

be a great pity if for this reason Charles Williams's work was lost, for everything that he wrote—novels, poetry, and theology—teach, among others, two things which are of paramount importance in the twentieth century. He firmly believed in the power of 'spirit', whether by this he meant angels, devils, or what we call the 'spiritual' in the human make-up. Not that he just believed in ghosts; he was convinced that human love and human faith could govern the conduct and the destinies of mankind. But further than that, he believed that the power of God was greater still, and that the Incarnation changed for ever the face of the earth because God made Man altered the human race *body and soul*. Without falling into the trap of modernism, he found in man some tincture of the divine and he insisted that this transformed the whole person of man. In that sense he was a mystical writer. His mysticism was not a vague woolliness that confined the effects of the Incarnation to some mysterious 'spiritual' area of life. In an important way, therefore, Charles Williams is an important writer for this age, which has split up human life into too many departments and which believes that 'specialisation' in religion or theology or prayer is but another (though rather old-fashioned) department of human thought on the same level as any other kind of research. Charles Williams does make some attempt to show that religion concerns the whole human person and therefore the whole of human life. The growth of this belief must come if religion and religious people are not to be relegated to the museums of the future.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

KIERKEGAARD: *The Melancholy Dane*. By H. V. Martin. (The Epworth Press; 7s. 6d.)

Although this book is short—scarcely above a hundred pages—it is certainly not elementary, and the reader who turns to it in the hope of finding an easy introduction to an often-quoted philosopher, and, by the way, of having his mind clarified on the subject of existentialism, will be doomed to disappointment. What the author does achieve, however, is what, chiefly, he set out to do: stimulate interest in the thought and writings of Kierkegaard.

Kierkegaard lived and died a Lutheran Protestant, though he became, with the passing years, more and more dissatisfied with that form of epicurean Christianity taught by the officials of a State Church, until finally, at the age of forty-two, he was in open conflict with the Danish Bishop Martensen, and, in the midst of it, fell suddenly ill and died. He saw many Christians, even devout Church members, living in aesthetical, or at the most ethico-religious, categories belonging to natural religion. This is what he calls

'Religiousness A', to which he opposes true Christianity, 'Religiousness B', which stands for the unbridgeable gap between this world and God. 'When Christianity has lost its power to offend it has lost its power to save.' The significance of Kierkegaard must be in the depth and wisdom of his *obiter dicta* rather than in the truth of his teaching on superhuman questions which can only be answered by a superhuman teacher.

D.S.

THROUGH A CONVERT'S WINDOW. By Doris Burton. (Duckett; 7s. 6d.)

The writer came to the Church by way of agnosticism and the Groups. Becoming a Catholic, she became an optimist. In finding the answer to her own spiritual difficulties, she discovered that she 'held the key to things temporal and things eternal'. In the essays which make up her book she applies that key to a variety of problems. If her treatment, especially of social questions, does not always penetrate very deeply, still, her well-founded confidence in the Christian answers should be infectious. She ought to persuade many unconverted readers to consider the Catholic solutions; and she herself will be the first to acknowledge that their application may demand hard thought and self-sacrifice *usque ad mortem*.

J.H.



EXTRACTS

DOMINICAN REVIEWS on the spiritual life have been multiplying since the war. The third one in the English language has now appeared from Dublin under the title of *Doctrine and Life* (1s. 6d. every second month, or 10s. per annum, from St Saviour's Dublin, C.16). The Irish Dominican Provincial introduces the first number:

The writers in this magazine undertake the task of initiating the faithful into the treasures hidden beneath these sacred mysteries [of the Christian life]. In doing so they will stress the *dogmatic* truths. . . . The purpose of *Doctrine and Life* will be to explain 'the abundant riches of God's grace', so that 'doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in him, who is the head, even Christ'. With this end in view they will draw on the traditional sources of Catholic teaching—Sacred Scripture, the Fathers and Doctors of the Church. In everything they will follow, of course, the guiding light of St Thomas of Aquin.

And the Archbishop of Port of Spain, the Most Reverend Finbar Ryan, O.P., takes up this theme showing how it links up with the original plans for *La Vie Spirituelle*. It is clear from these opening