

## Book Reviews

*Land of the Trinity—A Study of Modern Christian Approaches to Hinduism:* by Joseph Mattam, S.J., T.P.I., Bangalore, 1975. Pp. 200. Price not stated.

This book is a summary and evaluation of the thought of five Roman Catholic scholars who have made important contributions in the field of Hindu-Christian encounter.

After paying a brief but important tribute to the pioneering achievement of Brahmabandhava Upadhyaya the author describes the thought of Father P. Johanns who believed that 'there is no important philosophical doctrine of St Thomas which is not found in one or other of the Vedanta systems.' The separate and fragmented truths of these systems can be brought into a harmony on the basis of the Christian doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. In attempting to work out this harmony the Church is following in the footsteps of the early Fathers who, though they 'oppose very strongly and even condemn the religious practices and cults of the nations borrow ideas and words from the philosophers of the nations'. Johanns thus saw Hindu philosophy as a *preparatio evangelica*.

Mattam is critical of this approach, for he asks whether 'a meeting with Hinduism beginning with doctrinal confrontation is possible at all' and also 'present day theology acknowledges salvific value in non-Christian religions' and thus no longer puts them as Johanns did in the category of natural revelation. He adds however that Johanns should be seen in the context of his time and that within that context he made an important and pioneering contribution.

The French scholar Olivier Lacombe is much more concerned with the personal meeting of Hindu and Christian and has some useful points to make about the demands of such a meeting. He is also clear-headed about the differences which arise because Hindu and Christian think in fundamentally different ways. He wants to go behind the developed philosophical systems to find out the very 'vital impulse' or *élan* of Hinduism and to create a direct Christian encounter with this. 'What India looks for through the whole of its history is an unveiled and direct experience of our innermost being at its very source.' This experience has a positive value for the Christian for if it 'remains open, if it does not enclose itself in self-sufficiency, then it is permeable to Grace, to an authentic presence of transcendence', and it can also help the Christian to penetrate more deeply into his own mystical tradition.

Dr J. A. Cuttat also wants to go behind doctrinal expressions, but not so much towards '*élan*' as towards the Yogi and the Saint who are respectively the archetypes of Oriental and Christian spirituality. Like Lacombe he is also concerned with the meeting of persons. As a

preparation for this we need to cultivate interior silence so that we may truly listen to the other without either rejecting what he says (which has too often been typical of the Christian) or attempting to make what he says conform to our own pattern (which is still the typical attitude of the Hindu). Thus Christian and Oriental spiritualities are both authentic and yet both different from one another. Neither can be reduced to the terms of the other, therefore we must ask 'which of the two is capable of including the other without mutilating its positive values?' Cuttat claims that only Christianity can do this, for

Hindu spirituality has not succeeded in making a synthesis between interiority and transcendence and it cannot assume the biblical spirituality of reciprocity because as solitary interiority it excludes the latter; whereas the latter by definition includes and transcends the former, and is thus capable of assuming Hindu spirituality provided the Christian can situate himself before Christ as a depth equal to that of the solitary interiority of the East and there open the latter to the divine absolute Thou, at the very point where it tends to close in on itself (p. 84).

Thus while Lacombe and Cuttat start from different places they reach very similar conclusions. Mattam goes on to show how Cuttat applies this seminal thought to the concept of the Deity, to the doctrine of creation-emanation and to the belief in avatar-Incarnation.

While Cuttat stresses the importance of *advaita vedanta* he is much weaker on *bhakti*. With R. C. Zaehner the pendulum swings to the opposite direction, for he starts from the conviction that 'in Hinduism there is a definite movement from pantheism to monotheism, towards the belief in one supreme and personal God'—and this of course is to give primacy to *bhakti*. Yet Zaehner refuses to minimise the differences between religions; rejecting any idea of synthesis he nonetheless wants to speak of a convergence towards Christ of all the revelations and manifestations of God which have taken place at sundry times and diverse manners. Mysticism is the only place where a meeting between Hindu and Christian can take place in terms that the former can understand:

Zaehner envisages Christian mysticism as the culminating point and fulfilment of Hinduism as follows: in Hinduism itself there is a development from a nature mysticism to a mysticism of union between two persons in love. But the mysticism of the Gita is only a promise, not as yet the fulfilment. It only speaks of the 'possibility' of a union of love between the human soul and God (p. 116).

This possibility is fully realised in Christ.

The last thinker to be considered is the Abbe Jules Monchanin who in terms of personal experience probably went deeper into Hinduism than any of the other four, for he lived as a monk in India and sought to explore and adapt the life of *sannyasa* from within. His prayer and longing was for the total Christianisation of India, whose aspiration for the Absolute, for the one without a second, could find fulfilment

in the Trinity alone. It was he who called India the Land of the Trinity. Christianity must embrace the whole personality of man in community, and all the values of art, culture and religion, but of religion especially for it is this which is the pole of a civilisation and it is primarily the religious aspirations which have to be assumed, purified and transfigured. Monchanin saw the contemplative life of the Christian monk as one of the most important means of achieving this great end.

The book is a sympathetic and admirably lucid account of the thought of these five men, yet Mattam is not uncritical. He rightly points out that the 'study of classical Hinduism and the ways of spirituality and monasticism is not enough', today. We must also take into account the quest of modern Hinduism which began with Raja Ram Mohan Roy. He also recognises that we need a variety of theological approaches to Hinduism and not just one.

Each of the great Christian traditions produces its own distinctive approach to Hinduism. Though different from one another these authors all share in the Catholic approach and thus we find them laying stress on the doctrines of Creation, Incarnation and Trinity and on mystical experience. Your reviewer is more at home in the Evangelical tradition which has always been suspicious of mystical experience, perhaps unduly so, for surely the Catholic tradition has always pointed out the need for passivity on the part of the mystic and has always held that all that comes to him is of God's grace—and none of this is irreconcilable with the classic Evangelical emphasis on justification by grace through faith. Yet one still hesitates to accord the primacy to the mystic which the last four of these writers insist on, for to concentrate on inner experience is to ignore *history*. The men of faith in the Bible were all called to perform specific historic tasks. Then while the New Testament has much to say about the objective events of the Gospel it is strikingly reticent about spiritual experience. What is the relationship between these two dimensions? Last, while the mystic or contemplative properly goes behind words and images back to the source, what of the other great movement which goes *forwards* through history to the consummation? In other words while the way of contemplation and mysticism have their proper place, are they normative for all, or complementary to something else?

