

Book Reviews

CHRIST'S STRANGE WORK

By Alec R. Vidler, B.D. *The Bishop of London's Lent Book.* Longmans. 2/6.

The author is described on the title page as Warden of St. Deiniol's Library, Hawarden ; Priest of the Oratory of the Good Shepherd. He is also, we believe, Editor of *Theology*. The title comes from one of the Articles of the *Formula of Concord* (1576). The Bishop of London in his foreword tells us that the purpose of the book is to help us to live "under a more practical and strict obedience to the Law of God—first, by taking our political responsibilities seriously as our duty to God, rather than as our ideals for humanity ; secondly, by hearing and proclaiming God's summons to repentance ; and thirdly, by seeing that our new life as Christians and as a Christian community is one in which God's law is our standard and guide, while Christ's righteousness alone is our justification."

When we read that last sentence we felt cheered. Until then we were afraid that the book was written by Mr. Worldly-Wiseman who directed Christian to the village of Morality, to the house of Legality, and his son Civility. We remembered that he spoke to Christian "contemptuously of the Book in his hand and ridiculed the burden on his back." But Mr. Vidler would say with Toplady :

" Not the labour of my hands,
Can fulfil Thy Law's demands."

Here and there the book would be improved by more concise definition. The author is fully aware that God's covenant with His people is not a bargain. It is not an agreement, but we think he fails to say clearly that it is "an arrangement whereby God promises certain blessings to mankind." Perhaps too, the discussion on the meaning of the word "Law" might have been clarified by the definition that "Law is something laid down by a superior to guide an inferior." But these criticisms must not be taken too seriously. This is a book which was sorely needed. The Antinomians are still with us ! Lent is a season of discipline and we think that it is time that we were called back to the keeping "of God's holy will and commandments." The author makes excellent use of the Homilies. We think that Evangelicals will welcome and profit by this book.

A. W. PARSONS.

THE WOOF OF LIFE

By I. Harris. Longmans. 7/6.

Dr. Harris is the Hon. Director of the Liverpool Institute of Research for the prevention of disease. As a working doctor he is anxious to see the fight against sickness and disease conducted with greater skill and force. He lays great stress on the preventive side of medicine. Much serious illness could be prevented if people were willing and able to go to the doctor regularly for examination, and not simply when the symptoms of some disease occur. The intake of men into the army has shown that many have been suffering from minor complaints, which could have been remedied if they had visited a doctor earlier. Dr. Harris is very critical of our present hospital system. He believes that there should be a much greater emphasis upon research, and that this should be properly planned, and not left to the enthusiasm of the individual working alone. One suggestion that he makes for the improvement of the hospital system is this : "The teaching hospitals should become part of the University and the heads of the various departments become professors and lecturers of that body ; and these in turn would be appointed exactly under the same conditions as other members of the staff of the university. . . ." There is much that is provocative and stimulating in this book, and there are passages with which we cannot agree. In his chapter on Christianity, Dr. Harris unduly minimises the sinfulness of man. We want better conditions for all, and we must work for them, but these in themselves are not enough. Man is a sinner, and it is only in Christ that he is saved. There is much, however, in this book for which one is grateful. One is glad to read Dr. Harris' criticism of the mentality, so characteristic of the age, which is continually seeking pleasure for pleasure's sake.

O.R.C.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY (CROALL LECTURES, 1942-1943)
 By Leonard Hodgson. 273pp. 15/- Nisbet.

