

Book Reviews

For Faith and Freedom: Gifford Lectures in the University of Glasgow. Volume II: Christian Theology. By Leonard Hodgson, Blackwell, 1957. Pp. 237. 25s.

The book under review contains the second series of Gifford lectures by Professor Hodgson, which is a continuation of his first series given a year earlier. The author has repeated the leading ideas of his first series, so much so that the present volume stands by itself as an intelligible whole. These lectures are a valuable contribution to the philosophical theology of our time.

According to the author the distinction between natural and revealed theology can no longer be maintained. All man's discovery of truth is by the interaction of divine revelation and human reason, so all theology is both natural and revealed. 'Christian Theology should be thought of as a specific form of natural theology differentiated by its seeing in certain events particular acts of God of unique and supreme significance for our understanding of everything' (pp. 3-4). The author's basic contention is that we can make sense of the universe by thinking of it 'as a process expressing the will of a Creator to bring into existence a community of finite free persons'.

The main intention of the author in this second series of lectures is to expound the 'special form of natural theology, which is Christian Theology, and to show how the Christian interpretation of certain events in the history of the world fits in with, illuminates, and carries further what understanding of the universe and of our lives we have already gained' (p. 4).

The proper starting point for this exposition is the Bible which is the record of God's special acts in history, recorded by consecrated men who, however, were inevitably conditioned by the forms of thought and linguistic usage of their age and culture. The author suggests that for a proper understanding of the events recorded in the Bible and their significance for the present, we must go beyond the thought forms and linguistic usages to that to which the Bible bears witness. This procedure applies not only to the Bible, but to the creeds, patristic writings and other documents of the Church. The question we have to ask is, 'What must the truth have been and be if men who thought and spoke as they did saw it and spoke of it like that?' (p. 5). One of the most repeated sentences is 'Christ gave His life: it is for Christians to discern the doctrine'.

After dealing with the chief source of Theology—the Bible, the author discusses the cardinal truths of the Christian revelation—God, God and Evil, Christ, The Holy Spirit, The Christian Church, Grace, Prayer and Providence, Eschatology, and Freedom and Faith.

Professor Hodgson's thesis is that the history of human thought is the history of God making Himself known to men through the minds of men, and that it proceeds by the interaction of 'categories' and 'evidence'. The presuppositions which condition a man's outlook are termed 'categories', and the objective facts which one seeks to understand are called 'evidence'. The author in dealing with the truths of Christian revelation has tried to strip off layers of misconceptions derived from unexamined categories, and arrive at the objective facts.

In his lecture on God, the author concludes 'In order to make sense of the universe as it actually exists we have to think of it as brought into being by the will of the Creator, that our ultimate explanations must be in terms of His purpose and that this implies thinking of Him as personal' (p. 41).

Such a view of the universe and God raises the problem of evil which the author deals with in his third lecture. His treatment of the problem is very realistic, and does not follow the usual path of relieving God of responsibility for the existence of evil. The irrationalities, Professor Hodgson thinks, in general are to be accounted for as incidental to the Creator's will to create persons endowed with freedom.

In seeking to understand Jesus Christ the author says, 'The developed doctrine is not simply concerned with what He (Christ) thought of Himself while on earth, or what His disciples thought of Him, but with what He was . . . The history of the doctrine of Incarnation in the first four centuries is the history of the Church discovering that Jesus could not have been God's Messiah and done God's saving work without Himself being God' (p. 70). The Holy Spirit is seen as God at work within creation. Professor Hodgson, as he has done elsewhere in his writings, has argued the relevancy of the doctrine of the Trinity as implying internal differentiations in the unity of God.

The author has tried to clarify the Christian understanding regarding the Church, grace, prayer, providence and eschatology. The reader will find many valuable observations. In dealing with prayer, for example, Professor Hodgson says, 'If we believe that both the orderliness of the natural world, and our responsibility for whatever we do with it, spring from the will and creative activity of God, we must believe that he is able to control the development of His creation without either disorganizing its orderliness or destroying our freedom and responsibility' (p. 167). 'Our thoughts about prayer must rest on the foundation of belief that God voluntarily waits upon our asking' (p. 168).

