in Genesis xiii. The theme is the historic magnificence and fertility of the Jordan valley south of the lake of Galilee—a truth which necessitates a convincingly phrased correction of the great George Adam Smith, who wrote that the Jordan valley has "never been populous," that most of the mounds in it "are probably the remains, not of cities, but of old brick fields," that towns have "always been few in the Valley," and that it has "deserved the name of Wilderness." Professor Glueck replies trenchantly to such maligning of the valley, for he has the advantage of long residence and also of archeological knowledge not open to G.A.S.

So on to "The Highlands of Transjordan," rich in Biblical associations—the king's highway along which Israel petitioned in vain to be allowed to pass (Num. xx); the residence of Ruth; the patrimony which Gad, Reuben and half Manasseh desired, much to Moses' concern; Jabesh Gilead rescued by Saul from shame at the hands of the king of Ammon; and the brook Jabbok, scene of David's flight from Absalom, of Jephthah's triumph and sad sacrifice, and of Jacob's midnight wrestle. All these stories, and many others, are vividly portrayed as the author guides his reader through country steeped in sacred history.

There follow two chapters on the lower basin and upper basin respectively. The astonished reader is overwhelmed with the variety and density of the historic sites, some of which saw the beginnings of civilised life over seven thousand years ago. The possible explanation of the miraculous crossing of Jordan and the fall of Jericho's wall—none the less miraculous because due to earth tremors—the labours of Hiram, Solomon's master coppersmith, and the coming of Jacob to Succoth, have all an illuminating reference, and there is lucid demonstration of the true sites of Zarathan and Jabesh Gilead. Personal reminiscences of recent visits are deftly interwoven with description of the scenes where Elijah and Elisha began the prophetic era.

The final chapters entitled "The Path of Pilgrims" and "The Plains of Moab" indicate the past glory of Beth-shan and Jericho in pre-Biblical times and in sacred history, and the book draws to a close with much illuminating material concerning the Herods. There is one reference which will puzzle many readers. Who was the Marcus Agrippa, whom Professor Glueck designates as "emperor of Rome" in the time of Herod the Great?

The book is well indexed, and is sumptuously produced considering modern standards. Every reader will feel more at home in Bible story after reading it. The Lutterworth Press are to be congratulated on a first-class production.

H. J. BURGESS.

THE ENGLISH TOWNSMAN.

By *Thomas Burke. Batsford. 12/6.*

This attractively produced Batsford series of handbooks has its own special charm and appeal and Mr. Burke's fourth and, unhappily, his last contribution to it, well maintains the general standard of interest. Like the others it is most tastefully and helpfully illustrated with old prints, paintings and modern photographs, which describe realistically the characteristic customs, costumes and life of the different periods under review. Thus we get a continuous and often fascinating picture of the life and activities of the townsman of the medieval, Stuart, 18th Century and modern periods, which is not only interesting, often amusing, and always instructive, but is of real educative value for the student of history and social life.

Mr. Burke reminds us that it is to the townsman and not to the countryman that we owe all our English liberties, and it is perhaps well for us to remember, with the modern concern over the "closed shop" question, that the regulations and restrictions enforced by the Medieval Craft Guilds were more severe and exclusive than those of our modern Trade Unions. Weavers were forbidden to dye their own cloth and dyers to weave it! Again, modern "planning" seems to be threatening our individual liberty, but in the Middle Ages the State directed all service, and the Englishman's house was not his castle when royal officers could invade it at any time!

We discover that the lure of the town for the countryman is of long standing, since as early as 1630 Charles I ordered landowners to return from the towns and reside on their country estates. We notice also with interest that social conditions were as alterable in the 17th Century as to-day, and that wealth and social status were acquired then by people of quite lowly origin. Even farm labourers migrated to towns and became wealthy mayors. We get, also, a very familiar modern note when we find Daniel Defoe declaiming against the high domestic wages and the excessive over-dressing of the maids in a desire to "out-shine their mistresses."

Mr. Burke exposes the hollowness of the boasted "elegance" of the 18th century, which was only a superficial veneer to that which was too often coarse, vulgar and ugly. He records the changing social life and customs in the unceasing rush of country folk to the towns in order to secure better pay and the chance of advancement and of "seeing life." It will probably surprise many to learn that public whipping at the cart's tail was not abolished till 1838.

