

Reviews

Dictionary of Mysticism. Ed. Frank Gaynor. (Philosophical Library of New York, \$5.00)

The Philosophical Library are in process of issuing a "Mid-century Reference Library" under the general editorship of Dr. Dagobert Runes. The project is ambitious, and extends from volumes like the present one to a "Dictionary of Diplomacy" and an "Encyclopaedia of Tobacco."

The title of the present volume is a little misleading. Its scope is mainly Eastern mysticism and the occult. Of "orthodox" Christian mysticism it has very little to say. For instance, the reader who looks up "Stage of Illumination" will be surprised that he is simply told to look up Dasa-Dhumi, which he will discover to be the Sanskrit name for the ten stages in the spiritual development of a Bodhisattva. "The dark night of the soul" makes no reference at all to St. John of the Cross. Moreover, he will search in vain for any reference to such terms as "ligature" and "acquired" and "infused" contemplation. All this seems a little puzzling as the drawing on the dust-cover is of St. Jerome and his lion, and the books which lie open round him appear to be written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Modern religious movements come off better. We learn that Christian Science was founded by Mary Baker Eddy, and the Theosophical Society by Col. Olcott and Mme. Blavatsky and a note of their main tenets is given. The Quakers and George Fox get a mention. It is a little surprising to find Freemasonry figuring once or twice till one remembers that Annie Besant came back from the Continent as "The Most Puissant Commander, the Venerable and Illustrious Brother Besant" of the Rite Mixte du Droit Humain, and observes that, according to the Dictionary, "A great deal of ancient and medieval occult lore, particularly of the Kabalah and of alchemy, has been retained by the Order in a more or less modified form." But the 2,200 definitions afford a mine of information on Buddhist and Hindu terms, astrology, necromancy, occultism, magic and demonology, psychical research and kindred subjects.

Great Systems of Yoga, by Ernest Wood. (Philosophical Library of New York, \$3.50.)

Professor Ernest Wood was formerly a Professor of Physics in India, and while teaching in that capacity he became deeply interested in the ancient philosophies and psychology of India,

learning Sanskrit so that he might read the authorities in the original. On retiring from his post he devoted himself to expounding these doctrines to the Western World, believing that they would be of great value here.

The dust-cover shows a man tied up in the kind of physical knot which we can only associate with acrobats, and in consequence one opens the book expecting more of a dissertation on advanced gymnastics than anything else. Indeed when expounding the physical exercises of the Hatha and Laya Yogas, Professor Wood quotes from the Shiva Sanhita as follows: "When the Yogi is able to practise holding the breath for an hour and a half, various siddhis (faculties and powers) arise, including phophecy, travelling at will, sight and hearing at a distance, vision of the invisible worlds, entering others' bodies, turning various metals into gold, invisibility at will, and moving in the air." The author, however, lays it down firmly that he does not believe that purely physical exercises can develop the mind at all, or contribute to yogic or occult experience, but merely develop the body. This quotation is an extreme case and the other systems of yoga here described aim much more directly at mental and spiritual control. Indeed one might describe many of them as severe disciplines to arrive at the fruits of the spirit.

To a student of Yoga this book will be an invaluable guide by an expert. To the average Christian three lessons seem to emerge. First, the amazing determination and discipline of those who embark on this quest for perfection. Second, the intimate correlation of the physical and spiritual, so often overlooked in the West, and third, the fact that occult powers and spiritual ones are entirely different things.

DENIS LANT.

The Dawn of the Post-Modern Era, by E. J. Trueblood. (Philosophical Library, New York, \$3.75.)

The underlying assumption of this book is that in the last decade or so the modern epoch has come to an end. The split atom and a split humanity have brought us to "the Post-Modern" era. The task which the author sets himself is to analyse the life of post-modern man and to describe the re-orientations necessary in the changed conditions. In many ways this is a praiseworthy attempt at that task and the book reveals a wide range of investigations into the many fields in which guidance is needed. Not the least commendable feature is the evident sympathy with which the author writes of the problems confronting our generation.