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*The Coalition Government*: edited by Saral K. Chatterji. C.I.S.R.S and C.L.S., 1974. Pp. 145. Price Rs 10.

This is the most recent of the excellent Social Concerns Series published by the C.I.S.R.S. It is a collection of 4 papers presented by four different speakers for a C.I.S.R.S. Consultation in 1971 around the topic of coalition governments. Given the limitations of a collection of essays—and any number of *Festschriften* exemplify these all too clearly—it holds together well and is not unduly repetitious. However the reader hoping for a definitive unravelling of this difficult subject will

not find it here. This is rather a presentation of selected material, much of it culled from newspapers and personal interviews, which will help the reader with some knowledge of Indian politics to greater appreciation of one small area. An unfortunate delay in publication, against the background of sudden political developments both in 1971 and 1975, has given to some of the authors' more general comments a rather wordy tone, but this does not detract from the book's value as a source of reference for the period 1967-69.

Of the four writers, there is little doubt that Dr Ray bears home the bell with his 'Non-Congress Coalition Governments and Change'. By taking two contrasting governments (those of Orissa and West Bengal) established at the same time, he is able to draw some useful conclusions about the circumstances which are likely to enable such coalitions to survive. An admirable spirit of academic detachment has prevented him from lambasting the West Bengal United Front as he might. A 'united' front of 14 parties with nothing more in common than rejection of Congressism (which in itself is vague enough) to bind them together simply could not provide what in traditional terms would be called stable government. His early statement that the electorate gave 'a clear verdict . . . for a non-Congress government', when Congress won only a little under half of the seats and were the largest single party by three times, is questionable. It would seem closer to the situation well-known in Europe of an equally divided electorate. However, there is no doubt about the trouncing Congress received at the 1969 mid-term polls. But why? Was it a vote for the United Front in spite of its deficiencies? Or an unsuccessful vote for an all-CPM government? Or a protest vote against President's Rule? This is an important area on which the essay throws little light. But in other respects Dr Ray presents a readable and rounded case.

Mr Varughese's ambit is more limited: in an analysis on Nambudiripad's United Front in Kerala he treats the ramifications of its rise and fall with clarity. Inevitably his remarks have a direct bearing only on the Kerala situation which is so distinctive as not to provide a valid yardstick with which to measure coalitions in the rest of the country. In summing up, he states that the United Front's failures reveal 'not only the inherent weaknesses of a coalition government but also help to find a clue to their remedy'. Evidence of their weakness there is in plenty, but there is nothing here that suggests that co-operation is practical between such different bed fellows.

The inclusion of Mr Deepak's essay on Lohia is slightly puzzling. There is no doubt that Lohia was a major opposition figure of the 1950's and that he is an absorbing historical personality. Equally many of his efforts were devoted to attempting to find a valid alternative to Congress. Hence, presumably, the connexion with coalition governments. But here the connexion ceases. Lohia did not himself participate in any coalition government, and from 1953, when the PSP did not go into coalition with the communists, onwards, he showed a realistic scepticism about their viability. As to Angrezi Hatao Sammelan and other socialist policies, to which some space is devoted, while they would form a crucial part of a study of Indian Socialism, they are hardly germane to this study.

It is on Mr Narain's essay on the Crisis of Compatibility that there falls the burden of summarising and generalising, and in some respects he measures up to the task. But the result is somewhat ungainly (in the course of 20 pages there are no less than 65 foot-notes), and appear to be based, in the initial stages, on the assumption that categorisation is clarification. No such luck. The more he categorises, the more it becomes clear that each case is largely *sui generis*. Far more valuable is his useful compendium of the problems faced by these governments. In brief: the role of the State Governor, of the Chief Minister, the manner in which Ministers are appointed and their responsibilities, the role of the civil service and state-centre relations. Here are topics which in some later more detached era will deserve thorough study, and for which Mr Narain's work might provide a basis.

*Deuteronomy* (The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries): by J. A. Thompson. I.V.P., London, 1974. Pp. 320. Price £2.30 (PB £1.95).

J. A. Thompson, senior lecturer in a department of Middle Eastern Studies, is well known for his book *The Bible and Archaeology*, for his commentaries on Joel in the *Interpreter's Bible* and Numbers in the *New Bible Commentary*, and numerous articles. His interest in archaeology is evident in this his latest commentary. There is an introduction of 70 pages and the remaining 240 pages are devoted to commentary. The layout is clear throughout: a full summary of the main sections and sub-sections is given on pages 78-80. In the Introduction he deals concisely with the Structure, Literary Characteristics, Central Sanctuary, Social and Religious Background, Date and Authorship, and Theology of the Book.

A comparison with von Rad's commentary may help to demonstrate the relative merits and defects of the work. Von Rad has 210 (bigger) pages, including 20 for introduction and over 50 taken to reproduce the text of the RSV, with only minor differences. Here is a scholar of great authority who gives a lucid exposition of his own position, but who makes almost no reference to differing viewpoints. For example, Welch is quoted because he 'rightly emphasized the indications pointing to an origin in the Northern Kingdom'. Nothing is said about Welch's better known view concerning the central sanctuary. By contrast, one of Thompson's concerns is to give a fair summary of the most important hypotheses concerning the origins and development of our book of Deuteronomy. Thus for instance he outlines the views of Noth, von Rad, Mendenhall, Weinfeld, Nicholson, and Lohfink. He has also apparently had access to the Ph.D. thesis, as yet unpublished, written by Gordon Wenham under the supervision of R. P. Ackroyd, 'The Structure and Date of Deuteronomy', from which come a number of interesting suggestions. Dr Thompson has accepted the limitations of space and has not attempted to argue in detail for or against the views he presents. His own views, moreover, are stated with admirable caution and modesty. E.g. 'The present writer finds

it difficult to decide on the date at which Deuteronomy reached its final form and feels that there is something to be said for the view, that, while Moses himself provided Israel with the heart of Deuteronomy, it became necessary in new situations to re-present the word of Moses and to show their relevance to the new day' (p. 67 f).

With respect to the commentary I have done no more than select a few passages of particular interest. The first is chapter 12 which deals with 'the place which the Lord shall choose'. Introductory material is set out under the following headings: 'The Law of God: the detailed covenant stipulations (12:1-26:19)'; 'The worship of a holy people (12:1-16:17)'; 'The worship of the central sanctuary (12:1-28)'. After this the text is dealt with verse by verse. An interesting chiasmic structure is pointed out:

11:26f and 28:1-68 blessing (s) and curse (s)

11:29f and 27:1-8, 11-16 Gerizim and Ebal

11:31f and 12:1-26:16 (The command to obey) the commandments.