The author concludes the second series by pointing out that man's effort to understand the world and gain mastery over the

forces of nature depend on his *faith* that the universe does make sense and will be responsive to his efforts. Man is also conscious of the reality and the imperfection of his freedom and comes to see that only by his growth in knowledge and in the mastery of himself and his world can he reach perfection. In the Christian faith we see God revealing Himself as willing man's growth in freedom, calling man to a partnership in which alone true knowledge and full freedom can be found (p. 224).

I am not quite certain whether this philosophical presentation of the Christian faith is convincing enough to an atheist or to a non-Christian. However, it will be valuable to one who is already a believer in that he will know that his faith is not superstitious but reasonable. I commend this book to all, especially to theological students and teachers.

Jabalpur

V. P. THOMAS

The Person of Christ in New Testament Teaching : by Dr. Vincent Taylor. Macmillan and Co., x + 321. 21s.

Dr. Vincent Taylor has followed up his useful trilogy on the Atonement with a second trilogy on Christology. Of this second trilogy the present book under review is the third volume, the other two being entitled 'The Names of Jesus' and 'The Life and Ministry of Jesus'; thus we may expect to find in this book the fruit of many years of study on the work and the person of Christ, and in this expectation we are not disappointed.

The book is divided into two parts. In the first part (Exegetical) Dr. Taylor summarizes the teaching of the different writers of the New Testament about the Person of Christ. In this summary he is careful to note those elements of New Testament teaching which belong to primitive tradition, and to draw attention to the way in which they have been developed and interpreted by the great New Testament theologians. He likewise distinguishes between the language of worship which gives to Jesus Christ the title 'Lord', and the language of reflection which gives to Him the title 'Son of God', arguing that the latter title is not just the later reflection of a worshipping Church but is in fact our Lord's own estimate of His Person. Valuable in this part is Dr. Taylor's treatment of the 'intractable element of subordination', which, Dr. Taylor suggests, can only be resolved in 'relationships of love which are interior to the life of the God-head'. The part concludes with a valuable appendix summarizing the New Testament uses of the names 'Lord' and 'Son'.

The second part of the book is entitled Historical and Theological, and is most valuable for our understanding of the Person of Christ, in the light of the New Testament evidence which has just been set forth in Part I. In the first two chapters (entitled The Divine Consciousness of Jesus, and The Emergence of the Divine Consciousness of Jesus) Dr. Taylor insists that we ought to

abandon the phrase 'Messianic Consciousness' and speak instead of Jesus' consciousness of Divine Sonship, 'the key to the presentation of Jesus we find in all the Gospels'. Some will not find easy his conclusion that in the Synoptics our Lord's knowledge that He is Son of God is not continuous but 'flashes out in climacteric moments which illuminate the whole', though it should be pointed out that he adds that 'in the Fourth Gospel Sonship is always in its noonday splendour'.

The next three chapters are entitled *The Christology of the Primitive Christian Communities*, *The Limitations of Primitive Christian Christology*, and *The Contributions of the Great New Testament Writers*; here Dr. Taylor shows how the Christology of the early Church is to be seen not only in its thinking but in its life and worship, and how its limited Christology was enriched in the realm of thought by St. Paul, St. John and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, all of whom were able to appreciate in some measure the Christological importance of the work of Christ, and the bearing of the high claims made for Him by the early Church upon the doctrine of God.

The implications of the 'high Christology' of the great New Testament thinkers for the doctrine of the Trinity are discussed in the next chapter; here Dr. Taylor comes down firmly on the side of those theologians (like Dr. Hodgson) who accept 'the social theory of the Trinity', arguing that neither Karl Barth's designation 'Modes of Being' nor William Temple's 'Three Centres of One Consciousness' satisfy the demand of the New Testament evidence that 'a fellowship of mutual love' should be characteristic of a truly Biblical doctrine of the Trinity; noteworthy is his comment that 'The great hymns to the Trinity all confess a Trinity in Three Persons . . . So far as we know, Personal Centres and Modes of Being have not as yet lent themselves to a comparable use . . . A theology which does not express itself in hymns is found wanting'.