Dr. Hodgson has already contributed worthily to Christian thought in his previous books—"The Grace of God in Faith and Philosophy", "Essays in Christian Philosophy", and "Towards a Christian Philosophy". He has strongly maintained that the data given by revelation should be seriously taken as part of the material which philosophy should use. His previous work in this field quite obviously underlies his treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity. In the first lecture, he lays down the basis for his consideration of the doctrine as a reasonable belief, by pointing to the acts of God in history as recorded in the Bible and in church history as the true *revelatum* from which we infer this doctrine rather than propositional statements in the text itself. He dispenses with the scholastic theory of the separate spheres of reason and revelation as an unreal differentiation between the actual experience of the receivers which is involved. On this point Dr. Hodgson has an interesting discussion which is continued in an appendix on the human responsibility in "seeing" the meaning and the truth of the Christian revelation and argues that all men are judged on their response to what they believe to be true, wherever it may lead, rather than as traditional Christian thought has held, that they are judged by their response only to Christian truth, the seeing of particular truths in a particular way. In honest response to whatever truth is seen by the individual as truth, lies justification (*i.e.*, avoidance of damnation) holds Dr. Hodgson, after which it may be hoped that at some subsequent time he may receive the "saving" faith in Christian Truth, by what seems like a work of congruous merit. The old problem of Divine grace and human responsibility which underlies this discussion has little assistance by being transferred to a future plane with all the weaknesses of the "second chance" theories, and the implied condemnation of the divine revelation in this age as inadequate; or from the Thomist definitions of grace *de congruo* or *de condigno* which appear to underlie the different rewards of "justification" or "salvation" in this theory. Nevertheless, the facts of the Christian revelation are established as the necessary "key-feature" by which the universe may be interpreted in a Christian philosophy. From this position, the "key-feature" of God's revelation is itself studied, in the New Testament for the next two lectures, to see what can be found about the being of God. Dr. Hodgson traces the growing awareness of the Apostolic band of the meaning of Christ and of their relationship with the Father, later summed up in the Pauline thought of "adoption". The Christian life—"in the Spirit", has its meaning in reproducing in the Christian the same way of life as of Christ here on earth especially as doing the Father's will, by the indwelling companionship of the Son, through the guidance and power of the Spirit. Hence the nature of the eternal life of God is founded, as a formal statement, upon the fundamental experiences of the Christian life. This developing conception in the early church brought a conviction of the Deity of Jesus Christ lived in a genuine human life, by which a new era was brought in. Yet the accidental conditions must be "thought away" from what must be considered the essential features of God's self revelation in the Incarnation when seeking for a true interpretation of the eternal life of God. Similarly with regard to the New Testament references to the Holy Spirit, the same method is involved and the facts of the revelation so resolved must be reckoned with by any thoroughgoing philosophy. For the purposes of theology, Dr. Hodgson in the fourth lecture seeks a line of inquiry from the nature of human personality, as Dr. John Laird had analysed it in its threefoldness. Parallels are striking between the history of thought on the nature of the self and of the Trinity. Especially is this instructive on the interpermeation between the "Knowing, willing, feeling" activities and the doctrine of *περιχωρησις*; the inadequacy of explaining the whole by one activity, and the historic rejection of subordinationism; and the ultimate mystical unit which is nevertheless founded on a rational approach. Dr. Hodgson brilliantly exposes the error of thinking of unity from mathematical conceptions and the subsequent limitations that this has had on Christian doctrine.

Having so far elucidated the doctrine for the purposes of theology, Dr. Hodgson applies it as a "key feature" to contemporary philosophical positions, notably that of idealism, and the attempt of Dr. Temple in his Gifford Lectures to meet its obvious weaknesses from the Christian point of view. While acknowledging the temporary assistance of idealism, the support so derived was at the cost of

injury to the Christian revelation on creation and personality. Hence Dr. Hodgson holds that empiricism is the present need for Christian philosophy from which the doctrine of the Trinity can be approached, as has been shown, as an "internally constituted unity" yet whose ultimate mystery is not an unphilosophical admission.

The sixth lecture is an investigation of the empirical approach to the doctrine shown in the writings of Augustine, Aquinas, and Calvin, though the struggle is evidently to reconcile the uncriticised mathematical idea of unity which is shown in their adherence to the doctrine of the *principium* of the Father with the acceptance of the Biblical revelation conceived of in the form of propositions. Finally the last lecture shows the practical relevance of the doctrine as arising from practical experience and so leading to a clearer expression in the life here of what we believe is eternally the life of God (e.g., possession by the Spirit and sonship). Aspects too refer to Christian unity, future hope and the reconciliation of all empirical knowledge with the outlook that holds God and man closely related.

Appendices, some of great interest, complete this able and intensely interesting discussion, which should be read for its value to the preacher and teacher in presenting the great doctrine of the Christian revelation that it may be understood and be a spiritual incentive in Christian life.

