

## Reviews.

*Living Religions and a World Faith*, by William Ernest Hocking.  
(Allen and Unwin, 10s. net.)

By many, Professor William Ernest Hocking, of Harvard, is known and appreciated for his stimulating volumes, *The Meaning of God in Human Experience* (1912) and *Human Nature and its Remaking* (1918). In missionary circles he came into prominence as chairman of the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, which published its findings in 1932 in the volume *Re-thinking Missions*, which had a wide circulation but failed to commend itself to the main body of missionary opinion. In the present volume, which contains the lectures delivered under the Hibbert Trust, Professor Hocking fastens on the question which must be the burning centre of all missionary thinking, namely the exact nature of the Church's witness to the non-Christian religions. He is convinced that there is no future for the missionary enterprise if it persists in its aim of displacing the non-Christian religions. With equal decision he rejects the method of synthesis and advocates what he calls the method of Reconception. The meaning of the phrase is not immediately obvious, and the author helps out his exposition with diagrams after the manner of A. N. Whitehead. Professor Hocking's meaning seems to be that Christianity should immediately include all that is valid in the non-Christian religions, and then go on to include indefinitely more as the adherents of the different religions come to understand more clearly the true essence of their own faith. The method involves, of course, the surrender of the finality of Christ and the uniqueness of Christianity. That causes Professor Hocking no misgivings because he is convinced that the existence of many different religions is a scandal. What is needed is a single world religion; and Christianity is not yet ready to serve as such, since it does not, at present, include all the values that the other religions possess.

If only we were all Barthians, we might feel that Professor Hocking had been answered in advance by Dr. Kraemer's *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, which was written for the Tambaram Conference. Dr. Kraemer's book is a learned and important work, but missionary-minded theologians like Dr. D. S. Cairns were not slow to express their disagreement with some of its presuppositions. At Tambaram it formed the *pièce de résistance*, and by then the non-Barthians had recovered from Dr. Kraemer's onslaught. Now they are

attacked on the other flank by Professor Hocking. They must muster for a counter-attack by bringing forward their exposition of the finality of Christ. Perhaps, in spite of Professor Hocking's demurs, Dr. Macnicol's *Is Christianity Unique?* will satisfy most of them. Clearly the acceptance of Professor Hocking's views would cut the nerve of the missionary enterprise; and the world religion he advocates would be, to use one of his own phrases, "an abstract distillate too tenuous to live and too colourless to retain its interest."

A. C. UNDERWOOD.

*Great Women in Christian History*, by F. Townley Lord, B.A., D.D. (Cassell and Co. Ltd. 4s. net.)

The dedication of this book, "to the memory of Sister Doris, Bloomsbury's beloved Deaconess," will give pleasure to all who knew this devoted worker, for in consecration and faithfulness she was not behind the great women of whom Dr. Lord writes. The reception given to his volume, *Great Women of the Bible*, published less than twelve months ago, made this companion volume inevitable. From Perpetua and Monica to Susannah Wesley and Catherine Booth, the centuries are bridged; and martyrs, mystics, monastics, evangelists and home-makers pass before us. These women made an important contribution to their times, and their story is attractively told. We commend this volume as heartily as the earlier; it will inspire many addresses and lectures in the forthcoming autumn.

*Brookfield Hymns*, by Maurice F. Hewett. (Carey Press. 1s. net.)

The author had his first ministry at the Baptist Church, Chudleigh, in the heart of Devon. There he could listen to the music of the brook, and rejoice in the beauty of the fields. Thus he obtained the title for this enlarged edition of his hymns. When a supplement is published to the *Revised Baptist Church Hymnal* some will surely find a place.