This means that the rearrangement theory for chs. 27 and 28 is weakened (v.i.). Perhaps though it might be used as an explanation for the present position of ch. 27. Let the chiasmic experts decide. The discussion on the central sanctuary outlines the main issues and gives suggestions towards a solution. At times, I think, the author is rather too cautious and it is difficult to determine what his view is. Thus: 'At first sight 12:1-7 *seems* to stress unity of worship at one altar. But it *might be argued* that this represents the final step in the revision of an ancient requirement, the main concern of which was *something else*' (p. 163). A few lines later he asks: 'Was then Mount Ebal "the place", or was it merely the place where the covenant was to be renewed, while "the place", the central sanctuary, was elsewhere?' The introduction (p. 41) helps to clarify the position: 'The whole book presents the ideal, feasible and capable of operation in the days of Moses (i.e. worship at one sanctuary, viz., where the ark was), impossible to maintain from the days of conquest onwards though not forgotten by reformers such as Asa, Hezekiah and Josiah, but never realized till post-exilic times'.

The comment on 12:1-28 contains a very brief discussion of form in non-technical language. Explanations are given of terms which would be uncertain to the general reader, e.g. 'Pillars (*maššēbā*)' and 'graven images (*pāsīl*)' and the writer's extensive knowledge of archaeology is usefully employed. I was disappointed not to find any grammatical discussion of v. 14.

A second section which I consulted was chapter 27, which is related to chapter 12. Thompson notes well some of the problems: (i) How does ch. 27 relate to the rest of the book? It quite suddenly refers to Moses (for the first time since 5:1) and seems to interrupt the flow of chs. 26 and 28. He outlines three solutions without betraying a strong preference for any. The last is that of G. J. Wenham who 'allows ch. 27 to follow quite naturally after 28'. This seems an attractive proposal. (ii) How is the altar on Mount Ebal related to 'the place which the Lord will choose'? Again, only hints are given towards a solution. 'A

book written with the intention of centralizing worship in Jerusalem would not be expected to include a command to set up an altar on Mount Ebal. To be sure, Mount Ebal did not feature as a sacred place in the days of the kings, but in the same general area stood Shechem where the central sanctuary stood in ancient Israel (Jos 24:1) (p. 260).

Incidentally it is strange that he does not comment on the common sense question: If the altar was to be on Mount Ebal why was this the mountain for 'the curse'? Actually von Rad's commentary is worse since the text printed has 'Ebal' but his commentary only refers to an altar to be built on Mount Gerizim. Presumably he takes the same view as, e.g., Eissfeldt, that Gerizim was altered to Ebal for the purposes of anti-Samaritan polemic. The Samaritan Pentateuch reads 'Gerizim'.

The section dealing with Hebrew slaves (15:12-17) mentions the related passages Ex. 21:2-11 and Lev. 25:39 but does not really account for the differences. Reference is made to the *Habiru*.

On 18:1 he translates RSV's 'the Levitical priests, that is, all the tribe of Levi' by 'the Levitical priests, (indeed), all the tribe of Levi' (*hakkōhenīm hale wīyim kol shēbet lēwi*). He thinks it is likely that modifications were made from time to time with regard to the priests' portions and that the details did not greatly matter. Hence the difference between this passage, Lev. 7:32-34, and Num. 18:8-19.

It is a pity that no index has been provided. It would surely not involve a great deal of extra trouble or expense to provide author and subject indexes, and preferably also an index of biblical passages.

The commentary will be of great interest to conservative scholars, some of whom will, I feel, wonder if Dr Thompson has not given too much away. Those who have had some training in theology and can only afford one commentary on Deuteronomy may well find this the best buy. Cunliffe-Jones (Torch Series) is probably more suitable for those primarily interested in application or preaching. Those who are completely happy with at least the main outlines of the prevailing scholarly consensus may not be very interested. Personally I found it a stimulating and valuable book, and hope that the author will develop in greater detail some of the suggestions he has made.

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*The Christian Way*: by Keith Ward. S.P.C.K., London, 1976. Pp. 95.  
Price £ 1.25.

Keith Ward is Dean of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and this short attractively produced book is clearly aimed at the vaguely agnostic student age-group. The author skilfully anticipates the more common objections to 'Churchianity' by contrasting those (in all religions, not just Christians) 'who accept religion as a liberating, life-enhancing, creative exploration of existence' with those 'who turn to religion as a safe, secure, dogmatic, infallible system of beliefs and practices, adherence to which clearly separates its devotees from all other men and gives them

an exclusive monopoly of truth which no one else can share'. One may at times feel that the author overdoes this writing off of Creeds, structures and systems (it was G. K. Chesterton who once defended the Creeds as the simple Christian's defence against the cleverness of theologians), and that he has merely reduced his presentation of Christian faith to a rather mushy series of generalities in which 'Love' vaguely covers up the gaps from which the real teeth have been pulled. This would be unjust, however. He organises his presentation round what he regards as the basic pattern of Christian experience: the three themes of 'Reverence', 'Penitence' and Love. The goal of Christian living he sees as 'Fulfilment', and this can only be realised within the context of the believing and worshipping and accepting Community of faith. Far from being a reductionist, the major Christian attitudes and practices turn up again, neatly translated into contemporary terms. There are useful prayers attached to each chapter (including a particularly fine chapter on Prayer). Although addressed to the post-Christian context of the West, there is much here that would enrich a course of sermons, or provide material for study-groups, in any cultural setting.

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*Hope and Planning*: by Jürgen Moltmann. S.C.M., London, 1971.  
Pp. 228. Price £2.75

*Hope and Planning* is a collection of articles published by Moltmann over a period of time. These articles were first published in scientific journals between 1960 and 1968. The original German edition of this book was more accurately entitled "Theological Perspectives". In the English edition the title of the seventh chapter has become the title of the book itself.

With his earlier publication, *Theology of Hope*, Moltmann had emerged as one of the world's outstanding Christian theologians. Persons acquainted with his stimulating and creative theological thinking, will find in this book a great help to a deeper understanding of his original approach to the Gospel as the great hope for the world today. What is the interplay between hope grounded in Christian faith and man's endeavour to give shape and direction to history? This question has haunted Moltmann for years, and it is bound to haunt all Christians especially when we see great countries like the New China having full confidence in its capacity to keep hope alive among its people without any reference to the ground of Hope around which Moltmann centres his reflections. Is there some inner connection between these apparently contradictory approaches? I doubt whether Moltmann himself can give a satisfactory answer to this question. He rightly questions the realism of a hope based on the capacity of the people to plan their own future alone. To believers, on the other hand, he renders an immense service by being constantly critical towards a faith inviting man to retreat into his



inwardness, thus isolating him from mankind which is set on making justice a historical reality.

