

pattern spread too wide. It is, for instance, doubtful whether liturgists, those exact and exacting scientists, will concede him all his indications of the Roman-Gallican conflict in the Charlemagne era. In succeeding centuries he advances on to firmer ground; and his account of the various stratagems used to promote the claims of Reims to be the coronation church, if it were read by the canons of Westminster, should remind them of the good fortune by which their church has since the Conquest enjoyed immunity from attack upon its pre-eminence.

ERIC COLLEDGE

BRIDGE TO ISLAM. By Erich W. Bethmann. (Allen and Unwin; 15s.)

STUDIES IN MUSLIM ETHICS. By Dwight M. Donaldson. (S.P.C.K.; 27s. 6d.)

Here are two books on Islam, each by an American Protestant missionary possessed of long experience in the field and some acquaintance with Islamic languages and literatures. Further than this they have nothing in common.

Mr Bethmann's work is an extraordinary 'scrapbook', opening with an imaginary trip to Jerusalem, passing on to a consideration of Muhammad's person and of certain general Islamic ideas, and then rapidly reviewing country by country, the whole Islamic world: all this in two hundred, by no means closely packed, pages! The treatment, despite frequent displays of statistics (those more than usually false guides where the East is concerned), is utterly superficial, much of the work being devoted to speculation on the political and religious future of Islam and Islamo-Christian relations. The writer is alternately crudely 'scientific' and embarrassingly sentimental: at one moment one catches an echo of a State Department pronouncement, at another all is quiet confidence and *savoir faire* in the best tradition of Mr Dale Carnegie. The style is not engaging and reads at times like a literal translation from a foreign tongue.

Dr Donaldson's book, on the other hand, unites a wealth of learning (though not always of accurate scholarship) with cogency of exposition and a sense of form. Even the professional Islamist must welcome a book which for the first time surveys in fair detail the whole range of Muslim ethical thought, presenting it as an organic growth rooted in the Koran and fertilised by Hellas. At the same time, the general reader can strike up here, as nowhere else at present, a passable acquaintance with some of the outstanding persons and writings of Islamic civilisation: the introductions are made by way of translations by eminent scholars or through appreciations based on the standard work of such scholars. Dr Donaldson also contributes some original material of his own.

The work is sympathetic yet objective, suffering not at all from having been in part originally planned as a course of lectures to American Protes-

tant seminarists. The footnotes and bibliographies are on the whole well calculated to lead the reader along sure paths to such goals as he himself may propose.

G. M. WICKENS

COLERIDGE. By Humphry House. (Rupert Hart-Davis; 8s. 6d.)
 WORDSWORTH AND COLERIDGE, 1795-1834. By H. M. Margoliouth.
 (Home University Library; Geoffrey Cumberlege; 6s.)

Mr House's *Coleridge*, the Clark Lectures for 1951-2, is a distinguished book. He has had the wit, his scope being necessarily limited, to make his point clearly and at once. The traditional accounts of the poet distracted by German metaphysics, or of the philosopher spoilt by poetry, or of the split personality, are in their different ways inadequate. And there has been too much pitying of Coleridge. Certainly, says Mr House, pity is needed, but it must be 'a developed, comprehending pity, so far as we are capable of it, a pity like tragic pity. . . . The area in which we should pity him, the things for which we should pity him, are beyond our normal emotional scope.' This fairly indicates the book's concern with the things that matter, and the quiet authority with which it is addressed to them.

Mr House has little time, and perhaps he has not much inclination, to discuss Coleridge's philosophy or his criticism: he concentrates on the aura of the man and then on his poetry, or rather, on his five or six great poems. Here he has some good points to make, in one case—*Frost at Midnight*—attempting a serious revaluation, in support of his belief that this poem belongs with Coleridge's best. About *Kubla Khan* he argues very convincingly that nobody would have thought it less than perfect had not Coleridge first described it as 'a fragment' and 'a psychological curiosity'. Good too is his study of the potentialities of *The Ancient Mariner*, of the allegorical interpretations, sensible and silly, that have been given to it.

Like *The Road to Xanadu*, Mr House's book is preoccupied with the joining together in poetic conspiracy of close observation of nature and a rare appetite for abstract studies. This rewarding critical approach gains in value from Mr House's review of the unpublished notebooks, in which both sides of Coleridge appear to fine effect.

Wordsworth and Coleridge, a recent addition to the Home University Library, is also a good book, an introduction to the two poets which is in the best sense elementary, since it makes an excellent basis for further reading. Here and there it is marred by slack writing—'Bursting out like that is unusual for the charitable and affectionate Dorothy, but to have one's serious letter thus ignored!'—and by absurdity of phrase—'little brown Dorothy'; but Mr Margoliouth orders his material so well that he is able to say a great deal in a small book, without dullness or vicious distortion. Also,