

attention had been paid to the nature and origin of the problem itself. It is the presence of certain unresolved and hardly noticed obscurities about the natural power of goodness and the nature of the goodness of power which, while they keep the argument moving and indeed make the scheme of the book into an argument, at the same time cast a shadow on the royal splendour which the author is reflecting in the mirror of Milton.

IVO THOMAS, O.P.

BRITISH DRAMATISTS. By Graham Greene. Britain in Pictures Series. (Collins; 4s. 6d.)

Mr. Greene traces the development of drama from Holy Week services and mystery and miracle down to the present day. His presentation is lively, with flashes of brilliance; his judgments are sometimes debatable, as with Otway, for example, and still more; Congreve, but he keeps well to the fore the idea of what drama should be, the expression of the life of a people, and for that reason alone the book forms a valuable introduction to the dramatists themselves such as might well be used in higher form work in schools. The illustrations help: interestingly chosen and reproduced.

One main criticism: 'We confuse the issue when we talk of Shakespeare's greatness as a poet'; but the rest—the action, characterization, accessories—is surely *for* the poetry, the 'extended metaphor', and determined by it; and the reversal of the order is what leads to decay. Mr. Greene might perhaps have made more than he does of contemporary experiments; but is not their importance precisely in this, that they attempt to recover the vitality first of the *word*, and thence, by consequence, of the stage?

G.V.

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION by H. G. Wood. (Cambridge University Press, 3s. 6d.)

This book is in the Current Problems Series. The strenuous effort that is called for in order to see and analyse comprehensively the real problems of our times, in the spheres of religion, economics, and sociology, etc., evokes always unstinted admiration when we find the call being answered. Professor Wood attempts in six lectures to assize the relative values of the state 'isms', of science and scientific humanism, and of the unadulterated teaching of Christ, in helping us to form for ourselves an idea of the forces which alone are able, when translated into the concrete, to guide society aright.

We could not quarrel fruitfully with the conclusions to which the author comes. With the general bent of his own religious and intellectual outlook we are in hearty and affective agreement.

Such publications may prove within a small circle a unifying strengthening power, but we cannot help feeling that this effort is too

long or too short an evaluation. It lacks the power to convince through thoroughness—the spirit to convert through enthusiasm succinctly expressed.

P. P. FEENY, O.P.

Edward R. Westbook has some pleasing ordination and prayer cards (1½d. each) and calendars for 1943 (1s. each with envelope) for sale: 39 Ridgeway Road, Osterley, Isleworth, Middlesex. Every year he produces new designs which show considerable progress in technique. The human face and figure are still weak, but the prayers are pertinent and clearly written, which places them high above the trite Gothic texts and the sugary saints that so often act as book-markers in our prayer-books.

C.P.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS.

Dear Sir,

It was a surprise to me that, in these days of paper shortage, you should have devoted two full pages of your October issue to an unqualified eulogy of Evelyn Underhill's last book . . . What are we to think of the author's advice of 'dropping all consideration of . . . the imperfection of our character'? One of our own modern masters of the spiritual life, Dom Columbia Marmion, tells us that the appalling tepidity of the average modern Catholic is due to our habitual lack of 'compunction,' the very virtue that Miss Underhill seems to deprecate in her book in favour of an easy-going confidence in the love of God drawn from emotional experiences of wild cherry blossoms and the like. Surely concern for our own goodness is neither 'innervating' nor a special characteristic of our lax age, as your reviewer seems to think. On the contrary, the ardent desire for perfection has always been not only the concern of all the Saints but even that of our Lord Himself who told us to be perfect and to destroy ruthlessly all that might hinder us from attaining to perfection even unto plucking out own own eye! One cannot help wondering what the great Dominican Saints like St. Catherine of Siena, St. Vincent Ferrer, and in our own time a man like P. Lacordaire—to say nothing of St. Dominic himself—would have thought of such strange 'fruits of the Spirit' that pretend to send you to heaven on a comfortable motor road though, alas, only at 'thirty miles per hour'!

H. C. GRAEF.