

Book Reviews

Religious Hinduism: by de Smet and Neuner (Ed.). Second Revised Version, 1964. St. Paul's Publications, Allahabad. Pp. 330. Price Rs.6.

This is a handy volume of over two dozen essays by ten Jesuit scholars of repute on every aspect of Hinduism, laying a broad basis for a sympathetic understanding of the religion of the Hindus as a preparation for a Christian-Hindu dialogue. There is a useful bibliography at the end and an interesting biographical note on the contributors at the beginning. The introductory chapter, 'A Christian Approach to non-Christian Religions', and the concluding essay, 'The Present Situation', both representing the mature thinking of Frs. Fallon and Antoine, are notable examples of irenical writing. The argument of these two essays may be summed up by the phrase, 'Christian assimilation and Hindu assumption'. The rest of the volume deals with every aspect of Hinduism, each chapter concluding with an 'appraisal'.

The chapters on the Upanishads, Sankara's Advaita and Saiva Siddhanta are notable for the omission of a large amount of wearisome details. The essays on 'God in Hinduism' and 'Gods of Hinduism' are full of useful material and telling comments. The chapter 'Popular Hinduism' is very informative, though the concluding paragraph is not clear and its final sentence most puzzling: 'The Indian hills will not be Christianized by the substitution of a Christian myth for an Indian one, but by the Samadhi of Indian holy men who are also Catholic saints' (p. 104). The authors have an unfortunate tendency of making a distinction between Christianity and Catholicism. It does not make for clarity of thought.

'Hindu Ethics' deserves a more detailed study than has been given, but the treatment of the two great Epics is excellent. In the critical evaluation of Ramayana the theory that the second half of the Epic may have been influenced by the agricultural myths was not examined. The discussion on image worship has run into difficulties and is unavoidably ambiguous on account of the veneration of images in the Roman Catholic tradition. The authors are at their best when they expound the doctrinal background of *bhakti* spirituality.

The writers in this volume have brought into use some unfamiliar words and phrases, such as unicity, radical fideism, rationalistic conceptualization, circumstantiality. Though such

expressions obscure the meaning, the book as a whole is much more readable than many books on Hinduism. I hope it will be widely read and used.

E. SAMBAYYA

Bishop's College
Calcutta 17

Discovering the Faith : by U. N. Ghasal. St. Paul Publications, Allahabad. Price Rs.4.50.

This book is a down-to-earth, practical offering to the new spirit of dialogue between Christianity and Hinduism. To attempt such a task at this stage of development is not an easy thing. For the most part, all we have so far is the rather rarified discussions of the experts, far above the heads of the ordinary laity, and many of those not so lay. This present work sets out in simple terminology to look at the two faiths and bring about a decision concerning the true faith. One wonders what the canons of true dialogue are? Would they not include the casting aside of any pre-arrived-at conclusions? Does it not demand almost an abandonment of one's own faith in an unconditional quest for the truth? If so, then this book loses out before one has even gone further than the list of 'Contents', for there it is for all to see—'Man's Quest for God—Hinduism' (this is Part I) and 'God's Self-Gift to Man—The Christian Faith' (Part II). On top of this the author fails to refrain from bringing in counter-attacks even before he is through with Chapter 2 of Part I. In other words, the Hindu faith is denied the right to a full and unbiased statement. But perhaps this is inevitable where one man essays to create a dialogue between himself and himself: true dialogue demands two persons.