THE LETTERS OF EVELYN UNDERHILL

Edited with an Introduction by Charles Williams. Longmans. 10/6.

Evelyn Underhill died on Sunday, June 15th, 1941, and is buried in the churchyard of St. John's, Hampstead. Born in 1875, her father was Sir Arthur Underhill, Barrister-at-law. She was educated privately, and at King's College for Women, London, though in his most admirable introduction, Mr. Williams does not mention that she became Honorary Fellow, in 1913. She married Hubert Stuart Moore, Barrister-at-law in 1907, one of the Jew companions of her somewhat lonely childhood. She was Upton Lecturer on Religion in Manchester College, Oxford, 1921-22, and Fellow of King's College, London, in 1927. She was a mystic. As we read this interesting and vivid book the favourite lines of the late Sir William Robertson Nicoll kept recurring to us :

"Now I hear it not, but loiter
Gaily as before.
Yet sometimes I think, and thinking
Makes the heart so sore—
Just a few steps more
And there might have dawned for me
Blue and infinite, the sea."

It was that prince of journalists who wrote, we remember : "Miss Underhill has given us, on the whole, the best English work on Mysticism." She formed in 1911 a firm friendship with Friedrich von Hügel and almost joined the Roman Church, but in 1921 she became a practising member of the Church of England. She loved the Retreat House at Pleshey and towards the end of her life joined the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, largely owing to the interest in the Orthodox Churches and their Liturgy which her studies for her last large book, *Worship*, aroused in her. She joined the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship, and wrote for it an uncompromising pamphlet, *The Church and War*. Her general attitude is indicated in many of the really beautiful letters in this book. Evangelicals will find much in them with which they must disagree but the sympathy, sincerity and the deep love of our Blessed Lord make this book an outstanding one. She had undoubtedly "that burning sense of God which can set the spirits on fire." A. W. PARSONS.

JESUS THE MESSIAH

*By Prof. William Manson. The Cunningham Lecture. pp. ix. + 200.
8/6 net. Hodder and Stoughton.*

This extremely satisfying work can best be described in the Author's own words: "It is not the primary intention of the book to handle afresh the problem of the Messianic consciousness of Jesus, but rather to show how, on the basis of the confession of Jesus as Messiah, the early church built up the structure of its distinctive witness to the Christian revelation of God." To achieve this purpose has involved the consideration of a number of subsidiary aspects of the Synoptic tradition, in the course of which Prof. Manson has some extraordinarily good

things to say which alone make the book of great value to the student of Biblical theology. As a book it is difficult to summarise as the Author treats a number of different subjects grouped round his main theme. He has a good deal to say about our Lord's teaching which he examines with meticulous care in the light of the claims of the Form critics. His attitude to these latter is not uncritical. He examines the main claims of these critics of the Gospel tradition in ch. ii with great fairness and we commend particularly what he has to say on ps. 21, 28-9. In this connection it is interesting to observe Prof. Manson's stress on the value of St. Mark's Gospel for the teaching of Jesus as well as for an account of His life. "For Mark the teaching of Jesus is essentially a sign, a Messianic phenomenon. . . . So Mark thinks of the words as well as the acts of Jesus as signifying a manifestation of God in history." In this he agrees with Prof. Vincent Taylor in his *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition* (cf. p. 88, and see also p. 113). So also with regard to the miraculous. "Miracle," he writes, "is not a late importation into the tradition of Jesus but constitutes the primary stratum" and he effectively illustrates this with a reference to Mark ix. 26 on which he comments, referring to the words "the boy became like one dead". "If there was an ungoverned tendency to the miraculous in the tradition, it is difficult to explain how a story with such features escaped being turned into a record of an actual raising from the dead. Plainly, it was not a case of the Church being in absolute control of the tradition. We see that at many points the tradition was in control of the Church."

When Prof. Manson comes to a consideration of the Parables of Jesus he agrees with Hoskyns and Davey in their *The Riddle of the New Testament* as to the "Christological significance" of the Parable beyond even what "the redactors of the tradition have perceived." But he only very cautiously endorses their contention that even the details of certain of the Parables contain a hidden significance, the clue for which must be sought in the Old Testament. (Incidentally, his reference to that work should rather read p. 157 ff instead of 168 ff, which misses this section on Parables). It is, as he says, possible that such metaphors as seed and lamp "possessed this significance on the lips of Jesus, but it is not to be presumed as certain."

