

schism until the advent of Isaias and Micheas during the last years of the Northern Kingdom, from the collapse of which they were able to draw such powerful lessons for their own people.

This book has already been found by the present writer to be most valuable for the preparation of classes on this period of Old Testament history.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

THE LITERATURE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. By G. F. Moore, revised by L. H. Brockington. (Cumberlege; Oxford University Press; 5s.)

This recent addition to the Home University series is a revision of a work first published in 1913. It treats the Old Testament writings from the point of view of their literary history and the development of their religious ideas rather than from that of the political history of Israel. Its aim is to present the results of the critical literary study of the Old Testament to the ordinary educated reader; and from the standpoint of the independent critic it has done so with great success. After introductory chapters on the Canon and on the Old Testament as a national literature, the Pentateuch is treated rather fully, as its importance deserves. Its main sources are dated from the ninth century (J) to the Persian period (P); the terms 'myth' and 'legend' are freely used of the older narratives; miracle is explained away. The other books or groups of books have each a chapter. To the Prophets there is a short general introduction. The whole of Daniel is assigned to the second century. (It is a pity the printers have misplaced a line on page 167). Jonah is put with Esther and Ruth among the 'Story Books'. The Wisdom Writers also have a special introduction by the reviser of this edition. There is a rather limited bibliography and a sufficient index. Since the book is clearly written and most readable, it is likely to be widely read by the ordinary public; and its conclusions and still more its assumptions, will probably be accepted as those of Biblical literary criticism in general. Although, in an early chapter, Church authority, the consent of tradition and the witness of the New Testament to the Old are mentioned as of weight with many Christians, yet in the body of the book these factors are ignored. To Catholics, therefore, many of its conclusions will be suspect, as neglecting essential elements in the Biblical problem. But this work is no doubt representative of the bulk of more or less popular writing on the Holy Scriptures in English. Catholic writers have still the task of capturing popular opinion in this as in other fields; there is no need for them to let the case for their own more traditional but equally critical presentation go by default.

DOM J. HIGGENS.

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE. By Edgar J. Goodspeed. (Cumberlege, Oxford University Press; 7s. 6d.)

This book was published in America in 1946 and the author is

chiefly known for his important part in the new translation published in 1938 as *The Complete Bible: an American Translation*. He was also on the committee which produced the Revised Standard Version for the Protestant Churches of America in 1946.

Professor Goodspeed has in mind the inquirer who wants to read the Bible, but, daunted by the volume's bulk and the variety of its contents, does not know 'where to begin' (the title of the first chapter). First of all, he says, 'the Bible is not a book but a library. And how do you read a library? Certainly not by taking the catalogue and reading the first book listed in it, then the second, and so on. Nor do you read it shelf by shelf, beginning at the upper left hand corner. You follow some definite interest of yours, or you decide upon some principle to guide your reading'. The present book is intended as a guide of this kind. Very sensibly he suggests beginning with the Gospel of St Mark: 'if we ask How is the Gospel of Mark to be read? the answer is At one sitting, as any close-packed, swiftly moving story should be read. It can easily be read aloud in an hour and a half, and to yourself in half that time' (p. 3). Then immediately he proposes the reading of the other Gospels, for a knowledge of the Gospels gives us the high point of view from which we must read the rest of the Bible (p. 8), and thus we shall 'make friends with the prophets and apostles who so largely wrote it, and above all with its last great Hero, who invited us to be his friends' (Preface).

From here he guides the reader to the various kinds of literature in the Bible, beginning with biography (indicating the biographical sections in the prophets, for instance). There follows a section on eloquence, which includes Hebrews, 'the most finished and conscious eloquence in the New Testament' (p. 33). Then he proceeds to history, and to the special department of history which is law. The various types of poetry in the Bible are treated admirably, and the book ends with chapters on the letters, revelations and devotional literature of the Bible.

Some of the chronology is a little distasteful to us, e.g. the Pentateuch 400 B.C., Psalms 150 B.C., Synoptics 70-90 A.D., Ephesians 90, Pastorals 150, and Baruch c. 100 A.D. But these dates are quite irrelevant to the thesis of the book and in no way disturb it. There is a sound piety throughout, although Christ's divinity is nowhere asserted or evidently presupposed, though he is seen as the Saviour of the world (p. 18) and 'the embodiment of the highest Wisdom of God and at the same time the guide and helper of the individual human spirit' (p. 8). These are vague terms which although they cause no offence, leave so much unsaid. The chapter on English Bibles traces the history very accurately and includes the little-known eighteenth century efforts of Whiston and Wesley as well as the various modern speech versions. Rheims, Challoner and its 1941 (American) Revision are included, but a

sad lacuna is the absence of reference to Mgr Knox, whose final text may not yet have been published at the time of writing, although this should have been made good for the English edition.

Undoubtedly the most valuable feature of this book is the classification of Old Testament literature, extracts being given in the Professor's own version.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

JESUS—HISTOIRE ET CRITIQUE. By F.-M. Braun, O.P. (Casterman).
SAGESSE GRECQUE ET PARADOXE CHRETIEN—Témoignages Littéraires.

By Charles Moeller. (Casterman; 90 francs.)

Père Braun's book is a collection of studies dealing with the chief aspects of our Lord's person and message and having particular reference to the findings of modern scholarship, both Catholic and non-Catholic. The author displays wide knowledge of the relevant literature and succeeds in compressing a vast amount of reliable information into some two hundred and fifty pages. Much of the work was originally written, so the author tells us in his preface, as an article for a volume entitled *l'Histoire Générale des Religions* which no doubt accounts for its somewhat schematic character; it may well be that too much has been attempted in too small a space. But if we are invited to survey the surface rather than gaze into the depths, Père Braun off-sets these possibly inevitable limitations by his well-documented text and sufficient bibliography; though the student would have been helped yet further had the book been provided with an index of scripture references and authors' names. Following an opening chapter on the Sources come fourteen others, each serving to elaborate the main theme. Together they fulfil the author's promise of giving to 'the reader in search of precise and fundamental notions what he is entitled to expect from lives of the Saviour, from commentaries on the Gospel, and critical studies concerning Christian origins'. The whole is a notable piece of work by the Professor of Holy Scripture at the University of Fribourg.

Christianity, Dr Moeller would appear to hold, is indissolubly wedded to Hellenism, at least in so far as this embodies the highest form of a merely natural humanism. The 'scandal' of the Cross remains, yet through the influence of divine grace all the glory that was Greece is to be found again, deepened and enriched, in the artists and poets of the Christian era. The age-old problems, evil, suffering and death, are in truth only explicable in the light of Calvary, and of this the Christian writers show at least an implicit awareness. Dr Moeller is a theologian and scholar of distinction, as is evident from the clearness of his expository method and his comprehensive reading, here tabulated in a useful bibliography; his literary manner, a blending of the hortatory and the rhapsodic, is