It is quite a useful book, setting out as it does to present the main trends of Hinduism and Christianity (of the Roman Catholic kind) in simple language, though here and there of course technical terms are unavoidable, but even then an attempt is made to interpret them simply. The whole range of Hindu spirituality is surveyed from the Vedas through Yoga, the Gita, to a chapter on the 'Sources of Inspiration of the Hindu Religion and the basis of their Authority'. In the section on Christianity the claims of Jesus Christ are examined, Redemption and Grace receive full treatment and so also do the Church and the Sacrifice of the Mass as a means of Grace. Hinduism is presented in an attractive form, but Christianity appears very dull and uninteresting, not, I'm sure, in the author's design. The arguments against Hinduism, e.g. dependence on myths as opposed to the historical fact of Jesus, when presented on their own appear quite strong. It is only when we come to the treatment of Christianity that we begin to wonder at the author's

criterion of judgement. Prophecy in the Old Testament is confused with Apocalyptic. Excessive weight is given to the miracles of Christ to prove His claims, and backed up with the statement that 'the narratives of the New Testament are the most genuine and authentic historical documents in the world'. One doesn't have to be a Bultmann to shudder a little at such a claim. And when the author goes further to claim that Jesus can be accepted as God 'on rational grounds', one wonders what has happened to Faith.

On the positive side the section on Christianity is well documented with scriptural references. That salvation is through Christ alone is strongly brought out and it is interesting that the Church and the Mass figure so prominently as facets of the Faith to be commended to non-Christians. There surely is a lesson here for much non-Roman Catholic apologetics. Again we might complain that what apologetic there is, is of the traditional, old-fashioned, rather unexciting kind. The Vatican Council hardly seems to have happened as far as the author is concerned. This book is a step in the right direction but shows just how far we have to go along the road to fruitful inter-faith dialogue.

D. A. TERENCE THOMAS

United Theological College
Poona

India's Religious Frontier: Christian Presence Amid Modern Hinduism: by William Stewart. S.C.M. Press, London, 1964. Price 16s.

I have taken a long time 'reviewing' this book. My difficulty arose from the subject-matter of the book itself and I am not sure that I have been able to overcome it. Christ's *Presence* in modern India is the theme. The right etiquette, whether in court, shrine or the cave of the heart, toward a *presence* is perception and reception. As the occasion demands, therefore, the reader will be profited by perceptivity and receptivity, rather than criticism which a 'review' demands. I look at this book as a work of art, an attempt to contain and present a vision, *darshan*. And as in all art there is the *darshana*, the vision and the *tantra*, the technique, that is, the devices of presentation or communication of the vision, which in verbal art is known as *alamkara*, 'clothing'. All the historical facts (*vastu*) and the incisive comments (*alamkara*) serve only to present the vision of the author.

The modern history of India, political, economic, social and religious, is perceived as the scene of divine activity as a result of a vision. It is something like the perception 'If I by my finger cast out evil spirits the Kingdom of God is *already amid you*'—the perception of the Presence amid phenomena. This is what

has occurred to the author. For he says, 'awareness that the Coming of Christ declares God's own love for a world which includes India intensifies one's longing for a wider knowledge of him among our brethren'.

The point of view of the author is refreshingly new. It is so because some of the older missionaries seemed to speak of 'bringing Christ to India' as though He had been absent, and of 'building the Kingdom of God in India' as though it was *their* job to do it! In clean contrast Dr. Stewart states the opposite, or so it seems to me. He urges his readers to see and appreciate the fact of Christ's Presence in India now (as it has been always) and to read the signs of the times.

I suggest that this book will make an epoch if a sufficiently large number of missionaries see the point of it all and plan their missionary strategy and tactics in terms of the thesis of this book. Just as a *samyak-darshana*, full vision, inspires a *maha-kavya*, great poetry, the vision of Christ's Presence in India *today* has led Dr. Stewart to produce evidence from all aspects and levels of Indian life to show that that vision is rooted in reality. I am still too much under the spell of the Presence to undertake a formal critical 'review' of the contents and may be it is just as well it is so.

MARK SUNDER RAO

C.I.S.R.S.

Bangalore

Introduction to Radhakrishnan: by S. J. Samartha. New Delhi: Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 1964. Pp 108. Price Rs.3; cloth Rs.5.

Dr. Samartha has provided a most useful guide to the thought of President Radhakrishnan. Selected topics ('Hinduism', 'God and the World', 'Man and Society', 'The Meaning of History') are set out in manageable form and with commendable brevity, yet the treatment shows a wide acquaintance with Dr. Radhakrishnan's works and with his critics, Hindu and Christian.