These are but specimens of Prof. Manson's method in dealing with his main problem which, put very simply, is to demonstrate that the Form critics have not destroyed the trustworthiness of the synoptic record of the life and teaching of Jesus. The problem is a vastly important one and a contribution such as this which goes far to vindicate a more conservative (if one may use that word) approach to the whole problem of the Christian tradition and its authenticity is greatly to be welcomed at the present time. It would be disastrous from every point of view if the idea became widely disseminated that Form-criticism had robbed us of the possibility of acquiring any really authentic account either of the life or the teaching of our Lord. Such criticism has no doubt thrown much light on many New Testament problems but it must not be allowed to undermine the authentic content of the Synoptic tradition, else the whole historic basis of Christianity would be destroyed. No doubt we are learning much concerning the form and content of the primitive tradition out of which arose the later compilation from which again our gospels were constructed. In all this the Community must have played a decisive part but that is very far from saying that the Community in any way was the source or origin of the tradition. The early Christian Community may have done much to select, approve or reject from amongst the authentic Christian accounts but that is very different from any attempt to invent them. Hence we welcome this work and hope that its technical discussions, some of which are relegated to appendices, will not prevent many ordinary readers from a careful perusal of it. It is a book to read more than once, particularly by those whose function it is to proclaim the historic Gospel.

CLIFFORD J. OFFER.

REDEEMING THE TIME

By Jacques Maritain. pp. 276. 12/6 net. Geoffrey Bles. The Centenary Press.

The writer of this work can be numbered amongst the few contemporary authors who in the realm of philosophy have established for themselves an international reputation. Therefore, anything that they write is always worth reading whether we actually agree with them or not. One can think of quite a number of men—Niebuhr, Berdyaev, Brunner—who, writing from very

different standpoints, are making valuable contributions to an age which needs all the spiritual guidance and illumination which it can get. And it has to be admitted that hardly any of them come from the ranks of the Roman Catholic Church. There are probably good reasons for this. Trained as most Roman Catholic thinkers are within somewhat stereotyped limits, dominated by one school of theology, they are not prone to explore new realms of thought. They are seldom speculative, and if so then it is well within the limits of the established philosophy. Jacques Maritain constitutes in many ways an exception. Though writing very definitely as a Roman Catholic and always remaining loyal to the traditional Thomist position, he yet finds himself able to approach many contemporary problems with a freshness and breadth of view which one does not normally find in writers of that school. Hence readers who, under ordinary circumstances, might hesitate to read a Roman Catholic production as having nothing very new to contribute, can put their fears aside and enjoy this stimulating work. But one comment is necessary. Parts of this book are not easy to read and they are obviously addressed to readers versed in the technicalities of modern philosophy. These chapters may be omitted and even then much will remain of real value and interest.

One interest of this book for non-Roman readers will be to note the opinion of a writer who obviously claims for himself a good deal of freedom. One notes at once the absence of the customary *nihil obstat* of Roman Catholic books. He claims to be heard not by virtue of the authority behind him but by the intrinsic excellence and value of his contributions to thought. This is refreshing and accounts, perhaps, for some of the attractiveness of Maritain for modern readers. He appears to believe in the almost unlimited capacity of the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas to adapt itself to the requirements of modern thought. "I hope," he says in his Preface, "that the essays I have gathered here may give evidence that Thomist philosophy, which is grounded on tested principles, yet does not slumber comfortably, offers us an equipment enabling us to extend more and more the boundaries of this philosophy itself, and to advance farther into the problems of our time."