*The Revelation of God and the Question of Truth* is the first chapter of the book. How can man be open to God's revelation? The author discusses various 'schemes of verification' and finds them inadequate. Revelation and Truth must be understood eschatologically in the light of the Easter event. The humiliated is exalted, and the Risen Lord points in the direction of history, the divine plan of history. Man's hope, that the world will move into the light of the glorious Lord, the leader of Life, is grounded in this Promise of God. Christian faith, alive in the steadfastness of hope, opens up new horizons, mobilizes to new obedience and keeps the faithful critical of society as it is.

*God and Resurrection*, the second chapter, establishes the ground of solidarity of Christians with all men crushed by suffering and oppression in the cry of Israel and the Son of Man: 'My God why hast thou forsaken me?' Because faith intends to lead man out of this world, 'it leads him even deeper into solidarity with groaning creation'. With atheists, believers too ask 'Why do I suffer?' Whilst the honest atheist has to say with Bloch 'the agony has not yet been taken care of', the Christian finds in the crucified and risen Christ the answer to the cry emerging from agony and forsakenness. Love born in men is the reflection of the resurrection. 'Love is itself already the power of the transformation of life, but only under the condition of agony and death.' It is in the concrete struggles, not only of inner temptations, but also of social and political conflict, that one becomes a Christian.

*Exegesis and the Eschatology of History*. Does history have a unity, a meaning? To this question the third chapter attempts to give an answer. Its analysis of different attempts to understand history makes heavy reading. It basically criticises all attempts to understand history in a positivist perspective 'in which neither God nor the Spirit appear'. Only Eschatology gives history a meaning. It also condemns the tendency of Christians to create a dualism between the Jesus of faith and the Jesus of history escaping into an ahistorical 'supernaturalism of the inner Spirit'. History is open, unfinished. Faith perceives the direction in which it is moving. . . in the direction of the Promise. 'History must be seen as the sphere of action of revelation, in which the judicial process of truth takes place'.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the study of the relationship between Sociology and Theology. It ends with an attempt at formulating a historical ethic of hope. Commandment is the ethical side of promise and of hope. This establishes the eschatological community which cannot be fitted smoothly into existing social structures. By its hope it becomes a community of unrest within society. It critically questions existing institutions. To a society faced with meaningless determinism it can provide meaning and direction. A deeper understanding of the O.T. *Shalom* must help the Christian community to free itself from a one-sided trans-historical concept of liberation or salvation. Creative love leads Christians to working and

suffering together with the rest of men. 'Hope must find its way in faithfulness to the earth on which stood the cross of Christ'.

The fifth chapter has as its sub-title: "Towards an Understanding of the Church in modern society". It examines first the expectations of society today from the Church, and then raises the question as to how the Church ought to respond to the command of its Lord. How can the Church become both a world-transforming and world-transcending power? 'It does not soothe and calm the tensions of brokenness and the devastations of society, but rather it brings these to a head and confronts them with the divine transformation'.

Questioning the validity of a science of history, Moltmann confronts the Marxist and other secularist concepts of history with the Christian faith-understanding of history in the sixth chapter. Here the central question again is: how does resurrection hope affect history? It generates a sense of mission which is revolutionary and patient at the same time. 'It allows nothing to remain what is was and is, but rather confronts everything with that transformation which it expects by reproaching it with its unredeemed and unfulfilled condition.'

The book got its title from the seventh chapter: "Hope and Planning". Moltmann believes that without Christian hope the enthusiasm of man in planning his future will weaken and even end in pessimism. Only a hope which reaches beyond the historically possible can sustain, in the long run, a will to planning a better future. On the other hand, hope to remain realistic must be expressed in and related to historic planning. In fact, hope stimulates planning. This chapter is the most interesting of the whole book. It invites serious reflection on the nature of a mere inner-worldly hope which seems to retain the inspirational power of real transcendence (as we see it operative in the New China). The last chapter deals with the need for theological reflection. In face of an apparent meaninglessness of theology for the world of today, Moltmann perceives a dangerous retreat, in many Christian circles, into mere inwardness in which faith is put into a 'ghetto' in which it could well perish. He detects a great challenge to the Church in Einstein's saying: 'Formerly one had perfect purposes but imperfect means. Today one has perfect means but confused purposes.' At a time when a new quest for meaning is emerging in mankind, theology must recognize the specific contribution it can make to this search. By relating the saving event to the history men create, it has something to say about the future of man, about the purposes, goals and ends of history. With an increased control over nature and society mankind is anxiously asking the question: where are we going? Not in isolation but in dialogue with the human sciences, can eschatological theology become the message of universal hope. 'Only in company with the sciences can eschatological faith arrive at a historical self-consciousness.'

Critics of Moltmann have accused him of 'profanation of the secular'. It is necessary for theology also to clarify the relations between secular hope and eschatological hope, not only between hope and planning.

What about the hope that is born out of massive human suffering, which is at the origin of movements that have redirected the history of many a country in the world? Does not a theology of eschatology risk minimising the consequences of the incarnation for those who, though not hearers of the Word, have their history encompassed by the One who came into his own . . . and enlightens every man born into this world? Can the Church alone make contributions to historical liberation which is related to the *Shalom* of the Kingdom? These are some questions which the reader of this book may have to answer for himself.

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*The Emerging Culture in India*: edited by Thomas Paul. Pontifical Institute of Theology and Philosophy, Alwaye, 1975. Pp. 189. Price Rs. 12.

This Symposium is 20th in the series of Institute publications and the first of the annual Father Zacharias Lectures 1974, named after the great Roman Catholic pioneer of Christian-Hindu Dialogue and author of *Studies of Hinduism*. The Foreword is written by Raymond Panikkar, the author of *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*.

In a symposium both the length and quality of the various papers presented is bound to be varied and duplication is unavoidable. The Introductory Chapter written by the Editor is a very good gleaning from the various contributions. It cuts across the necessity of detailed comments by a reviewer! Its perusal gives a fair idea of what the various presentations have attempted to highlight.

The subject of the Symposium is of great contemporary interest and in the context of an emerging world culture has both a significance and challenge. The Indian contribution to this emerging world culture has been well brought out. It is a very valuable addition to the growing literature on inter-religious dialogue.

