

(p. 8), and the Syrian Jacobites are omitted on p. 18, where, too, the number of non-Orthodox Eastern Christians is badly under-estimated.

But a more serious adverse criticism one feels bound to make is this. Without a doubt Dr. Zernov gives a picture that in some respects is valid for the whole of Orthodox Christianity; but he does not make it clear that in other, and some far-reaching, respects he is showing us a predominantly Russian view, sometimes representing only a section of Russian Orthodoxy at that. Those who have warned us against forming a conception of the Orthodox Church based mainly on Russia, or even a section of Russians, are quite right: to do so would only still further put off that day of unity and truth for which we long. And this reviewer feels the more bound to say this because his own sympathies tend to coincide with some of these Russian views and trends which, moreover, he believes (together with Dr. Zernov) to be in peculiar consonance with the religious sentiment and understanding of English people.

As an example of what I am referring to, Dr. Zernov writes on p. 58 that 'A bishop in the East, as an individual, has no special power to make priests or deacons; his role is to sanction in the name of the Catholic Church the ordination performed by the Holy Ghost, who acts through the unanimous decision of a local church gathering for the celebration of the Eucharist.' Is that the belief of the Eastern Orthodox Church? Perhaps it is. But surely there is no doubt that many Orthodox bishops, priests, deacons and lay people would deny it most strenuously.

- DONALD ATTWATER.

THE EPISTLE TO DIOGNETUS. Edited by E. H. Blakeney. (S.P.C.K.; 6s.)

The production of modern editions of Patristic texts has been sadly neglected in England, and Dr. Blakeney's work should call attention to a great need. He points out (p. 33, note on *kainon genos*) that the spirit of the Cross introduces a new relation to life, and one of the most striking characteristics of Christianity is the 'new and youthful life' which Christ brought into the world. It is also a fact that the freshness of Christianity appears in all its vigour in the Gospels and the writings of the early Christians, so that Christianity to-day can win a new power by returning to its sources. Evidently Dr. Blakeney had this in mind when he undertook his edition of the *Epistle to Diognetus*, which has been described as the noblest of early Christian writings.

The Introduction to the text is brief, and is written for those who are unfamiliar with the *Epistle*: it includes also a list of the chief references to Christians in heathen writers of the second century. The text follows, and some may regret Dr. Blakeney's decision to omit the 11th and 12th chapters, which, though spurious,

have aroused new interest since the publication of the *Homily on the Passion* by Melito of Sardis (ed. C. Bonner) in 1940. A translation of the text would have been useful, because although there are several already in existence, they might not always be to hand: and the inclusion of a translation would only have added twelve pages to the slender volume. The Commentary is efficient and cheerful, containing useful material on such subjects as God's purpose in creating the world (p. 74), the eternity of God (p. 66), Man's creation in the image of God (p. 78), the Christian's pilgrimage on earth (p. 48), and Infanticide (p. 50). The book concludes with a useful Index Verborum, in which words not found in the New Testament or which occur neither in the New Testament nor the LXX are asterisked. It is unfortunate that a book of ninety-four pages should cost as much as 6s., because it may not have so large a sale as it deserves.

A.V.W.

THE LITERARY OUTLOOK. By S. L. Bethell. (Christian News-Letter Books; 2s. 6d.)

Here is a plainly-written account of the present literary situation in England and a plea for its Christian interpretation. 'If the Church is to fulfil its obligations to every aspect of the social order, it must maintain, not only its theology, its sociology, and so forth, but also a body of sound and respected Christian criticism.' Such is Mr. Bethell's theme.

There are chapters on Lowbrows, Middlebrows and Highbrows, and one on the Future. And running through them all is an acute perception that takes nothing, least of all a fashionable reputation, for granted. Mr. Bethell's analyses, for instance, of Charles Morgan (pp. 42-50) and Dylan Thomas (pp. 71-76) are models of smooth writing and hard hitting. Bogus mysticism and careless talk don't get past Mr. Bethell. He has a formidable critical equipment; wide knowledge, sharp logic, humour and, *mirabile dictu*, a conviction that 'as the Christian revelation is in absolute agreement with natural law (both being divinely decreed), the Church must necessarily find it easier to work, and the Christian to live, in a state in which the natural law is respected, than in such a society as we have at present.'

The functions of the Christian critic are certainly of supreme importance, and Mr. Bethell's book is to be recommended as a guide to them. It may be that he expects too much of society as perfectible and it is to be hoped that his constructive proposals do not depend altogether on 'the reorganised society, whenever it may come about,' or they may be a very long time in being realised.

I.E.