

Reviews

Christianity and Existentialism, by J. M. Spier. Trans. by D. H. Freeman. (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., U.S.A. \$3.00.)

The author, a pastor of the Dutch Reformed church, is a prominent member of the new school of Christian Philosophy founded by Hermann Dooyeweerd, of Amsterdam Free University, which has attracted considerable attention in the Netherlands. A previous work of his, *An Introduction to Christian Philosophy*, is now in its fourth Dutch edition and is shortly to be published in English. This present work is in two parts. In the first Mr. Spier shows the philosophical and non-philosophical background of Existentialism and then gives brief accounts of the thought of Jaspers, Heidegger, Marcel, Lavelle and the Dutch Theistic Existentialist, Loen. The second part describes the general characteristics of Existentialism, some of its true insights and, finally, the reasons why in the author's view it has to be rejected. As Mr. Spier rightly points out, the influence of this school of thought is widespread, expressing as it does, the insecurity, anxiety and gloom of modern man and the protest of men of thought against rationalism and the principle of philosophical neutrality. In the world of today Existentialism is a force to be reckoned with and, therefore, Christians need to understand what it is, what are its genuine insights and upon what grounds it can be criticised. To this task Mr. Spier has made in these pages a useful contribution. It is not a book for advanced students, and in places the treatment is somewhat sketchy. But those who want a clear introduction to Existentialism will find this a most helpful guide and will read it with pleasure and profit.

George Whitefield—The Awakener, by Albert D. Belden. (Rockliffe, 30s.)

Rockliffe have done well to re-issue this revised edition of a vivid and challenging biography which first appeared in 1930. Dr. Belden undertook the work in the belief that, firstly, because Whitefield was the contemporary of Wesley he has been generally underrated and, secondly, as the western world is ripe for another spiritual rebirth we shall be wise to reconsider the lessons of the Evangelical Revival. It is a remarkable story he has to tell, and it is told in a way that grips the reader's interest—the progress

of the Gloucester pot-boy from the squalor of a tavern to the vanguard of an evangelical crusade in two continents and the throne of Christian eloquence. The contribution of Whitefield to the Evangelical Revival is revealed to have been much greater than probably most people supposed and we are shown the amazing power and extent of his preaching, his humanitarianism, his journeyings (thirteen times across the Atlantic) in the cause of the Gospel, his pioneer work in philanthropy, education and in what were ultimately the characteristic features of Methodism. We see the passion, the genius and the piety of the man himself; the whole portrayed against the social and religious background of the age he profoundly influenced. Not the least impressive feature of this splendidly produced volume is the number and excellence of the illustrations. Dr. Belden has made this, in addition to the life story of a great evangelist, a useful study of the Revival itself, though one wonders whether the book would not have been equally effective in both respects had the last three chapters, on the Revival in the light of today, been omitted. In the work of revision one or two foot-notes (e.g. p. 17, on the Buchmanites) have not been brought up-to-date; the author has a fondness for capital letters which it would be an improvement to curb, and one feels that in the chapter on Whitefield's influence on society he tends to claim a little too much. Nevertheless, this is a biography which throws light on social and religious history and which, we are confident, readers will find instructive, enjoyable and stimulating. In one way and another Whitefield's influence on our own denomination was not inconsiderable and we trust that this attractive book will not be neglected by Baptists.

GRAHAM W. HUGHES.

Hymns and Human Life, by Erik Routley. (John Murray, 16s. The Philosophical Library, New York, \$6.00.)

In the preface of this book, Dr. Routley says that his intention is not so much that the reader may be edified or instructed or moved to admiration as that he may enjoy himself. The author has certainly succeeded in his main aim, as far as anyone with any interest in hymns is concerned; but this book is more than enjoyable, it is an important contribution to the literature of hymnology. Of its three parts, the first deals with the story of hymns, the second with the people in the story (i.e. the writers), the third and shortest with hymns and English life. Though the title, the author in his preface and a number of reviewers suggest some likeness to Lord Ernle's classic *The Psalms in Human Life*, the comparison is not really apt. Lord Ernle set himself to collect

instances in which psalms guided, controlled and sustained the lives of men and women. Dr. Routley gives us only a few stories of this kind. Primarily, this is a book about the various types of hymns and their composers.

It is full of good things, set forth with zest and freshness and an occasional exaggeration and provocativeness, which keep interest alive to the last page. The few comments that follow in no way detract from what has been said. There are some passages in the book which show signs of haste and fall below the usual high standard. (Why, for example, such preoccupation with the age of writers in the chapter on women writers?) There are a few slips. An improved edition may well become a standard work for a generation.

Why even Julian's great *Dictionary* says nothing about the hymns of the Anabaptists is still a mystery. There should at all events be a brief reference to these in the chapter on the Reformers. Baptists cannot claim any substantial place in a study of this kind, but Dr. Routley seems unnecessarily curt in places. Spurgeon is not happily described as "the fiery evangelist" (p. 155). Marianne Farningham was never married and her work was done from Northampton (p. 208). Though Dr. Routley is chiefly concerned with hymns that appear in *The English Hymnal, Congregational Praise* and *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, John Rippon and his work might well find a mention; his supplement to Watts first appeared as early as 1787 and had considerable influence among Dissenters. The popularity on both sides of the Atlantic of Fawcett's "Blest be the tie that binds," as well as the circumstances of its composition, suggests that it also might have been found a place. We are told that Joseph Hart's hymns are now hardly heard except among the Baptists; but we have only one in our hymnbook, while there are two in the new *Congregational Praise*.