In the opening chapter, Professor Samuel Mathai, former Vice-Chancellor of Kerala University, is worried about some aspects of the emerging public behaviour in some sections of Indian society: 'Throwing stones at passing cars and buses, *gherao*, *dharna*, *bandh*, and other forms of social behaviour may be the new culture of India; but until recently these things would not have been looked upon as manifestations of our ancient *dharma*.' Commenting further on the growing violence in Indian society he says, 'One may ask whether the real national hero of today is not Subhas Chandra Bose rather than Gandhi' (p. 17).

However, he has not failed to point out some emerging hopeful signs such as a sense of equality among people, self-assertion of youth and freedom of women. 'The most important need of the emerging culture is for India to re-discover her soul and "to her own self to be true" . . . A new interpretation of *sanatana dharma* is necessary' (pp. 48-49).

The Rev. Emmanuel A. Pallikunnen, writing about Social Forces at work in the Emerging Culture, analyses these forces; and, pointing to the tension between old and new in the Indian culture, pleads for 'an eclectic approach'. 'To achieve a balance between what is good in the old way of life and the new competing culture, this ideal equilibrium will be the most desirable thing, though it is not that easy to achieve' (p. 61).

Dr. C. P. Menon has discussed the impact of Science and Technology on the emerging culture and suggests that 'we take a close look at the implications of science and technology in regard to the ultimate good, that is, human happiness' (p. 74).

Dr. Cyriac Kanichai has dealt with the growing pace of secularization but does not regard it as an enemy of the spiritual, and affirms that 'Christianity with its incarnational basis and sacramental structure has better chances and possibilities of coping with the demands of contemporary secularization' (p. 87).

A word needs to be said about two presentations from Hindu and Muslim points of view. Mr Justice Balakrishne Eradi pointing to the basic search for *Sath, Chit, Ananda*, embodied in the Hindu Scriptures lays stress on the height of spiritual aspiration in the Advaita philosophy (p. 115). He expands the three basic approaches to this goal through *Jnanamarga, Bhaktimarga* and *Karmamarga* (p. 119). He calls Hindu Dharma 'the symbol of India's spiritual vision' and asserts that 'Hindu thought never developed a Monroe doctrine in matters of culture'. Mr Justice Khalid has taken the growingly fashionable attitude of pointing to the doctrines of equality of all men, nations and religions (p. 129) and has quoted selected verses from the Quran to establish his thesis of Islam's tolerance of all religions and the philosophy of live and let live. He has taken pains to discuss the challenge of youth (p. 129), his aversion to conversion (p. 141) and the support of the government's Family Planning programme (p. 143). The last two he regards as controversial matters.

Dr. Dominic Fernandez has contributed the longest paper. It is a carefully reasoned apologia for the Christian position *vis-à-vis* emerging culture throughout the world but with special reference to India. Referring to the 'liberating revolutionary literature' in South America he says, 'If it is to be genuinely Christian and genuinely Indian, it is to be inserted into the mainstream of the Indian spiritual tradition, which has nurtured in the modern times the unique movement and philosophy of non-violence as lived by Mahatma Gandhi' (pp. 179-80).

The Symposium has a closing address from Cardinal Parecattil. In the midst of a confused picture the Cardinal sees some redeeming features in the emerging culture of India. He emphasises the need for 'social apostolate' for young and old, and suggests that 'art and architecture, liturgy and worship should draw largely on indigenous resources and assimilate deeply elements taken from the emerging culture of the nation' (pp. 188-89).

The Symposium is a significant contribution to inter-faith dialogue with reference to the emerging cultural situation in India which

is surely an important item of the agenda provided to the Indian Church by the contemporary situation. The book, although taxing to the reader, will handsomely repay the labour of reading.

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*Religion and Ideology in Sri Lanka*: by François Houtart. Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 1974. Pp. 541.

The history of Sri Lanka is tremendously rich in material for the study of religion in society, and much valuable work has been done. This book by Professor François Houtart, of the University of Louvain, is a welcome addition to an already extensive literature, both for its own original work and for its collation of extremely diverse sources. The book has serious faults, but all who are interested in South Asian religion and society over the last two millennia will want to refer constantly to this work.

The book has a rather complicated theoretical apparatus, which many will find pretentious and irritating. Houtart's theory might be dismissed as so commonplace that the most reactionary of religious apologists would not challenge it. He proposes that in agricultural societies a religious ideology dominates, and a close correspondence exists between the religious and social systems. Under pressure of economic change, tensions (torsions in the book's terms) develop between these systems. As social organisation becomes diversified, so different ideologies, religious and otherwise, adapt to and compete with one another. He offers Weber's thesis that the function of religion in the development of ideology is to legitimate the power of the dominant group, and to compensate through promise of salvation the dominated group. But he carefully avoids the notion that economic factors 'cause' social and religious change; he allows to social and religious systems a high degree of autonomy. This rejection of a mechanistic approach is admirable, but suffers the consequence that no really examinable hypothesis can be offered—a familiar dilemma in social investigation.

Houtart makes a special place in his theory of ideology and power relations for the effect that external intervention has on the social ensemble. The intervening power he describes as the 'centre'; the object of intervention the 'periphery'. These additional categories are necessary because of the immediacy and arbitrariness of external interventions of the colonising type, which are not generated by existing conditions within the colonised society.

The great value of the book is in the material that it gathers in support of the theory. The author selects five periods for study: the establishment of Buddhism, 3rd Century B.C.; the Kandyan Kingdom, 17-18th Century A.D.; Portuguese colonisation; British colonisation; the era of independence. These descriptions are fascinating, but marred by the author's presuppositions, and a failure to

appreciate fully the background to each period, resulting perhaps from his severe selection of the material.

In the first two periods, he tends to ignore the 'centre-periphery' relations between India and Lanka, which have forged the latter's really enduring institutions. In the early period, we have a thorough description of the internal conditions that led to a need for a religious ideology able to legitimate the growing power of monarchical authority. But the author is unconvincing in his theory that the adoption of Buddhism, as a matter of royal policy, was adequate for this purpose. It is far more likely that royal authority was established on the basis of the prestige of the Emperor Asoka, which underlay the Buddhist mission to Lanka. The Sinhalese king, Devanampiya Tissa, accepted at least the nominal overlordship of Asoka in his acceptance of Buddhism. He was reconsecrated by Mauryan envoys, using the imperial regalia; 'Devanampiya' is itself an Asokan title, attaching from that period to all the monarchs of Anuradhapura.