In the remaining three chapters, entitled *Christology and the Kenosis*, *Christology and Psychology* and *Towards a Modern Christology*, Dr. Taylor reveals his own preference for a kenotic Christology, pointing out that 'it can only have been by the deliberate acceptance of self-limitation that the Son of God appeared on earth', a conclusion demanded, he argues, both by the New Testament evidence and by the Chalcedonian insistence on the reality of the Two Natures. Dr. Taylor adopts in particular the view of Drs. Forsyth and Mackintosh that 'the divine attributes of omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence are potential and latent rather than continuously operative' in the incarnate Son of God, and both adduces the arguments for, and answers the standard objections to, such a Christology.

It will be clear from this brief summary of Dr. Taylor's book that we are given an adequate survey of the New Testament teaching about the person of Christ, and also some stimulating thinking about the implications of that teaching. All will not

agree with his kenotic theory, but none would disagree with his conclusion, in the Epilogue, that 'worship, as well as reflection, has prompted the greatest Christian affirmations', and would endorse his insistence that only through faith and the fellowship of the Church can we begin to understand the person of Christ.

Calcutta

PETER MAY

An Introduction to Asian Religions : by E. G. Parrinder. S.P.C.K.
Rs.3/00.

(Available from S.P.C.K., Post Box 1585, Delhi 6.)

Dr. Parrinder's 'Introduction to Asian Religions' is an admirable handbook specially suited for students seeking to acquire a general idea of the contents of the living religions of Asia and of the spiritual forces which underlie these religions, moulding the lives of countless millions of peoples for generations and generations. The author is mainly concerned with providing his readers with accurate data, relating to their origin, expansion in other countries, literature and their peculiar treasures. He is not concerned with an estimate of their values in relation to Christianity. That is a task which he has rightly left to his own readers. He has made an honest attempt to bring out all that is best in these religions, not ignoring altogether the lower forms, so that a critical evaluation may be made of these religions and their different schools of thought. One of the attractions of the book is that it has quotations of some of the sublime passages from the sacred writings of these religions so that a proper appreciation of some of their highest thoughts may be made by the readers and serve as an incentive to further study. It cannot be denied that some of the literature connected with these religions have given expression to thoughts and ideas which have soared very high indeed and can be regarded as being inspired by the Eternal Spirit though the writers may not have been conscious of it. A study of such literature would be not only edifying but also illuminating and is essential for those who aspire to make a comparative study of these great religions.

The book has another attractive feature and that is that it has not only dealt with the Asiatic religions as concisely as possible within the limits that the author has himself imposed but has also noted the main trends of thought which have influenced religious expression in our day such as Darwinism, Frazerism, Freudism and Marxism. This is essential for anyone who wishes to understand the modern mind in relation to religion, ethics and religious observances. It would have been better, perhaps, if the writer could give a little more detailed account of the new forces at work in India today such as Arobindoism, Gandhism, Tagorianism and Ramakrishnaism. It would have thrown more light on the present position of Hindu thought in India at the present day.

I strongly commend this book to all who are engaged in comparative study of religions and particularly to students of Theological Colleges in India as a book which gives a comprehensive account of the living religions specially of our country in the most compressed and concise form possible within the limits of a small book like this. I have no doubt that it has met a long-felt need.

Calcutta

J. K. SHAH

Religion for Today: by Canon Charles E. Raven. Pp. 54.
Calcutta, Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 1957. Re.1.

Religion for Today contains a series of three sermons delivered by Canon Raven under the joint auspices of the S.C.M. and Y.M.C.A. at Colombo.

