

said, be regarded either as 'a card-index or a scramble of eggs with their shells on', it must be 'portraiture based on organized facts'.

The art of the spoken word, warm, flowing, deep with experience and learning, lit with geniality and wit, was admirably demonstrated at the final banquet by Charles Morgan, C. V. Wedgwood, André Maurois and Compton Mackenzie. For a while tradition, continuity, the long life of European culture, shone like the candles in the king's hall where the sparrow flew; but I sat next to a writer in exile from Estonia, and in his nearness felt the outer night, and remembered *de la Mare* and 'look thy last on all things lovely every hour'.

RENÉE HAYNES

REVIEWS

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS. By Millar Burrows. (Secker and Warburg; 30s.)

This book, announced as the British edition of the work which appeared in 1955 in New York is, apart from 17 additional lines in the preface, nothing else than an exact photomechanic reprinting of the American book. The paper may not be as good as in the Viking Press edition, but the price is considerably lower.

Dr Burrows is one of those privileged scholars who have been in contact with the great scrolls, discovered in 1947 in a cave near the Dead Sea, almost since the beginning of the discoveries, and in the present book he presents his well balanced and judicious views on the most important problems which have been debated so far. In the book itself there are no notes, but there is an extensive bibliography at the end (pp. 419-435); it is clear that the author has studied all the publications he mentions, because he constantly refers to them, explicitly or even tacitly, in his text. In his preface, which he calls, alluding to some texts of the scrolls, 'a word to the wise', he says that the book is not intended for the scholar; as a matter of fact it is written in a scholarly way and discusses many scholars' problems. This makes the character of the work somewhat ambiguous; whether this is the author's own idea, or is due to restrictions imposed on him by the original publishers, I cannot decide.

As a whole, and with the restriction that the method of treatment is not included in this judgment, the book is excellent and is probably the best we have at this length on the subject. It should be read by everyone who wishes to have more than a superficial judgment on many parts of the problems raised by the scrolls. Unlike several other publications in America and on the continent of Europe, the book has

been written with the sincere honesty of the true scholar: it discusses the facts and explains them, it presents each hypothesis as an hypothesis, it does not try to win popular favour, it warns the reader where he should be warned and does not speculate on his emotions. In this respect it ranks high above such publications as those of A. Dupont-Sommer, of a journalist such as E. Wilson and of a Unitarian such as A. Powell Davies.

In the first five parts of the book the author treats in turn of discoveries and discussions, the age of the manuscripts, the dates of composition, the community of Qumran, and the importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls. In a sixth part we have translations of the more important documents, and the already mentioned bibliography. He is convinced that archaeology and palaeography, text and language, taken together, prove that all the manuscripts found hitherto in the caves near the Dead Sea in the vicinity of Khirbet Qumran were made before 70 A.D. The oldest of the more or less complete scrolls, the St Mark's Isaiah scroll, probably dates from a little before 100 B.C. The identification of individuals and groups in the Commentary of Habakkuk remain, according to Burrows, uncertain; in all probability the commentary was written not very long before 63 B.C. and not long after that date. As for the now so hotly debated relations between the authors of the scrolls and Christianity, Burrows remarks very justly that the doctrines and practices of the community which produced the scrolls substantially enrich our knowledge of Judaism at the time just before and during the origin and early growth of Christianity; this in turn contributes to our understanding of the New Testament in its relation to its background and derivation, and all the more so because the beliefs and ideals, the organization and the rites of the group, as compared with those of the early Church, exhibit both impressive similarities and even more significant contrasts.

J. VAN DER PLOEG, O.P.

GOD THE UNKNOWN. By Victor White, O.P. (The Harvill Press; 18s.)

Instinctively one takes up this book, with a title that vividly recalls Alfred Noyes's superb work, in the hope that the author has at last written a *magnum opus*, possibly exposing the fallacies of the agnostic with answers that cannot be gainsaid. Instead we have a collection of lectures and articles which have already appeared in print. But one has only to begin to read these chapters to find one's initial disappointment give way to great delight that so competent a psychologist and theologian has gathered together his views on a variety of subjects which form a quite remarkable unity precisely because his comments and applications derive from the teaching of St Thomas Aquinas.