Houtart gives a firm impression that the Kandyan kingdom expressed the full development of Buddhist monarchical ideology. In fact, the 18th century saw the final stages of a decline which had lasted six centuries. The classical Sinhalese period ended with the magnificent hydraulic culture of Parakrama I at Polonnaruwa in the twelfth century. The subsequent flight of the monarchy to the south-west indicated the end of the rice-based economy of the northern plains. Before the colonial onslaught, a certain prosperity was established upon the trade in gems and spices; this was firmly controlled by Muslim traders. Their existence within a Buddhist state needs some examination and explanation; but Houtart completely misjudges their importance.

During this era, the Buddhist Sangha had deteriorated, and in the 18th century became extinct. The monarchy itself passed into the hands of the *Nayakkars*, themselves not Sinhalese, but the product of intermarriage with the Vijayanagar of Malabar. It was in their period, 1739-1815, that the Sangha was revived, and the Buddhist Monarchy thrived in the picturesque manner described in the *Culavamsa*, which extols the virtue of these devout Maduran converts. The Kandyan monarchy, then, was at least partly based on an overseas trade dominated by Muslims. It survived for at least a time without benefit of clergy. Its final flower grew under the care of a foreign dynasty. This is a far cry from Houtart's picture of a divine monarchy, resting upon an intricate hierarchy, existing in a wholly agricultural economy, the whole bound together by a Buddhist religious ideology.

The colonial period is much better done, partly because Houtart is able to admit the full range of external forces in play. His description of Portuguese religious ideology is very fine. He shows us a unified social system very similar to the Sinhalese, differing mainly in the missionary aggression of the invaders. Both these systems wanted the same kind of allegiance from the dominated, and so 150 years of bloodshed followed. The diverse needs of centre and periphery in

the British period made conflict less obviously necessary. For this reason, less space might have been given here to the abortive rebellions of 1818 and 1848, and more to the development of Buddhism.

A condition of the Nayakkar revival of the Sangha was that monks should be recruited only from the dominant Goyigama caste. This led to the formation in 1830 of the Amarapura Congregation, drawn from the Salagama cinnamon-peeler caste, who had come to economic prominence under the Dutch. And probably the most enduring feature of the 19th Century missionary activity has been to draw the resources of Buddhism into the field of education. It is not completely fanciful to see the British era as Buddhism's Babylonian period. The changes in Buddhism in this period certainly reinforce Houtart's view that the religious system becomes diversified under a liberal regime sustained by a non-religious ideology.

Houtart acutely concludes that the colonial period left the structure of Lanka's society basically untouched. It is extraordinary that a small country should thus survive the whole British liberal apparatus of classics, cricket, plantations and railways. Half the book is given to the independence period. The examination of politics and religion is extremely valuable, though weakened by serious omissions.

Houtart shows us a deep ambivalence in contemporary politics. He describes the current ideology as 'developmentalist'; the imperative to increase production while leaving the present social structure unchanged. Under the capitalist, nationalist and socialist labels which attach to the parties, he detects an unchanged form; that of the Sinhalese caste system. A massive weight of evidence is brought to demonstrate this. The case could be further tested by observing whether it is reiterated by those who are most thoroughly alienated from the present system. But in fact the JVP leaders of the 1971 insurgency dealt in straightforward political terms, and challenged what they saw as neo-colonialism rather than indigenous reaction. Houtart has 20 pages on this event alone, which make this book invaluable. But this apparent assumption that the 10,000 suspects constituted JVP activists, rather than a large proportion of passive bystanders, undermines his statistical analysis of this group; he certainly greatly overestimates active Catholic participation.

The examination of the function of contemporary Catholicism is much more comprehensive than the work done on the Buddhists, mainly due to the author's own formidable studies of Catholic attitudes. The examination is in terms of the tendency of religion to legitimate power, and to compensate the powerless with the promise of salvation. Catholics, particularly urban and better-educated groups, look for progressive change within the options offered by conventional politics. This legitimation has only a weak religious base, however, and owes more to the liberal Catholic educational tradition. But the value of this work is seriously questioned by one freak result in the statistical material. *All* Catholic groups—old and young, urban and rural—show a majority in favour of the abolition of caste. Such unanimity

among otherwise differentiated groups should have indicated that reality is being concealed rather than revealed by the research method.

Buddhists also appear to legitimate the conventional set of options, and do not side as strongly with the heirs to S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike as might be thought; Buddhists continue to be publicly distressed at his party's alliance with the left in a way that the Catholics gave up when they lost their schools. This legitimation is reciprocated by the public—and private—respect paid to Buddhist institutions by the chief non-Marxist political leaders.

Houtart's great contribution in this work is his account of the common ground between Catholicism and Buddhism as popularly practised. On the evidence, neither is a 'salvation religion'. Both are chiefly concerned with obtaining *protection* for their adherents in a this-worldly setting—a notion that must bring some discomfort to all religious professionals; for Protestantism, if examined, would not be exempt from this judgement.

But protection of what? Here we come to the serious omission in Houtart's account. The basic fact concealed by all the research is that this society rests not on public but on domestic institutions. The family is paramount. Its complex network manipulates the public systems, economic, social and religious. Its central economic strength is the dowry arrangement. It is given social cohesion by the caste system; but this is not itself the key to the situation; it is merely a strong feature of the domestic system. This explains the anomalous results when Catholics are questioned about caste; in the context of the public system, unreal, shadowy and wholly secondary, Catholics reject caste; but Houtart asks no questions about the domestic system, where a completely different set of answers are observable in actual behaviour. Neither poverty, wealth, urbanisation nor even emigration guarantees exemption from the domestic system; this goes for political success also, and explains the situation which Houtart ascribes to caste alone.

The supremacy of the domestic system is dramatically revealed in a superb table of Buddhist religious practices, which in itself is a sufficient reason to own this book. Here, the point is not what protection is from, but *for whom*. The rites almost without exception invoke protection of the family unit; almost all take place within the home. Nor is this merely a hangover of rural feudalism; Houtart shows that urbanisation merely differentiates the type of protection required: in the village, from disease, drought and flood; in the town, from unemployment, academic failure and strange neighbours. This is a common factor to all religious groups; and indeed makes simpler the question of the apparent ease with which whole communities have alternated between religious allegiances over the centuries.