The over-all solution he offers is a philosophy of personalism and much of what he says, both positively and also as against the

prevalent materialism, is valuable. The book is weak however at a vital point. There is no doubt of the author's sympathy towards religion or of his conviction that Christianity has a vital role to fulfil. But his philosophy seems to be the important thing and religion appears as one among several sources which will serve towards its realisation. Moreover, in spite of occasional allusions which suggest a more adequate theology the general impression gained is that in this sphere he is least up-to-date. His Christ is "the greatest religious genius of all time" and Christianity's task is "to rediscover the genius of its Founder." This kind of doctrine was found inadequate by the Church of the Modern era; it is unlikely to satisfy or save the Post-Modern.

G. W. RUSLING.

A Foundation of Ontology, by Otto Samuel. (Philosophical Library, New York, \$3.75.)

Nicolai Hartmann, whose ontology is here expounded and criticised, died in 1950. Our author describes him as one of the three greatest modern philosophers (the other two being Martin Heidegger and Max Scheler) and sets out to introduce English readers, for whom only Hartmann's "Ethik" has been translated, to his "Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie." He deals carefully with Hartmann's terms, such as "Being" (Sein), Extant (Seiendes), Hereness (Dasein) and Suchness (Sosein), but his purpose is critical and he develops a distinctive viewpoint of his own, which he describes as meontological. This is a difficult book about a difficult subject. Philosophers are often hard to understand and German philosophers sometimes impossible. One wonders what the scientist who, after hearing F. H. Bradley lecture, was asked if he now knew what philosophy was and replied, "Yes, organised piffle!" would have made of this. It is heavy going. The reader will lay the book down, if not enlightened, at any rate humbled, and that is not the least of the benefits of philosophy—it induces humility.

Christ and the Human Life, by F. W. Foerster. (Philosophical Library, New York, \$5.00.)

We are told that Pope Pius XI sent the author his personal blessings and the Protestant faculty of Leipzig conferred on him their honorary Doctorate of Theology, but, even without this information, the reader would be in no doubt as to Dr. Foerster's piety and erudition. His book is a second edition of one published in 1921, but he has "radically revised" the text in the light of world events since then. There are two parts, viz. "Christ and

the Human Soul" and "Christ and the Human Life," the former dealing broadly with theoretical, the latter with practical, Christianity. Chapter headings in Part I include "We are living in an Apocalyptic Time," "Father, Son and Holy Ghost" and "The Political Christ"; in Part II, "The Meaning and Application of the Sermon on the Mount," "Dignity and Education of Woman," and "Self-Knowledge." It will be seen that the work covers a great deal of ground, which is both its chief virtue and principal defect. There is a mass of useful material. People who collect illustrations will find some new ones here. Preachers who like a book which starts trains of thought for next Sunday's sermon will value this one. Those who are seeking the common ground between Roman Catholics and Protestants may feel that in this book they have found the answer. In two respects, however, the book is unsatisfactory. (i) Dr. Foerster seems constantly to be beginning again. So many are the subjects dealt with in the different chapters, and so many the divisions within each chapter. He tells us that his procedure will be, not deductive, "applying a central truth to individual cases," but inductive, "calling reality to witness"; penetrating "from the edge towards the centre, not from the centre outward toward the edge." This procedure may commend itself to those who think highly of the scientific method, but it is questionable as to whether, beginning in that way, you can ever arrive at theological conclusions. Dr. Foerster, at any rate, seems to be better at beginning than concluding. This is the book's second defect, (ii) it frequently leaves an argument in the air. For instance, in a chapter on "Mary," just when the present reviewer felt that he was beginning to understand the place which the Virgin occupies in the devotional life of some Christians as he had never done before, he came on this: "The fact that woman, by her soul's contact with God, can become a maid again, contains such deep knowledge of and such penetration into the most delicate mystery of all spiritual and physical health that one would sin against chastity if he tried to explain it even." Is there anything which it is a sin to explain?

W. D. HUDSON.

The Christian and his Bible, by Douglas Johnson. (Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 3s. 6d.)

If one cannot accept the author's conclusions, which are unyieldingly conservative, he commands respect by the manner in which in the main he states his case. There is evidence of considerable wading in "critical" waters, but he comes out dry. But the bibliography excludes his readers from any fishing in such dangerous waters!