It is indeed for this breadth of outlook that the book is especially to be valued. Dr. Samartha has responded to the challenge with which he concludes when he says, 'We need to move from the position of mere confrontation to that of real communication.' That this adventure is not without its dangers might also be proved here. The grounds from which Dr. Samartha speaks are not always clear. Samartha the philosopher and Christian theologian asks pertinent questions of Radhakrishnan the philosopher and Hindu theologian. (Are they held together by Tillich? Whence are the quotations on page 37?) In this situation Samartha the Christian theologian rightly points to 'the shadow of absolutism' hanging over personal religion. At

one point Dr. Samartha rises to a sound theological interpretation of Radhakrishnan's predicament in this respect ('though *philosophically* Brahman is the ultimate concept, *pragmatically* *Isvara* is Creator, Lord and Saviour'), but at another point he seems to lean so far backward that he loses his footing ('Radhakrishnan does not seem to question the *validity* of Christian faith'). In the section on 'Man and Society', Samartha gives a good positive evaluation of the spiritual roots of Radhakrishnan's democratic outlook but fails to raise in any incisive way the important question of the theological or philosophical foundations of 'community' as such.

There are numerous misprints in this edition. Were it not for the attractive cover one might say that the author deserves a better press.

A. F. THOMPSON

Bishop's College
Calcutta 17

The Secular Promise: by Martin Jarrett-Kerr. S.C.M. Press, London, 1964. Pp. 224. Price 18s.

The ideology of secularism was placed along with the other great religions of the world as a missionary concern by the Jerusalem Conference of 1928. It has been placed among them again by this sixth volume in the Christian Presence series. This book does not, alas, measure up to the high point in the series, John V. Taylor's *The Primal Vision*. Several of Father Jarrett-Kerr's chapters are very competent indeed, but the book reads like a collection of lectures given to different student groups.

Does this book on contemporary humanism in the West have much relevance for us in India today? Yes, it does. The roots of much doctrinaire humanism throughout the world are common. There is, for instance, material in the book which is relevant for understanding important parts of the Radical Humanist movement of the followers of M. N. Roy—many of whom seem to welcome conversations with Christians about our common concern for nation-building. Nevertheless, there are important differences between secularism in the West and secularism in India. Fundamental to these differences is the differing cultural context, against which secularism reacts but with which secularism shares many cultural values and unexamined assumptions. In the West this cultural context might be called Judao-Christian. In India this cultural context is essentially Hindu.

P. D. Devanandan and M. M. Thomas (*Religion and Society*, Vol. IX, No. 1) have very correctly suggested that Indian secularism as defined by Gandhi, Nehru, and Radhakrishnan differs from Western secularism by giving much more place and positive value to religion—especially to religion as a necessary

basis for ethical activity and social concern. Fr. Jarrett-Kerr points out, for the West, that nineteenth-century agnostics rejected Christian dogma while commending Christian ethics, but that '*contemporary secularists* reject much of the ethics and ignore the dogma. If he is correct in this then we should be prepared to entertain the possibility that our Indian secularism may travel in a similar direction—away from religious ethics.

The book tells us much about contemporary humanism, but very little, really, about Christian presence in the midst of it. Fr. Jarrett-Kerr feels that the concern of humanism has tended to lead toward a greater and more common understanding of what makes man human and he sees this as providential. He seems not, however, to see in the West that aspect of secular humanism which in India many see as equally providential—the breaking down for many men of age-old traditional barriers, on account of their birth and station in life, to the possibility of more fully human lives.

Now that there are six volumes in the Christian Presence series a curious anomaly in its editing is becoming apparent. Surely Christian presence if it means anything means real intimate involvement. Yet all of the volumes in the series have been written by outsiders! Five experienced British missionaries have written about Christian presence amid five essentially non-European religious situations. Now a monk has dealt with Christian presence amid contemporary humanism. Surely there are Christians, intelligent, concerned, literate Christians, more nearly inside these situations—with more of a feeling of presence. Several of these volumes have been excellent, but on the whole this editorial astigmatism about the nature of presence seems unfortunate.