Dr. Raven makes a forceful presentation that the Christian faith is completely adequate to meet the challenge of the scientific knowledge of our day. He elaborates his main thesis in terms both appealing and convincing. The Christian finds that 'awareness' of God 'uniquely in the incarnate life of Jesus Christ'. It is from this fact of Jesus that religion should be understood in our day. Jesus did not teach theology to his disciples; he taught them to 'become sensitive to God' and be 'infected' with Him. It was in this experience that the deepest meaning of 'life abundant' was made known to the disciples: 'Whoso loveth his life loses it'.

The author calls upon his readers to have this experience of Jesus meeting every situation of life—loneliness, self-esteem, desire to advance, etc. Atonement is better understood as an experience of unification and integration of the 'whole way of living', than as a doctrine satisfying some particular human need. No doctrines are satisfactory for all times.

Understood in this way the Christian faith would welcome and correlate both scientific and metaphysical knowledge. In the case of St. Paul the acceptance of the fact of Jesus led to a thorough re-appraisal of his basic religious ideas. Nor was this change sudden. The St. Paul of Philippi 'standing on his own dignity' of Roman citizenship, and the St. Paul of I Corinthians 13 are different persons. So long as he depended on his own speculation St. Paul was neither effective nor convincing. But when he 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ' the meaning of life as a whole became clear to him. Then he found it easier to give up his old notions, and began to see the whole universe—the creation, suffering, living, etc., through the eyes of Jesus Christ. As an illustration of this, the author elaborates on how St. Paul thought about 'creation'.

1. 'The creative process was definitely made incomplete.

2. This incompleteness has the nature of a great pregnancy, so that hope and not fulfilment is that by which we live.
3. God is Himself involved in this very process.
4. Because God is Himself involved, therefore the end is sure and progress is not automatic.

Dr. Raven believes that this analysis meets the evidence of the physical sciences, and is a better explanation of the act of creation than the one given by sciences. He pleads with his reader to get himself rid of 'unworthy ideas of God' which have a way of distorting Christian thinking.

It seems that Dr. Raven is over-dependent on 'reason' and stakes too much on it. Reason alone cannot explain the whole fact of life. Our aim should be not so much to establish Christianity as a 'reasonable' religion, but to experience it as a coherent way of life expressed in Jesus Christ.

Throughout the last three centuries some Christian leaders have struggled with the advancing sciences as though with the agents of Satan. This attitude is unfortunate. We must also remind ourselves that every generation has produced men of faith for whom scientific knowledge has been an aid to the understanding of God and man. Histories of religion may provide for us interesting and fascinating studies, but more important for us today is the question as to how the fact of religion meets the challenge of our being today.

And lastly, the author makes a strong appeal that this 'gift of Christ' should 'enable us to attain a new human relationship—a new type of creative community'. This cannot be attained except through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Christ came to establish a society the key-note of which is *agape*. Thus Christianity provides a better basis for a society than 'democracy' which seeks merely to rule by the majority. Instead, it should be our aim to 'integrate members into a *single group*' such as was evidenced in the early church when the disciples could say: 'It seemed good to us and the Holy Spirit. . .'

Religion for Today is a thoroughly enjoyable book. We recommend it to every Christian concerned with higher values.

Jabalpur

J. RADHA KRISHAN

Function, Purpose and Powers: by D. Emmet. Macmillan.
Pp. 300. 28s.

The theme of this book, though not at once obvious from the rather cumbersome title, is made clear by the sub-title 'Some Concepts in the Study of Individuals and Society.' Though Miss Emmet, who is Professor of Philosophy in the University of Manchester, has written a book in which the wealth of references to

authorities in the fields of sociology and social anthropology might well betoken a book unintelligible to those not experts in these fields, the clear presentation of the subject ensures that the book can reach a much wider range of readers. Miss Emmet is avowedly outside Thomistic and Idealistic circles and approaches her subject by an analysis of the actual usage in moral, political and religious thought of such terms as function and purpose and a group of terms such as creativeness and vocation which she brings together under the category of powers. She is convinced that no adequate analysis of society can be made without all three terms.