This phenomenon of the domestic system needs to be studied outside the confines of social anthropology. The application of Houtart's historical method would probably show that a system common to most of the world outside the impoverished industrial West is more marked in societies which external intervention has denied strong public, indigenous institutions. Houtart reveals that the colonial period has affected Lanka but little; but public institutions *ought* to affect the



entire social ensemble. Where they do not, the vacuum is filled by the family. It legitimates the formal power of the dominant, and develops a religion not of salvation but of protection, subscribed to by dominant and dominated alike. Houtart's sociological approach to contemporary life would reveal the correspondences and torsions between the domestic system and the public system. The practical results of this research might diminish the current ambivalence in political and religious activity. And as for the Church, we might find that in our unwitting adaptation to the domestic system, we have become more truly indigenous than we thought, and indeed more so than we would wish to be.

JOHN KENNEDY  
*Batticaloa, Sri Lanka*

*Poverty and Development*: by C. T. Kurien. C.L.S. for C.I.S.R.S., 1974. Pp. 209. Price Rs. 19 (cloth) Rs. 17 (paperback).

I read this book in many, many short snatches whilst travelling back and forth to Bombay city from the suburbs. My impressions of the book are mixed up with the close proximity of all the other travellers on the train, and the many impressions one gets as a traveller in these confined conditions. Travelling like this in Bombay one cannot avoid the faces of the poor and the many kinds of people who are crowding into this great city looking for a living. I hope that any reader of this book will allow his impressions of his immediate life in a similar way to intermingle with his reading of the book.

This is a review for a theological magazine but the book is about this present world and the greatest single issue facing us in the present time, poverty and development. It is a series of articles by a professional economist trying to tackle some of the contemporary issues before him. The green revolution, aid and trade and self-reliance, the meaning of development, the rich and the poor, garibi hatao, all find a place in this book. The only criticism that one would want to level against it is that the articles are in this way so occasional. However, the opening chapter labelled 'Introduction', is the author's own summary of the relation between all the issues which he has covered in the articles. He even adds a postscript to it of how his thought has gone beyond what he said in the articles.

Two of the basic issues which he dwells upon deserve mention. The first is the reality of power. Not just that of 'legitimate' power and that enshrined in official institutions of our society, Parliament and so on. But the fantastic power to resist any kind of change in what (to use the latest word) we call the structures. Dr. Kurien very vividly portrays the difference of perspective of the well-to-do and the poor when it comes to the question of development. The former fondly imagine that if the gross national product is only substantially increased then the means to distribute it more fairly will just spring to hand by magic. He quotes many examples to disprove this fond imagination. Another quotation: 'Many of our intellectuals and educated people,

like others who have power and influence, do not seem to have any commitment except their own welfare and progress.' And another: 'Morals are addressed primarily to change individual motivations and thereby individual decision making. But there are social issues which are beyond the realm of individual decisions . . . It is my argument in the papers in this collection that poverty and development are basically structural matters and hence called for structural transformations. Since structural aspects relate to collective decisions and have to deal with collective vested interests, moral reforms alone are inadequate to meet them. Social exercise of power is necessary to influence structural problems.'

But Kurien finds traditional liberalism and Marxism quite inadequate to solve our situation. Their followers merely import an idea of what our society is like and do not actually look at it as it is. He convincingly demonstrates that organized labour, to which the Marxists look for an agent of social transformation, are themselves agents of oppression in our so unequal society.

Students of theology ought to ponder this quotation: 'Revolutionary thought and action come not from those who conform to the pattern of the present order, but from those who are willing to change it through a renewal of their minds.'

So this writer takes us beyond formal academic economics. The student of the Bible and Theology has to take the realities of power quite seriously. Kurien says clearly, 'The material basis for their liberation is more food, more shelter and other basic amenities of life. We have enough human and non-human sources which can produce these goods, but the social economic system which we have will not allow such goods to be produced, while it permits and encourages a passion for growth which is to the advantage of those who own and control the resources of the economy and have virtual control over the political machinery as well. This is the crux of the problem.'

'The pernicious myth that the poverty of the masses can be removed only as a byproduct of the growing affluence of the rich must be buried forever.' Many writers today, if they are not straight-jacketed by some imported ideology, realize that we do not yet have the institutions with which to fight corruption or to change the system for greater good. Many of them are saying what Kurien says here: 'We must either wait for appropriate moments to come, or bombard the system from many points till it either yields or collapses.' A continuous bombardment is worth trying out as it appears to be the only active alternative today.

If the casual reader reads the introduction and picks out the other topics that he would like to read first he can conveniently read the book in what order he likes. This is an advantage.

There is a postscript entitled the 'Church and Development'. In these afterthoughts Kurien wonders whether the church has any real role to play in the development of the country. It has a glorious history of developing institutions which have been instrumental to a great extent but now he says, 'At the moment the church's thinking on development, and its involvement in development through its

projects are confined to a few professionals, with the vast majority of its members completely left out of both; if the church is to make a contribution its members have to be educated about the major issues and problems.' He points out that so far only the Church of South India has taken seriously any decisions about 'The Church in the struggle for a just society'. If more of us read this book in the context of our own struggle also for somewhere to stand up on the crowded train we may be part of that growing company of those who are really concerned.

J. R. McMANUS  
*Bombay*

*A Priest's Encounter with Revolution—An Autobiography:* by Joseph Vadakkan. C.L.S. for C.I.S.R.S., 1974. Pp. 159. Price Rs. 12.

This is the first book in a series projected by the Christian Institute for the study of Religion and Society under the title 'Studies on Indian Marxism'.

It is a highly subjective and self-conscious account of an Indian Roman Catholic priest who has tried to live explosively within the Church. His adventures in some respects have incurred the wrath of the hierarchy resulting in his suspension from official spiritual ministrations, but he has not been disowned as a member of that Church.

The author was born in 1919, orphaned in boyhood, and having studied up to the 7th standard, became a teacher at the age of fourteen on a salary of Rs. 5 per month. It was after a gap of 32 years that he received a university degree in Canada. He was ordained priest in 1956. Politics became his obsession even when he began his life as a teacher. Starting as an ardent Congressman, he became a socialist. Later defying the Communist Government in Kerala he led the Anti-Communist front. However, he has strong Communist learnings though he has not subscribed to atheistic and materialistic explanations of history.