RICHARD W. TAYLOR

Serampore

Christianity Explained to Muslims: by L. Bevan Jones. Revised edition. Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta 16, 1962. Pp. xii, 172. Price Rs.4.75 (8s. or \$1.20).

Christianity Explained to Muslims was originally published in 1937. Its revised edition came out in 1952 and now the same has been reprinted. The book was out of print, and therefore the news that it is again available is most welcome. Although the book is a manual for Christian workers it can be safely recommended to non-Christians, especially Muslims, who are interested in the study of comparative religion.

There are ten chapters in the book and each chapter begins with a list of objections most commonly raised by Muslims. All chapters are written in the light of these Muslim objections. This arrangement does not only help one to find suitable answers to the questions, but also provides material to understand the misunderstandings of Muslims. The study of this book will be

of tremendous use if the reader first goes through the author's earlier work, 'The People of the Mosque'. After having some background of the Muslim faith and practices, as well as history and culture, the reader will no doubt have a better understanding of the problems of a Muslim who is confronted with Christ and his teachings.

One might get the impression that the author has only the Ahmadi Muslims in view while writing his answers to Muslim objections and therefore the name of the book should have been 'Christianity Explained to Ahmadi Muslims'. But those who are actively engaged in the most difficult task of Muslim evangelism very well know that though Ahmadi Muslims are branded heretics by both Sunnis and Shias, their arguments and objections are much made use of by non-Ahmadi Muslims, especially in discussions with Christian evangelists. Hence the special attention to the Ahmadi objections in the book.

The changes made in the revised edition are in conformity with the more sympathetic attitude Christians should have toward Islam and the Muslim, especially in India and Pakistan.

SAM V. BHAJJAN

Henry Martyn Institute
Jabalpore

The Miracles of Jesus: by Cecil Hargreaves. Christian Literature Society, Madras. (Christian Students' Library No. 31). Pp. 236. Price Rs.4.20.

It is difficult to write an acceptable book on this subject for Christian students with only a High School background, in a country where the average person in that category is often culturally in the pre-scientific age. Aspects of the Gospel miracles which embarrass and baffle many Westerners frequently do not even present themselves to such students. It would be impossible to please everyone, but Mr. Hargreaves, who spent some years in India as a New Testament and Theology teacher, has given us a comprehensive book, somewhat on the conservative side but admirably suited to translation or adaptation into the regional Indian languages, which is the purpose of this series.

In the first eighty-four pages he deals in twelve chapters with such introductory subjects as the background against which we are to study the miracle stories, the purpose of Jesus' miracles, the different kinds of miracles and the way we can understand them, the miracles and modern science, etc. Special chapters are devoted to the attitude of Eastern and Western Christendom respectively to the miracles. He succeeds in striking a balance between a naïve attitude and over-emphasis on critical and other difficulties attendant on such a study; the latter, however, he does not by-pass. One chapter seeks to relate the miracles to other faiths, but really deals only with Hinduism. What

is said there is helpful. The author clearly exposes the unsatisfactoriness of the evidential view of miracles. Modern rationalizing views are not summarily dismissed, but the conclusion is reached that 'if Jesus was not God incarnate, then very great difficulties about the miracles arise, but if Jesus was God incarnate, then no insuperable difficulties arise'. However, this does not mean that all miracle stories are to be uncritically accepted: 'In the end we cannot just ignore questions of the "historical probability" of a miracle story.' The last chapter in this section gives evidence for the continued occurrence of miracles today.