The pages on the hymns used at Westminster Abbey and in certain Anglican Churches in Oxford are of interest, but Dr. Routley does not convince us that his researches should not have included the Free Churches. Would it not be illuminating to study the changes at the Central Hall, Westminster, and at Mansfield College Chapel between 1913-14 and 1931-32, and even more illuminating to come down to 1951-52? Could we not have a chapter on sacramental hymns—those used for baptism, the Communion Service and ordination, as well as those for weddings?

The difficulty of reviewing a book of this kind, however, is that one would like to go on writing about it or to spend an evening talking with the author. This book will certainly have a wide circulation, and deserves it.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

History of Philosophy Eastern and Western. Sponsored by the Minister of Education, Government of India. (George Allen & Unwin, 2 Vols., 65s.)

Professor Radhakrishnan was the chairman of the Editorial board, which with the help of the Indian Government produced these two substantial and important volumes. The project first took shape in 1948 in the fertile brain of the Minister of Education, who conceived it as a first attempt to overcome the fragmentation of philosophy and "to bring together in one common compass the knowledge attained by different peoples." Some sixty scholars have co-operated in giving this conspectus of philosophical thought. The first three parts of the first volume deal with Indian thought, the fourth with that of China and Japan. In the second volume there are sections on Ancient Thought (including that of Persia), Mediaeval Thought, Modern European Philosophy and Contemporary Western Philosophy. Professor Radhakrishnan contributes a brief concluding survey, as well as the chapter on Samkara. Most of the writing is by Indians, but two Chinese, a Japanese, a Jewish Rabbi and the Bishop of Bombay are in the strong team that has been got together. Each chapter ends with a short but useful bibliography. These volumes should at once find a place in libraries beside the older histories of philosophy. They will prove of great value to students and will certainly aid the process which is their aim.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

Atoms, Men and God, by Paul E. Sabine. (Philosophical Library, New York. \$3.75.)

The author, a research physicist, tells us that he has experienced as an acute personal problem the tension between the Methodist beliefs in which he was reared and the scientific education which he later acquired; and this book, which was fifteen years in preparation, is an attempt to reconcile the two. Considering the number of books already written on the same subject, it would have been surprising had the present writer had anything new to say. He has not, but he does discuss the issues in a clear, competent and cogent manner, and this work is a valuable contribution to Christian apologetics. The old view of Atomistic Mechanism is revealed to be inadequate. Against it must be reckoned the evidences of purpose in living organisms ("The origin of life is the most improbable event that could possibly occur in a completely mechanical world," p. 68) and the New Physics of Relativity and Wave Mechanics. The ultimate realities for the New Physics are mathematical relationships, i.e. mental realities, and this raises the question: Do these relationships exist

objectively or only in the mind of the scientist? "The whole history of physical science proclaims the former as scientifically the more acceptable," but this necessitates "the inference of a Universal Mind as an act of rational religious faith" (p. 110). For Wave Mechanics, the ultimate constituents of matter are wave particles whose position and momentum cannot be simultaneously determined, and this means that, whereas determinism was implicit in the older physics, conscious purpose in the universe and individual freedom are now "scientifically plausible hypotheses." Turning his attention to psychology, the author disposes of Behaviourism and finds in the Psycho-Analysis of Freud and Jung, as in the New Physics, reasons for regarding the Universe not as a machine, but as a thought of God.

As he closes this book the reader may perhaps wonder (a) whether you have quite done justice to the Christ of Calvary when you have described Him as, "the expression in finite human terms of the evolutionary purpose in human history" (p. 215); and (b) whether the tension between Science and Religion can in fact, ever be finally resolved. Truth is one; but man approaches Truth in different ways. In religion he makes contact with Truth through an act of commitment; in science he considers it in an attitude of detachment. The approach of religion is existential; that of science, conceptual. Though this deep tension will always persist, many superficial tensions (the sort of things they love to debate in the Science Sixth) can be, and are, resolved in this book. It can be recommended for Christians of all ages, who are having difficulty getting through the Science Sixth!

W. D. HUDSON.

For the Baptist Minister, by John O. Barrett. (Carey Kingsgate Press. 1s.)

This excellent manual is intended to provide the young minister with information about the Baptist denomination. Some older readers will find themselves regretting that so succinct and lucid a statement was not available when they began their work. Mr. Barrett describes the basis and purpose of the B.U. and the B.M.S., the work of the Associations and the Superintendents and various Baptist institutions. Considerable space is given to the beginning and ending of pastorates. There is a wise section on the relation of a minister to his deacons. (A companion section on the function and conduct of church meetings would have been useful.) Information is given on a variety of relevant subjects, including Income Tax and, unexpectedly, on manuals of worship. Altogether it is a most useful booklet for all officers of Baptist churches.

F. BUFFARD.