The only concession we can find follows his conclusion that the Synoptic evangelists are independent of one another. Mr. Johnson adds that "those who believe that a comparison . . . reveals signs of dependence of Matthew and Luke upon Mark may be allowed their view which does not diminish the value nor the authority of the synoptic gospels." It is a pity that he cannot realise that for many of us this and other "critical" views not merely "do not diminish" but actually enhance the value and authority of Scripture.

Many of the old ideas die hard, e.g. that the analysis of the Pentateuch rests solely on the variation in the Divine names, while the author's appendix on the authorship of the Fourth Gospel might have been penned forty or fifty years ago: it shows little appreciation of the real difficulties of the problem.

Nor on matters of the text is Mr. Johnson any happier. He misses the real significance of the comparative uniformity of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, and proceeds to give a curious twist to the discrepancy between it and the Septuagint. He further maintains that we are justified in claiming a "virtual," "essential" infallibility for the "resultant text" of Holy Scripture. As the phrase "resultant text" is in inverted commas, one assumes that it is used in the technical sense, which leaves one agape.

Space forbids reference to numerous other points, but strong exception must be taken to the suggestion, repeatedly made, that rejection of the "plenary" theory is due to agnostic outlook, veiled rationalism, all-pervading humanism and the like. It is hinted that the outlook of the "critic" is essentially deistic and that his view of the Bible suffers accordingly. All this is theological tub-thumping.

With much of the early chapters we can concur, while the closing chapter on "Understanding the Bible" is excellent. The bulk of the book has no necessary connection with them.

W. S. DAVIES.

Internationale Zeitschriftensschau für Bibelwissenschaft und Grenzgebiete. International Review of Biblical Studies. Vol. 1, Part 2. Patmos-Verlag, Dusseldorf.

The first part of this amazing work classified no fewer than 1,391 articles published in 393 Journals, etc. This second part carries the list of articles from No. 1,392 to No. 2,597. The work is a brilliant idea, and is essential for research. It is a bibliographical goldmine, though it is essential that every piece of gold should be examined before it is used. It is a Journal of Biblical and related Journals, and often gives summaries of the articles it classifies. These few lines can give no indication of the great worth and indispensable character of the work.

Essentials for a Living Church, by James Gray. (Berean Press, 3s. 6d.)

Here are three lectures given in several continents to the Disciples of Christ, on the relation of Scripture and Tradition. The first chapter evaluates Tradition as important, living and inevitable. The second illustrates the relation of Scripture to Tradition from such topics as Doctrine, Baptism and Ministry. In the concluding chapter Principal Gray comes to grips with his problem, i.e. the difficulty of finding the normative standard of Christianity in the New Testament and of applying what must be claimed as an irreducible minimum of the faith to the church and the ministry. The book is far more important than its size would suggest. The material is courageously presented and will stimulate Christians to further thought on these ever-present problems.

Letters to my Daughter, by Dagobert D. Runes. (Philosophical Library, N.Y., \$2.50.)

This book contains the personal testament of a Jewish philosopher set forth in the form of twenty-one letters to his daughter, with an appendix of "Evening Thoughts." The style is simple, the thoughts are homely, the themes relevant to our present discontents, and the occasional story arresting. Although in a way the book is a kind of Wisdom Literature brought up to date, the deeper notes of prophetic passion, and the promptings of wonder are not absent. Criticism of Christians is often justified, though blame is not for them alone.

The Church of South India. 1. *Daily Bible Readings*. 2. *Bible Readings and Collects*. 3. *An Order for the Lord's Supper*. (Oxford University Press, Geoffrey Cumberlege, 2s., 1s. 6d., 1s. 3d.)

Here are three most attractive and helpful booklets from the Church of South India. The first is a planned course of daily readings to cover the Bible in one or two years. Theme headings are provided. Through the readings the biblical history of the kingdom of God is set forth, and special attention is paid to Bethlehem, Calvary and Pentecost.