The remainder of the book is devoted to a detailed exposition of each of the miracle stories found in all four Gospels, those in Mark, those in Luke and Matthew, and those in John being taken in that order. Sometimes this exposition tends to be unnecessarily discursive, but there is no doubt about its overall usefulness to the preacher, the teacher, or any person wanting to study these parts of the Gospels. One might question whether Luke 5:8 needs to be treated as a miracle. In some places one gets the impression that, compared with the view adopted in Part I, the critical emphasis in Part II is somewhat toned down; perhaps that is intentional. For instance, not all the difficulties attendant upon the acceptance of the historicity of the raising of Lazarus are brought out. But such points are an inevitable corollary of the difficulty mentioned in the first part of this review. These expositions are filled with good things, both old and new. Critical matters are dealt with where necessary, and adequate notice is taken of variations when the miracle is recorded in more than one Gospel; but the emphasis is on exposition. At the end of the treatment of each miracle is a summary of the main points brought out.

The format of the book conforms to the pattern of the series to which it belongs. Stronger paper than previously has been used for the covers. Division of chapters and sections, numbering, etc., are clear. The printing is well done and the only error I noticed was the interchanging of the first two lines on p. 57.

M. R. ROBINSON

N.I.U. Theological College
Saharanpur

From Jerusalem to New Delhi: by Miss M. E. Gibbs. Christian Literature Society, Madras. (Christian Students' Library, No. 32). Pp. 369. Price Rs.7.

Here in the space of three hundred pages we have an outline of Church History from the beginning (Jerusalem) to 1961 (New Delhi). Let it be said at once: it is exceedingly well done. The whole period is divided into eleven sections of 25-30 pages each. Within each of these are from four to eight short

chapters picking out the leading features of each period, and dealing with them in a series of short paragraphs, each with its sub-heading, admirably concise yet always readable. This is no dull catalogue of facts, or crammer's notes. Events and movements and personalities are skilfully sketched and interpreted, and the interest never flags. Each of the main sections ends with a list of questions for discussion, opening up the subject further and bringing out the relevance of the history to the modern reader.

Six charts and seven maps are provided. Much useful and interesting material is contained in a series of appendices at the end. Two of these are on the meaning of ecclesiastical and philosophical terms occurring in the book, such as church, presbytery, canon, realism, idealism, substance. There is one appendix of statistics, showing the distribution of Christians of the main denominations and of adherents of other religions in the world and in India. (The bringing of the figures up to date for future editions will be quite a task for someone). Another gives a table of famous hymns typical of all the Christian centuries, arranged chronologically with brief comments on their authors and use. There is also a select bibliography and an index extending to 32 pages.

Truly this is *multum in parvo*. To select material from a vast field, concentrating on matters of major importance and avoiding too many details, to reduce it to a compact form and to present it in a lively and interesting manner was a task calling for sound knowledge and judgement and a large measure of the skill of the teacher. The author has performed it in a manner which shows that all these are at her command.

It is the Church History of Europe which bulks largest on the book: the Eastern Churches, Christianity in India, the missionary and ecumenical movements all come in; but it is the West which governs the story. This is the familiar predicament of the historian in India. He sets out to write on the heritage of the Indian Christian, as the well-known 'Member of the Church of India' did some years ago; and when it is finished, behold, a history of Europe. Miss Gibbs is well aware of this. In the Introduction she argues that it is inevitable. Christianity began in the Middle East, but for more than a thousand years of its history the chief growing point of the church was in Western Europe; it has become almost inextricably involved in European culture; and so we cannot understand the Christianity of modern India, either that part of it which is the product of Western missions or that part which, though of independent Eastern origin and type, has been much affected by them, without knowing the European background. This is probably true; or so, at least, we Europeans like to think. Perhaps the independent-minded Indian Christian historian of the future will see things in different proportion.

One of the best parts of the book is the last section,

'Modern Times—since 1914', where topics of a remarkable variety and interest have been very skilfully chosen and treated. It is here that the relevance of the book to India becomes clearest. In some of the earlier passages dealing with events in India the author's touch is less sure.