Mr. Burke registers the great social changes of the present century in the dwindling of private life and in the far wider choice of careers in new professions, trade occupations, and in the arts and crafts. He prophesies that modern official "mass planning" will not radically change human nature, and that "we shall not desert the little individual shop whose owner knows our tastes for the large impersonal stores," nor shall we "willingly give up our little villa in exchange for a corner of a hive, where we share a common garden or look at roses which are only partly ours." He thinks that "communal" solutions will soon over-reach themselves and lead to a reaction for "hermitages"! He well stresses the devotion, heroism and self-sacrifice displayed by townsmen during the horrors of the War period. 12/6 is a most moderate charge for this very attractive series, and these fascinating accounts should be widely popular.

C. SYDNEY CARTER.

IN TRAINING.

Edited by A. T. Houghton. 188 pp. Inter-Varsity Fellowship. 5/-.

"The right selection and training of missionaries is undoubtedly a major consideration confronting the world-wide Christian Church." These words, quoted from a chapter in the book now under review, are no over-statement of what some of us would, indeed, regard as priority No. 1 in the whole realm of missionary policy. If there is weakness or uncertainty at this point there will be inevitable frustration and failure in the years ahead and at every affected point on the missionary front. The situation has not always been so critical, nor has its vital importance always been so widely recognised, as is the case to-day. To meet a recognised and urgent need, and the problems related to it, this book has been produced. It is a collection of essays by different authors, and has some of the defects, as well as the obvious advantage, of a symposium. But taken as a whole it is cordially to be welcomed and commended. It says with courage and clarity many of the things that most need to be said to-day, and not only missionary candidates and recruits, but also those of us who have responsibility for policy in general and for training in particular, will be well advised to pay respectful attention to what is here provided for us. This, it hardly need be said, does not imply, of necessity, more than that!

The Foreword makes it clear that the book is written primarily for those who are contemplating missionary service overseas rather than for those who are charged with the oversight of their training. So far as detailed advice and instruction intended for them is concerned, we have little but cordial approval to report. The outlook of the book is conservative, more so at some points than that of your reviewer. But it is also as thoughtful as it is positive and there is about it nothing of the temper that is sometimes vulgarly called "hard-shell"! It pleads, for example, for true humility not less of mind than of spirit, and it demands the fullest possible identification with the conditions of those to whom the young missionary goes. This is nowhere more clearly stated than by Mr. Norman Grubb in his chapter on "Personal Evangelism." "Settle it before God whether you are willing to identify yourself as nearly as possible with the Indian, African, or Chinese, for Christ's sake, even as He became a Jew for ours; to make his country your home; his habits, outlook, customs, yours, so far as they fit in with Christian standards; to appreciate all that is admirable in his history, tradition, and national characteristics, in place of magnifying and giving evident preference to those of your own country." The full and practical recognition of all that is implicit in that directive would mean mistakes, even disasters, avoided and would promote the furtherance of the Gospel.

It is appropriate to remark at this point that very much of what is said for the candidate for overseas service, and about his training, will be equally relevant for workers at home. This is no adverse criticism of the book. It does, indeed, extend its usefulness. The chapters on Prayer, Preaching, and Bible Study are full of good things, enlivened and lightened by occasional flashes of humour. Further, despite the acknowledged and immediate aim of this book, it is at least arguable that it is quite valuable and important for missionary society officials as it is for missionary recruits. We welcome the case that is made for the comparative study of religions and, more briefly, for that of social anthropology. There is a condensed, but wholly wise, if not wholly adequate, comment on the important and critical matter of Government-missionary relationships. The chapter on The Work in the Field is Alexander McLeish at his best, and the detailed account of George Ingram's work in India, not so well known as it should be, even by supporters of the Society to which he belongs, will repay careful thought. Most of all we welcome the repeated assertion that the building up of the Church of Christ is the essence of our entrusted commission.

The merits of the book are great. We wish it a wide circulation, and an equally wide usefulness in the service of the greatest of all causes. To this very end—for a second edition will, we imagine, be required—and also as evidence of the will for the impartiality required in a review, we venture to make one or two comments of a rather different sort. To begin with, there is something to be said for a change in the present order of the chapters. It would seem logical to put Mrs. Howard Hooker's excellent chapter on "An Offer of Service" considerably earlier in the book, and more so to discuss "Bible Study" before