By considering society without taking into account the motives that lie behind observed actions society may be thought of as a system in which the constituent parts play their respective functions—but this, however useful it may sometimes be, is not a full account of any society. In such abstract accounts use has been made of analogies from biology, *e.g.* the concept of 'homeostasis' which describes how shut organisms are able to maintain themselves by automatic counteraction of any small deviation from normal on the part of any one element. Using this analogy society has been described as a self-regulating system able to maintain its equilibrium in the face of a small variation of the part of any one element. Such a definition not only ignores the fact that the elements of society are individuals seeking to realize self-chosen goals but is unable to explain the appearance of new patterns of behaviour in society since by definition a society either maintains its old pattern or collapses. Such a view also encourages the thought that stability of any society is the greatest good and the desire to effect changes a positive evil. On this view since *e.g.* the caste system provided a stable social system it ought to have been retained whatever its faults. To make stability the greatest social good is to ignore more important values such as justice. On the other hand the author points out the social chaos wrought by those who, without troubling to discover the social significance of customs they consider evil, destroy not only them but the society of which they were an important part. Not only anthropologists but missionaries acknowledge such failures to be in part responsible for social decay among certain African tribes.

Function is a valuable concept but needs supplementation. Since man is a goal-seeking person we must speak of purpose also. Miss Emmet vindicates the politician against those who speak of politics as a dirty game fit only for those suffering from infantile repressions. For a fully adequate analysis of society function and purpose are not sufficient since the use of these concepts would lead to the condemnation of individuals or groups conscious of a vocation that compels them to act in ways that cannot be considered save as rebellion against the purpose of society which assigns them a rôle they will not accept. In a very important chapter entitled 'Open and Closed Moralities' the

or reason of state in certain important Divines.' In a fascinating, well-written and well-documented account of the political thought of three seventeenth century Puritan thinkers—William Perkins and William Ames, both of whom were pure theorists, and the statesman John Winthrop—the author outlines against the political thought of their day the answer given by these thinkers to the problem of the relation between the things of Caesar and the things of Christ. Of one thing they were certain, namely that there is a relationship and they therefore rejected two ideas: that moral man must flee from immoral society; and that he should function as citizen or ruler while acknowledging that such action, however necessary, is unChristian. Political realism, based on a theological interpretation of man as sinner, convinced them that the good man who always uses good means to realize his purpose will perish at the hands of rogues. How then is the ruler—for it is chiefly with the Christian ruler that they were concerned—to act with a good conscience? They answered that since Jesus taught his disciples to be as gentle as doves and as cunning as serpents, the ruler may use means which would be evil for the ordinary man provided he acts with the intention of glorifying God. Since this justifies the use of guile and deceit, 'The Holy Pretence' is an apt title for what is primarily an historical study of those who held such a view.

This view may seem akin to Machiavellianism which had become known as a political doctrine in Britain during the sixteenth century. Machiavelli had taught that the ruler because of his position is beyond ordinary moral standards if the situation demands it and to preserve the state may revert to 'policy', *i.e.* actions such as deliberate deceit. Yet the divines criticized Machiavelli and sought to distinguish their position from his. As an atheist Machiavelli justified policy if the good of the State demanded it: as Christians the Puritan divines justified it only if the glory of God demanded it. Thus an action outwardly evil is in the one case justified and in the other not. It is true that the Puritans disliked the term policy and spoke instead of Christian prudence but the difference was largely verbal.

Professor Mosse shows that this answer was not peculiar to the three divines but common to Roman Catholics and Protestants both in Britain and Europe. This variation of the Mediaeval doctrine of the Double Standard may appal us and we might think that these divines were hypocrites seeking to cover evil with a veneer of religiosity. The author will not accept such an estimation of the figures in question but sees them as sincere men anxious to show how the Christian could fulfil his vocation as a ruler and yet keep evil at bay. Nevertheless, however sincere they were one may question if they were not victims of unconscious but unholy self-deception.

This study is valuable because it focuses attention on a problem common to them and us—the problem of keeping 'the balance between the Serpent and the Dove so that neither