

which have the dignity, the restraint, and the profound emotion of true art.

Any novel with Paris and Provence for background must offer some glimpses of olive groves and vineyards, some urban morning and evening scenes: there are in *Come Home Traveller* many, but not too many or too elaborate, such sketches. Here, for example, is nightfall on a hillside above Aix-en-Provence.

*The silhouette of cypress and olive trees stood out darkly; mist bathed the feet of the hills: beyond, in their setting of red rocks, were the little shining, solitary beaches which the Mediterranean tasted with drowsy lips.*

There is also Dolores, the aged nurse—a Spanish peasant, half witch, half Sybil, and wholly a child of God. She is not entirely incorporated in the tale of the people she serves and stands out from this picture of their lives as though demanding a book to herself. This criticism is, indeed, applicable to the whole tale: like many first novels, it contains material for two, if not three, full length books. That is the defect of its quality, a quality strong enough to carry its author far and high in the succession of Catholic fiction.

NAOMI ROYDE SMITH.

#### BIBLICAL STUDIES

THE BIBLE AND THE COMMON READER. By Mary Ellen Chase. (Collins 10s. 6d.).

This book has some good chapters, especially those on the background history of Israel, on certain individual characters in the Old Testament and on the literary value of different parts of the Bible. But it also has many inherent weaknesses which disqualify it as a practical guide to the Christian student. The author is a lecturer in English literature and a novelist, and sets out to introduce the literature of the Authorised Version ('The noblest monument of English prose', p. 15), by placing it in its background of Hebrew history and commenting on its varied literary forms (narrative, biography, letters, legend, saga, ballad, lyric, etc.), showing how in each genus it rivals the greatest. This study of literary forms is good, though superficial through not penetrating beyond the Authorised Version. The main weaknesses are (1) an entire absence of interest in Theology or Revelation in the Bible, with little emphasis on the action of God in the world; (2) an equal absence of interest in Christ, except as a good subject for a clever biography by St Luke, or in the development of Christianity 'to some branch or sect of which most of us either nominally or actually owe some measure of allegiance, if not by conviction at least by family tradition' (p. 239), which is of course why 220 pages are devoted to the Old Testament, and only 47 to the New Testament; (3) taking the Bible as the Authorised Version; (4) an acceptance without question of all the old 'critical' views, e.g., Peter is post-exilic, so are most Psalms, I-II-III Isaiah, Daniel is maccabean, Matthew and Luke are A. D. 90,

Pastorals and Hebrews are not by Paul, nor Apocalypse by John, etc., and an assumption as a matter of course that much biblical narrative is no more than charming legend, and that the 'so-called messianic interpretation (of e.g. Is. 53) is untenable' (p. 174), etc. In fact, this is a skilful popularisation of the Bible on a purely literary and non-Christian basis, it being supposed that the 'common reader' is interested in reading and not in praying, in literature and not much in religion. But mention should be made of the good and original dramatic and psychological analysis of the book of Job, with the interesting suggestion of Job's 'unorthodoxy' *vis-à-vis* the current Jewish view of evil (p. 190-204). Similarly the notion of the Canticle, Psalms, and Proverbs as 'anthologies' is valuable (p. 205-222). One cannot help calling to mind the different approach of a similar book, written from a Catholic standpoint, also by a woman who is not a trained Scripturist, Miss Monro, who helps us towards 'Enjoying the New Testament' not merely as literature but as God's word, and who is said (I hope truly) to be preparing a sister volume on the Old Testament.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST PETER. By E. G. Selwyn. (Macmillan, 25s.)

It is consoling to find that the first notable biblical book of 1946 (it appeared in January) is a genuine flower of that noble Cambridge tradition of Anglican exegesis, of which the names of Lightfoot, Westcott, Hort, Swete, Hatch, and Dr Selwyn's own father are the chief glories, whose scholarship is undisputed and whose roots in fact lie in the background of the Catholic tradition. For it is in virtue of this tradition, which begins in New Testament and early patristic times, that the author, starting with a perfectly scholarly examination of linguistic, biblical, patristic, and historical evidence, continuing through exact critical and theological reasoning, and inspired with a true love of our Lord and devotion to St Peter, arrives at an orthodox position entirely consonant with Catholic teaching.

This is a definitive commentary. The Epistle has been a life-interest of the author, and here we have the mature results of years of study. The first 115 pages are a study of the authorship, occasion, date and theological argument of the Epistle. The next 130 pages are a fully detailed commentary on the Greek text. The following 66 pages are devoted to additional exegetical notes on particular passages. The remaining 152 pages consist of two essays: on Christ's *descensus ad inferos*, and on a literary comparison of I Peter with other Epistles. At the end is a 20-page note by Dr Daube on linguistic parallels in Rabbinic literature.

It would be utterly presumptuous in a review like the present even to pretend to appraise the value of the investigations and conclusions expounded in a commentary of this calibre. It will be more useful to take a few obvious questions that the general reader would want to put to a commentator, and indicate Dr Selwyn's conclusions. For instance, was Peter the author, and if so, what was the position