The second provides a selection of one Old Testament and two New Testament passages plus theme headings and short prayers for each Sunday and some festival days. I warmly recommend both these booklets as a guide to both Bible reading and Bible preaching. The second booklet is also meant to be used with the third.

The third booklet will be of interest to Baptists because whilst it presents a typical ecclesiastical order of service for the Lord's Supper, it is quite unlike anything that Baptists are normally used

to. The booklet contains an order for Pre-Communion. Would that Baptists would revive the old custom of the service of preparation for the Communion! Then comes the Preparation (comprising twelve acts of worship), then, The Ministry of the Word (comprising fourteen acts of worship), and lastly, The Breaking of the Bread (comprising twenty-five acts of worship).

Baptists should read and study a book like this, for it will help them to make up their minds about their practices. They will want to ask—What is the relation of this suggested order to the account recorded in 1 *Corinthians*? Does this suggested order of service have the effect of “smothering” the *act* of the Lord’s Supper in too many words? When Baptists agree to televise their Communion service, will the service be similar to this booklet or to 1 *Corinthians*?

Deliverance—Challenge—Victory, by W. Gordon Robinson. (Independent Press, 1s. 6d.)

This booklet is an expansion of three talks given for the B.B.C. under the title “The Heart of the Bible,” expounded under the three themes of the title. The material is simple, sound and Biblical, and the booklet is to be commended for that reason. At the same time I was disappointed in the sequence. After the first chapter on Deliverance treated against the deliverance from Egypt, I expected the second theme, Challenge, to be concerned with Covenant. That is what follows in the Bible. All I found among other things was a few lines on relationship. Having thus lost the way, he failed to relate victory to the promised land. Thus it may be said that the author’s material is sound, and illustrates the themes he has chosen, but it does not give or illustrate the Biblical sequence.

G. HENTON DAVIES.

Epistle to the Galatians, by Herman N. Ridderbos. New London Commentary on the New Testament. (Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 25s.).

The author is a noted Dutch scholar, who teaches New Testament studies in the Kampen Theological Seminary in Holland, and this is the second edition of the volume. Questions of date, authenticity, content, occasion, purpose, etc. are dealt with in nearly 40 pp. of introduction. Professor Ridderbos dismisses Meyer’s contention that this epistle was the outcome of rivalry between Paul and Peter, and Lietzmann’s that Paul’s opponent was Barnabas, and accepts the traditional view that the Apostle’s conflict was with unnamed propagators of a Judaizing interpretation of Christianity which had infiltrated the churches of Galatia. A comparison is made between this epistle and *Romans*. The date of 50-51 is accepted, no doubt

is entertained as to authenticity and the churches of South rather than North Galatia are regarded as the recipients of the epistle. The actual commentary gives fairly full expository notes, clarifying the meaning in many places by reference to the original, and should prove a most serviceable help and guide to those who would understand better the message of this significant letter. The volume combines very well discussion of critical matters with the kind of exposition that is helpful to preachers, and the whole has been well translated by Dr. H. Zylstra.

The Churches and Press Publicity, by Raynor D. Chapman.
(Independent Press, 3s. 6d.).

The author of this wise and useful manual of guidance on how to make the best use of opportunities of publicising Christian activities is editor of *The Yorkshire Observer* and a Congregationalist, and therefore well qualified, as these pages prove. While the first part deals with relationships with the Press, the second is devoted to the Church Magazine and much valuable advice is supplied. We warmly commend this little book. Much good would result if the author's suggestions were put into practice.

Church Publicity, by Eric W. Hayden. (Carey Kingsgate Press, 2s. 6d.).

The author is a Baptist minister who possesses a talent with brush and pen. This brightly written booklet, itself attractively produced, pleads with churches to adopt a publicity policy and to bring church advertising nearer to the standards of modern commercial publicity. Useful suggestions as to how this may be done are offered and it is stressed that this need not be as costly as many imagine. There are five pages of illustrations, and the whole makes a helpful production.

GRAHAM W. HUGHES.

Transactions, vol. iv., Nos. 3 and 4, and the *Baptist Quarterly*, vol. iv, No. 5 are needed by Rev. G. W. Rusling, Spurgeon's College; the appropriate price will be paid for them to anyone who can supply.