Most of our readers will almost certainly turn to those essays which seem not only less speculative and philosophic, but most relevant to the circumstances of our time. And the very first essay is in this category for it deals with Human Equality. He sees the danger of the modern tendencies towards the "mass man" which is really the submergence of the individual at the cost of his personality. "The error," as he sees it, "has been to seek equality in a regression toward the basis set up by 'nature', and in a levelling down to this base. It should be a progressive movement toward the end which is composed of the good things of national life becoming in so far as possible and in various degrees accessible to all. . . ." In other words in so far as equality in human life is a possibility, it should be equality attained by levelling up rather than by a process of levelling down. With this should be compared the writer's statement towards the end of the book in a different connection: "The gospel and the Church (the reader will observe the Author's discrimination in the use of capitals here or elsewhere) taught men respect for the human person and respect for human life, respect for conscience and respect for poverty . . . the infinite worth of each soul, the essential equality of human beings of all races and of all conditions before God."

This latter quotation occurs in another essay to which many will turn with interest, *i.e.*, that on the Catholic Church and Social Progress. Here the writer boldly claims that the democracies can only avert disaster for civilization by following the teaching of the Roman Church as, presumably, embodied in successive papal encyclicals, quotations from which at some length he embodies in Appendix I. And here one would just like to enquire how much the content of these encyclicals owes to the pressure and pronouncement of Evangelical Christianity? If Rome were sincerely attached to these ideals as are set forth *on paper* then why does she exercise so little influence in those directions in countries such as Spain where she has real supreme power? There seems to be some inconsistency here.

A considerable part of the volume is taken up with the Semitic problems or, as Maritain puts it, The Mystery of Israel. The writer has much to say in two essays which we venture to think will be new to many readers. He ascribes a high place to the Jew in the economy of God. "For . . . the people of Israel remains the priestly people. The bad Jew is a kind of bad priest; God will have no one raise his hand against either"—a dictum which many will dispute.

Yet there is some truth when he says, making allowances for the Roman doctrine involved, "It is no small thing for a Christian to hate or despise, or to wish to treat in a debasing way, the race whence issued his God and the immaculate Mother of His God. That is why the bitter zeal of anti-Semitism always at the end turns into a bitter zeal against Christianity." This is an interesting and arresting book from a very definite standpoint by a capable and independent mind.

CLIFFORD J. OFFER.

THE CHRISTIAN IN THE WORLD OF TO-MORROW

By the Rt. Rev. H. A. Wilson, Bishop of Chelmsford. (London, Church Book Room Press, Ltd. 3/6).

The Bishop of Chelmsford deserves our warmest thanks for this timely, helpful and stimulating book. It is simple and unpretentious; but it goes to the root of the matter and has in it the note of the old Hebrew prophets. The Bishop surveys the world of to-day, stricken and torn by war, pulsating with hatreds and strife, and dominated by the love of money, of pleasure or of power, with the natural consequence of declining moral standards and the loss of all that makes for what is strong and good in character and conduct; and he asks "why is all this?" The ultimate reason he, like the prophets of Israel, finds in the fact that men and women have ignored God, or have turned away from Him, or have, as the Bishop puts it in modern phrase, "by-passed" Him, with the consequences we see all around us. The favourite belief of the latter part of the nineteenth century that with further education, improved social conditions and more leisure for rational enjoyment and recreation, a brighter and better era would dawn, has gone beyond recovery. It has been killed by the cold, hard fact of an era desolated by a world-war more horribly wicked, devastating and wide-spread than any that has gone before. To this has the "evolution" of the race brought us. An unclean thing cannot come out of a clean; and, as Bishop Butler reminded the people of his day—"Things and actions are what they are, and the consequences of them will be what they will be: why then should we desire to be deceived?"