rather than after "Preaching." Secondly, despite a valiant effort by Mrs. Hooker, the book seems never quite to succeed in shaking off the idea that a negative verdict on an offer of service overseas means relegation to a second-best in God's work. The fact is, of course, that to be finally "turned down" by the Candidates' Committee is probably God's clear call to serve Him at home. The missionary need in this country is desperate enough to give realism to the more positive interpretation of what, at first, may well be an almost shattering disappointment. Lastly, the truest insights of the book are not always or equally maintained by every writer. To take one example, Mr. Grubb, at the beginning of the chapter to which appreciative reference has already been made, seems to have a less adequate idea than that of other contributors with regard to the nature of Evangelism and its relation to the building up of the Body of Christ. How can one otherwise explain his writing "Personal evangelism or bringing men to Christ through individual contacts, is, obviously enough, the main end of our calling . . . Many may be the kinds of baits to be used on a mission field; . . . but all have one end and no other . . . Education, elementary and advanced; the founding of colleges in backward countries; the development of medical institutions, specialized or general; industry and agriculture; social problems; the Church in its relationship to the state; problems of Church union, Church order and worship; all these may engage the attention of missionaries; all may be tributaries that can lead to the main stream: but evangelism is that stream." Well, may God indeed preserve us from that corruption of the missionary enterprise which finds converts an awkward problem and seeks fulfillment merely in christianizing some primitive or pagan order. But the rhetorical reaction hardly does justice to the Pauline idea of the Church, as set forth, for instance, in the Epistle to the Ephesians!

T. W. ISHERWOOD

HERALDS OF GOD.

By James S. Stewart. 222 pp. Hodder and Stoughton. 7/6.

No man of our own day is better qualified to talk to us about preaching than Dr. Stewart. Himself a preacher and scholar with a justly wide reputation, he deals with the subject in these Warrack Lectures as one who is persuaded of its crucial importance, and treats it, not as an academic study, but as the intensely practical matter it is to every minister of the Gospel.

He begins by analysing the situation in which the preacher of to-day finds himself—a situation characterized by unresolved tensions between the opposing forces of disillusionment and hope, escapism and realism, scepticism and faith—and he expresses the conviction that "the Church needs men who, knowing the world around them, and knowing the Christ above them and within, will set the trumpet of the Gospel to their lips, and proclaim His sovereignty and all-sufficiency." As to the content of that Gospel, Dr. Stewart deals with this in a particularly fine chapter entitled "The Preacher's Theme." He has no sympathy with non-doctrinal preaching. The preacher's theme must be the historic Christian faith. He exists, not for the propagation of his own views, opinions and ideals, but for the proclamation of the redeeming acts of God in Christ; and this Gospel of the Cross must be presented in the context of the world's suffering and sin as at once a revelation, a victory, and a challenge.

Dr. Stewart makes a powerful plea for expository preaching and for the observance of the Christian Year. He recognises the intimate connection between preaching and worship and regards the former, not as a contradictory element, but as having an integral place in all true worship. He offers wise counsel on sermon construction and delivery, the choice of texts and subjects, the use of quotations, the question of language, and so on. In his final lecture he brings us face to face with the realities of the preacher's inner life: the depth of his own spiritual experience, his daily walk with God, and the kindling of that sacred flame which must first burn within himself before it can set other hearts aglow.

No servant of the Word could fail to find inspiration in these pages. If nothing else, he will find a model of lucid and vigorous English prose, enriched with a wealth of anecdotes and allusions and ringing with the note of strong conviction and passionate sincerity.

FRANK COLQUHOUN.

SECOND CENTURY CHRISTIANITY.

By Robert M. Grant. S.P.C.K. 6/-.

Mr. Grant has done good service in translating and bringing together this collection of fragments; and so has the S.P.C.K. in publishing them. Mr. Grant's compendium bears witness to the geographical expansion of the Church, and he has gathered fragments which represent the opinions of men of many countries. Some of the fragments are very tiny, almost too trivial to notice. He gives a brief introduction to each fragment or group of fragments, with some reference to the author, and explanatory notes here and there. It is a useful manual for the student, and one not without its value for those who make no pretence to theological competence.

In his Introduction Mr. Grant says: "To-day we hear much of the two hundred sects in America; but even they do not possess the variety of thought, on fundamental matters, which characterise the Christianity of the second century." One might well ask how has the Church survived at all, with the confusions of thought, the fantastic distortions of the Christian message, and the variety of sects claiming to be Christian, which, in those early days, as in our own, have marked its progress and marred its perfection. There are other factors to consider besides the errors of human understanding and the perversions of the human will. That the Church emerged from the obscurity of the hidden years at the end of the first century with a coherent message is due to the fact that she derived her power from the influence of the Apostles and of Apostolic Men; from the Canonical Scriptures; from the Overruling Providence of God and the Guidance of the Spirit.

HAROLD DROWN.

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND THE CHURCH.

