

of doggerel can be pinned, with more or less success, to contemporary events. For those who love anagrams, cherish the Baconian theory, or have a taste for cryptography, it must be great fun. Unfortunately, perhaps, it has also attracted Mr. Laver. Unfortunately, because Mr. Laver is a scholar, and writes entertainingly. He tells how he was a sceptic about Nostradamus, but became with study increasingly to believe that there might be something, after all, in his predictions. This book catalogues his increasing satisfaction that some powers of divination did visit this particular astrologer, who is towards the end openly and apparently without any overtones referred to as 'the prophet.'

The evidence does not, to the layman, carry irrefutable weight. Nostradamus himself says somewhere that he wrote down everything 'under a figure rather cloudy than plainly prophetic.' But whilst it means that he cannot easily be proved wrong, it means even more definitely that he cannot be accepted as right. Mr. Laver is impressed by a stanza about a king of Britain who dies after being recommended to the throne by his father, after which 'Lonole दौरa topique,' which means that Lonole, which it is pointed out is an anagram of Olleon, present participle of the verb 'ὀλλυμαι, to destroy, will speechify. Mr. Laver proceeds with the suggestion that Ole Nole is 'as near as a Frenchman might be expected to get to the "Old Noll" of popular speech': therefore, Lonole equals Oliver Cromwell. Later on Hitler appears as Hister.

It can only be said that Mr. Laver's belief that there is *something* in Nostradamus is not likely to be shared, from the assembled evidence, by a number of readers of this book.

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THE BIBLE AND SOCIETY.

THE RED BIBLE: AN ANTHOLOGY. Compiled by Sidney Dark. (Gollancz; 5s.)

Nowhere has social injustice been denounced with such strength and such authority as in the Bible, and it is important that this plain truth should penetrate both the ignorance of materialist revolutionaries and the complacency of ordinary *bien-pensants*. There is, therefore, room for an anthology of those Biblical passages which bear most directly and powerfully on the problems of our times; it appears, however, that Mr. Dark is not the man to make it. His texts are too few, he has missed some particularly 'Red' passages, and his introductions and glosses are as clumsy in thought as in expression. One example: 'In the Bible, God is the friend of man . . . Friendship, charity or love, call it what you will, means, it is made clear, understanding, the readiness to forgive, the avoidance of bumptiousness, and the liberty, equality and fraternity without which a satisfactory human society is impossible.'

W.S.