Having diagnosed the disease and traced its cause, Dr. Wilson proceeds to consider the remedies which are being propounded, most of them good so far as they go; but he warns us that unless they take account of God, they will, like others that have gone before them, fail to heal the sickness from which the world is suffering mortally. Man is not merely an animal needing food, warmth, clothing, shelter, etc.: he has a spiritual life with other and higher needs which God alone can supply, for he has fallen, and it is not improving but redeeming that will meet his case; and this can only be found in the Gospel of the grace of God manifested in the atoning death of Christ. It is this Gospel which is the mission of the Christian Church to proclaim. The Church itself, however, seems stricken with weakness and a sense of futility in the face of this great task. It has been on too easy terms with the world and too deferential to it. After all, the world is manifestly alienated from God and appears to be moving still further away, and it needs to be told so in clear and unhesitating terms. But it must see in the Christian the living example of a better way if it is to be convinced and converted; and it does not always see in Christian people any very striking difference from others. It is here that the Bishop calls for self-examination and for penitence. He puts ignorance as spiritual enemy No. 1. "It must be confessed that the average worshipping Christian is quite shockingly ignorant of what his religion teaches. If the Christian is to play his part in the world he must know what are the teachings of his faith and he must know how to defend them" (p. 31). And he must really believe and know that God is an actual living Person; not a vague, intangible Providence, but a Heavenly Father Who cares for and watches over those who diligently and earnestly seek Him; Who hears and will answer our prayers; and Who, moreover, invites and encourages us to make our requests known unto Him. "Thus saith the Lord God; I will yet for this be required of by the house of Israel to do it for them." A belief in this truth that God is among us and around us, will steady and fit the Christian to meet all trials and to face all tasks, however difficult, for the power is of God. A Christian Church composed of such men will not have to confess its impotence to deal with the tragedy of the present world situation, but will be strong and able to take a leading part in solving the problems which post-war reconstruction will bring if a new and better order is to arise.

The book concludes with three chapters on Prayer, Public Worship and Bible-

reading, three primary and essential elements of a progressive spiritual life, and on each many wise and searching things are said. Though specially suitable for Lent and for these days of war, it is not less suitable for any time. No one can, we think, read it without gaining profit and encouragement from it. "The grace of God in the heart of man," wrote Archbishop Leighton, "is a tender plant in a strange, unkindly soil"; and the Bishop of Chelmsford has in this book given much practical help in caring for and nurturing this precious plant of the Lord's sowing. W.G.J.

ENGLISH PRAYER BOOKS : AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LITERATURE OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

By Stanley Morison. (Cambridge University Press. 6/- net.).

This is the first of a series of books planned and edited by the Deans of St. Paul's and of Liverpool, to be written by members of various Churches, in order to provide a survey of 'the facilities provided for public prayer'. At first sight such a subject seems remote from the immediate problems of the war to the urgent demands of practical life. But, as this book shows, the purpose is not merely historical, bibliographical, or academic, it is also to conserve spiritual values in the worship of the future and to make that worship more truly expressive of religious aspiration.

This slight volume of 142 pages covers an immense ground in order to set English Prayer Books in their correct framework historically. It is packed with information succinctly given and most carefully arranged and documented, the Chapters dealing with the four 'periods', Apostolic times to the 5th Century, the 5th to the 10th Century, the 10th to the 15th Century, the 16th to the 20th Century, and concluding with a 'present-day Summary'. By far the largest section is naturally the fourth, in which we find an able, learned and dispassionate account of the liturgical development since the Reformation, in the Church of England, as well as outside its borders. The history of Prayer-Book Revision is shortly recorded, with that of the 1928 Book. Is it, however, quite accurate to say that on the second attempt to pass that Book through the Commons it had been "amended as the Commons specified"? Had this been the case it would not have been again rejected. The emendations did not meet the objections so widely felt, or the result might have been different.

Mr. Morison's work was handicapped at a critical time by the destruction on May 10th, 1941, of so much of the liturgical section of the British Museum: but the loss is certainly not obvious to the general reader, and he has had access to other services and collections. It is inevitable that there should be some omissions in so wide and yet detailed a survey, but it may be truly claimed that the account he gives is remarkably full and informing, and that it points helpfully and constructively to possible developments in the future. Of these perhaps the most interesting are the suggestion of the modern revival of vocational services (of which he gives in perhaps somewhat disproportionate detail, one for the Royal Navy, and another for the Royal Air Force), and the idea of a cathedral, preferably a new foundation, to be chosen to be the centre of experiment.

The '*obiter dicta*' with which the historical summary is lightened and characterized are both shrewd and humorous, though not everyone would agree with their judgments of persons and movements. But together they do provide a valuable text-book on a subject far too much neglected, not least amongst Evangelicals. The student, as well as the ordinary reader, will find much of quite fascinating interest in its pages, and the book as a whole sets in its matter as in its format a very high standard for the series it commences.

S. NOWELL-ROSTRON.