By Arthur Tarleton Macmillan. S.P.C.K. 1/-.

This is No. 10 in the new series of Theology Occasional Papers, and is a very good shillingsworth. Besides giving facts and figures about marriage and divorce in this country, the author sets out a draft proposal to deal with the incongruity of many marriages that at present are celebrated in Church. In brief, he proposes that marriages in Church should be accompanied by signature to a declaration that both parties recognise the implications of Christian marriage. Thereafter the state would not grant a divorce to any who had been married in Church. The most that would be granted would be a decree of separation. The author discusses two possible exceptions.

This proposal sounds more effective and workable than the suggestion made by the present Bishop of Oxford a few years ago, that the Christian ideal of the indissolubility of the marriage bond should be binding on all who are on the electoral roll of any Church. There are, of course, difficulties in the way of a double standard of marriage in one country, but in some way or other the Christian Church must clarify her witness in the eyes of the world. She cannot continue to be just a respectable Registry Office.

J. STAFFORD WRIGHT

FLECKER OF DEAN CLOSE.

By Charles Williams. 94 pp. Canterbury Press. 6/-.

Many will question the wisdom of a biography by an author unacquainted with the personality about whom he writes, but Charles Williams has done a difficult task in a competent manner. While in no sense a detailed life history, his book, with its many quotations from Flecker's diary and letters, does enable the reader to catch a more than fleeting glimpse of a dynamic figure, whose industry, intellect, wisdom and Evangelical love built a great school. There is, perhaps, an inadequate treatment of Flecker's manifold achievements, especially in the Dean Close period of his life, but the account of the ministry at Staines is both revealing and illuminating, and one wonders how many other headmasters could have transformed themselves into a vicar whose work was so much appreciated and whose person so much beloved. We have to thank Charles Williams for his picture of a true Evangelical of the old school who never supposed that intellect must be subordinate to the emotions in the life of piety. Possibly the author's death is responsible for the several misprints and the unchecked state of the quotations from Scripture.

H. J. BURGESS.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

By T. Henshaw. George Gill & Sons. 6/-.

Though designed primarily for students preparing for the School Certificate, Higher S.C. and similar examinations, this book will be found most serviceable to many others besides. It is written by an experienced teacher, and contains a mass of information arranged in an orderly manner and lucidly presented. It is not a commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, but it throws light upon nearly every question connected with the interpretation of this most important New Testament book. The treatment throughout is reverent and scholarly. It is, indeed, a valuable *Multum in Parvo*.

Part I deals with the problem of the compilation of Acts; Part II with the political, economic, social, intellectual, and religious background of the Apostolic age; and Parts III and IV with the foundation, outward expansion, and inner-growth of the early Church. To each chapter has been added a series of questions which will be found useful for purposes of discussion and revision.

Illustrations and maps and some very useful biographical and geographical notes help to make this a comprehensive aid to anyone who wishes to be well equipped with knowledge concerning the Church in New Testament days. An excellent book for Day and Sunday School Teachers.

HAROLD DROWN.

UNPOPULAR OPINIONS.

By Dorothy L. Sayers. 190 pp. Victor Gollancz. 8/6.

This is a vastly interesting collection of twenty-one essays by one who is a master of terse and striking English and who knows how to present her case. Not the least remarkable feature of the book is the rich variety of subjects treated, for though they are divided into three main sections they are much more diverse than such a division would suggest. Not often do we get a book which deals with things both sacred and secular (so-called), and this fact in itself strikes a shrewd blow at those who persist in the essentially pagan notion that human life can be divided into hard and fast compartments, as though anything could by itself be either sacred or secular.

That many of the essays have proved to be "unpopular opinions" we do not doubt, for that entitled "Christian Morality" will certainly be a shock to some—though we think a wholly salutary one—while that on "The Divine Comedy" too will not meet with universal agreement since it deals, though briefly, with the vexed question of the dramatic presentation of the Gospel. Whatever we may feel about that question—and it would be better if we felt less and thought more—it is not one that can be ignored, and certainly Miss Sayers appears to show a greater grasp of the significance of the Gospel as the great act of God than do some of her more vocal critics. Her comment on Matthew xi. 5, though only an aside, is particularly shrewd. The essay on "Creative Mind" which concludes the theological section will repay careful thought and is a considerable help in understanding what Miss Sayers calls "the quarrel between the sciences and the humanities." If this is only a quarrel about words it is assuredly not a quarrel about nothing, and the whole idea of the symbolism of language as it concerns Christian theology is well worked out here.