The further a writer goes in an outline of Church History, the more difficult it becomes to keep the whole in view. Inevitably the selection of topics and the comments reflect his own particular background. Miss Gibbs's treatment remains responsible and fair, and, considering the limits of space, wonderfully comprehensive; yet, even without having read the blurb on the cover, no one could take her for a Roman Catholic, or a Continental Protestant, or a member of one of the Free Churches—or indeed anything but an English Anglican. As such she may be forgiven for allowing herself now and then the pleasure of bringing the Anglican Church forward and patting it.

Inevitably there are some inaccuracies in details and some unqualified statements which some readers will wish to modify. One cannot complain of such things in a book of this scope and size. But the great defect is the shocking number of misprints. These are by no means exhausted by the errata sheet at the end, which itself contains three mistakes. There is also much carelessness in reproducing proper names, especially German ones. Kraemer is always 'Kraemar', Luther's Wartburg is always 'Wartberg', F. L. Cross is 'T. P. Cross', and so on. The index is full of examples. It is a pity that a book which will be used as a textbook should be so disfigured.

Lastly, three details for correction. The tendency for which the Three Chapters were condemned was Nestorian, not Monophysite (p. 63). The Waldensian territory in France was in the south-east, not the south-west (p. 129). If the phrase 'sacrifice of masses', which occurs several times, is derived from Article XXXI of the Thirty-nine Articles, it should be 'sacrifices of Masses'.

C. S. FIRTH

Union Kanarese Seminary
Tumkur

Origins of the Synoptic Gospels: by Ned B. Stonehouse. Tyn-
dale Press. Price 12s. 6d.

The sub-title of this book is *Some Basic Questions*, so it does not claim to be an exhaustive study of the whole of the Synoptic problem. The first subject is the question of the priority of Matthew, and the author examines Kilpatrick's theory and eventually comes to the conclusion that Mark is in fact prior. This is an interesting and useful discussion from a generally conservative scholar, but the following chapters go deeper into the question of origins and transmission, examining the

contributions of several different scholars, mainly British and German, including Dodd and Bultmann. The concluding chapter is on the 'Self-Revelation of Jesus Christ', and climaxes the argument that the ultimate origins of the Synoptic Gospels can only be found in Jesus himself.

This book provides an example of modern conservative scholarship which is not afraid to face problems, but at the same time holds on to the basic evangelical truths.

D. F. HUDSON

Serampore College
West Bengal

Passages for Divine Reading: Selected by T. R. Henn. Hodder and Stoughton. Price 16s.

Very many of us must have found ourselves in Mr. Henn's position before he embarked on this venture, wondering how valuable it is to have read in public worship certain extracts of the Old Testament which contain genealogies, fragments of Jewish history, military operations and anecdotes which are not always edifying. Having myself seen a new Christian, recently a convert from Hinduism, undergoing this ordeal, I sympathize with Mr. Henn. But heresy hunters should not sharpen their weapons prematurely! Mr. Henn (and I!) do not want to scrap embarrassing passages, or even obscure passages, but we wonder whether, when read in isolation and with little or no comment, they are anything but misleading.

So the compiler has collected a selection for divine reading, in church or in one's own room, from authors as varied as Richard Baxter, George Herbert, Dean Inge, Samuel Johnson, Mother Julian of Norwich, Albert Schweitzer and many others. Each reader will find that some catch his attention, of mind and spirit, more than others; I personally found twenty-two out of the total of sixty-five very good and I intend to return to them. They are the sort that await being turned into prayer. A few of the choices seem strange, for instance the one from Plato's *Phaedo*, which is as far from the Christian understanding and experience of Easter and Resurrection as one can imagine.

When, I wonder, will a Christian of our country compile a similar book of Divine Reading from Indian writings, Christian and non-Christian? Such would need a deep and living Christian Faith, a wide knowledge and appreciation of Indian literature and non-Christian scriptures, and the gift of discernment to see where the Holy Spirit has spoken, incognito, outside Christian revelation.

C. MURRAY ROGERS

Jyotiniketan
Bareilly