In the section not very happily styled "Political" two essays stand out as being particularly useful for clergymen and indeed for any who have either to speak in public or write. These essays are called "Plain English" and "The English Language" and together they form a delightful lesson in grammar and syntax. All of us, in greater or lesser degree, need instruction here, and in these essays our lessons are set out with a smile and we are entertained as well as taught.

The third section of the book has the general title "Critical" and consists of four essays which are a huge joke, and one more serious contribution on the strange theme of "Aristotle on Detective Fiction." Truly, there are not many subjects on which the ancient Greeks had nothing to say! The first four essays will bring surprised delight and not a little relief to those who are over-much disturbed by "Higher Criticism," for those methods are brought to bear, not upon the Biblical records, but upon the doings of Sherlock Holmes. They are, indeed, "spooft criticism," as Miss Sayers says, and no one will allow Biblical Criticism to claim any finality after reading these essays, for they show

just how foolish and how varied an unrestrained and over-serious "criticism" can become.

Well, there it is; a book which travels charmingly and incisively from Christian Morality to Aristotle as a critic of detective fiction! There is never a dull page, there is much thought-provoking material, and a deal of informed insight which we have come to associate with Miss Dorothy L. Sayers. We gratefully acknowledge the benefit which comes to us from her pen.

R. S. DEAN.

"THE PROPHET" IN THE LACHISH OSTRACA.

By D. Winton Thomas. *The Tyndale Press.* 2/6.

This booklet comprises the Tyndale Old Testament Lecture for 1945, which was delivered by the Regius Professor of Hebrew in the University of Cambridge. As we should expect, the lecture shows all the signs of cautious and accurate scholarship, but in the nature of the case its subject matter will be of interest to a somewhat restricted body of readers.

Professor Thomas examines the occurrence of "the prophet" (or possible occurrences when the reading is doubtful) in the 18 ostraca which were discovered at Lachish in 1935 and in the 3 others which were found in 1938. He finds that there are four possible references, only one of which is certain. He concludes that it is very unwise to identify him with the prophet Jeremiah of the Old Testament. We may quote his closing sentences: "We have caught but a fleeting glimpse of a shadowy figure. We have penetrated the darkness that surrounds him only a little. Until the darkness lifts, and we are able clearly to perceive where to-day we but dimly discern, we shall do well to refrain from unprofitable attempts to establish his identity."

F. D. COGGAN.

THE CHURCH AND HUMANITY.

By G. K. A. Bell. *pp.* 252. *Longmans.* 8/6.

The Bishop of Chichester has earned the gratitude of all Christians by his activities in humanitarian enterprises, in international church-politics and in the re-establishment of relations with the German churches. Anything that he has to say on matters of this kind will be listened to with respect as coming from one who has deep convictions, a wide range of interest and information, and far-reaching experience.

In the present excellently produced volume Dr. Bell has collected a number of utterances: speeches in the Lords, addresses to various bodies, an open letter, sermons. These were made during the years of war and the first year of peace, and deal with vital issues of the period. The scope and interest of the collection may be gathered from a list of some of the leading topics: Refugees, The Church's Function in Wartime, Internees, the Pope's Five Peace Points, Atrocities, Obliteration Bombing, Occupation, The Background of the Plot against Hitler, Famine.

The Bishop always brings to his discussion a high sense of the Christian responsibility to speak courageously and truthfully. He will not allow that the Church is a state department in time of war. He does not fear to advocate a settlement by negotiation if proper conditions can be found. He resolutely opposes the idea that all Germans are wicked and bloodthirsty. He speaks his mind plainly about British bombing policy. He sees that the only hope for Europe lies in a return to the Christian faith and to Christian principles.

Many of the speeches themselves have dated, of course, for the immediate issues are dead. But the ideals for which Dr. Bell stands have not changed, and the importance of the work is to be found in the enunciation and practical application of these ideals. At many points Evangelicals will read with reserve. They will fear that the Bishop has rather too idealistic a view of men and nations. They will think that he overestimates the readiness for co-operation in humanitarian works of a body like the Roman Catholic church. They will not like his obvious deference to the Pope's pronouncements—especially in the light of the part played by Rome in, say, Franco Spain. They may regret that Dr. Bell does not define the "Christian faith" to which Europe should return. (Is it mediaeval Christendom that he has in view?) But they will at least sincerely welcome this informed and challenging statement of Christian ideals, applied to international problems. And they will desire, not to criticise in a spirit of arrogance, but humbly to study, to question, and above all to learn.

G. W. BROMLEY.