'I shall not become an atheist—it was because of this that I opposed Marxism—apart from this spiritual and technical aspect, I agree with all the conclusions of Marx. Marx's economic theory especially has completely overpowered me. I believe in class war and revolution. If other democratic means fail, I firmly believe that the Indian people should attain economic freedom by a bloody revolution. Can it not be that the stage when the state withers away is the temporal form of the Kingdom of God envisaged by Christ? When the dimension of spirituality is added Marx's dictatorship of the Proletarian will become the Rule of Christ with his twelve fishermen. I firmly believe that dictatorship of the proletariat is the final culmination of democratic values' (p. 44).

These words more than any other reveal the tension in which Fr. Vaddakan has lived all his life. With this outlook his clash with his church authority was inevitable, though he admits that much of the inspiration for fighting the battles for the poor and the labouring class

came from the exhortation of Pope John XXIII in an interview: 'During the conversation, the Holy Father blessed me thrice placing his hand on my head, "work for the labourers and peasants"—I hold firmly to that command in spite of the suspension order by the Bishop of Trichur' (p. 82).

In his own church Fr. Vadakkan has been critical of episcopal luxury, confessions as they are practised, methods of raising money, and alignments with powers that be and with the *status quo*. He is an advocate of voluntary clerical celibacy.

In the very crowded and active life which he describes, there are some moving descriptions, e.g., his decision to become a priest consequent upon the way in which small-pox stricken patients had been neglected by priests. The words of a father whose son had been stricken by the dreaded disease, 'Jesus needs priests with courage', brought about this decision (p. 35). In his pastoral charge of the parish at Kuriachira, he tried some new and daring experiments, and his governing motto was 'Poverty, the Great Sin' (p. 118).

In the concluding part the author comments on the present economic situation in India and asks this question: 'What is the responsibility of a priest of Christ in this situation? Will it be sufficient if he prays in street corners? Or should he fight for a Government which will feed the hungry and clothe the naked?' In that question is revealed the agony of his own decision which has been expressed in his allegiance to Karshaka Thozhilali Party which began as a peasant organisation but has become a political party in Kerala since March 4, 1962. Fr. Vadakkan exercises his ministry outside the four walls of the institutional Church and he feels he is following the steps of the Master (p. 159).

The book reveals many facets of Indian politics and has references to many outstanding figures in recent Indian history. The C.I.S.R.S. is to be congratulated on initiating this significant series, and Fr. Vadakkan is to be thanked for his courageous unveiling of his soul.

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*Worship and the Child: Essays by the Joint Liturgical Group*, edited by Ronald C. D. Jasper. London: S.P.C.K., 1975. Pp. 67. Price 95p, paperback.

This study has been prepared by the Joint Liturgical Group, representing eight different Church traditions in England. It examines the attitude of these churches toward children and worship, particularly Eucharistic worship, and describes what they are doing to lead children to an experience of true worship in the present and prepare them for a deepening experience as they progress to adolescence and adulthood. The book is a symposium of essays by writers of the Anglican Church, Church of Scotland, Roman Catholic Church, Methodist Church, Baptist Church, and Church of Christ.

A preliminary article and a closing one are written by the Rev. Neville Clark, and both of these are very well done. In the first he states the problem and the unavoidable tensions involved in steering a safe course between the Scylla of giving children a negative attitude toward a church worship which either excludes them or bores them, and the Charybdis of doing violence to the liturgy in order to make it understandable and pleasant to the children. In the closing chapter he sums up the statements of the various writers and tries to indicate some basic considerations which he thinks must underlie a solution.

It must be said that the book states the problem better than it answers it. One is very much struck by the sameness of what is said in the different chapters about unsuccessful experiments by different churches. The theme with variations which runs through them all is:

1. We have tried having something separate for the children, either Sunday School or Junior Church, at the same time as the service. It is unsatisfactory because it divorces the child from the worshipping life of the church and does not encourage him to enter into it at the time of adolescence. It also means that certain adults must always be absent from the service.
2. We have tried having the children remain in the service throughout, but it is unsatisfactory because they are often bored by what they cannot understand and are excluded from the Communion and develop a negative attitude toward the worship service.
3. We have tried some combination of these two, having the children remain for part of the service and then leave. This is unsatisfactory because their exit disrupts the worship atmosphere, and it gives the child an incomplete worship-experience.
4. We have tried a 'family' type of service, but this has been less than satisfactory because the current concept of family gives such a prominent role to children that it distorts the act of worship for the adults and makes it a weak and sentimental thing.
5. A few report having considered allowing children full participation in the Communion, but this solution is not popular and all indicate a need for much further thinking on it.
6. The Roman Catholic writer describes the development of 'Classroom Masses' in parochial schools and speaks highly of them, but indicates a severe problem in making the transition to the adult service later.

The conclusion is not a very conclusive one, but the writer has pointed out a basic misconception that underlies much of the talk about children and worship; that of understanding worship as an educational or instructional exercise rather than an experience. He declares the necessity of exposure of the child to the Church's tradition which will lead to a conscious confrontation with God, and also of preparation through instruction for understanding the language of the Word and Sacrament, and he concludes by asking the embarrassing question as to whether children are not bored by the worship service because basically

the adults are also. This, of course, implies a need for re-examination of the Church's worship as a whole, which is the task the Joint Liturgical Group has embarked upon.

The book is welcome as a recognition of a very important problem, and should be thought-provoking reading for educators and ministers alike. Although written in England, its relevance for Indian churches is probably as great as for England. But it has to be read as the sharing of fellow pilgrims on a quest, not a light from those who have arrived at a destination.

ALICE M. FINDLAY

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*Hearing Confessions*: by Kenneth Ross. S.P.C.K., London, 1974.  
Pp. 110. Price £1.95.

This book offers us the 'final testimony' of Kenneth Ross, who for many years exercised a quiet but important ministry at All Saints, Margaret Street, in London. His confessional there was in constant use by people from widely varied walks of life. The manuscript of the book was not quite complete at the time of his sudden death in 1970.

It has to be admitted that this is a very 'Anglican' book and on a subject of somewhat limited appeal. There are also blemishes in the book, which might perhaps have been removed if the author had lived to revise it. There is some repetition (for example the not over-exciting quotation from Izaak Walton which appears on pp. 30 and 90). Some of the sections are simply too brief to be adequate. For example situation ethics is dismissed in under two pages by an amusing, though hardly adequate, *reductio ad absurdum*. (We are given the picture of the penitent who confesses that he has failed to commit adultery, though he had since come to realize that he should have.)

Nevertheless, this is a book which deserves a far wider readership than the foregoing remarks might suggest. It begins with a brief history of penance. But the heart of the book is a practical guide to the confessor which is the fruit, not only of wide reading and sound learning, but of the author's own experience and wisdom. He dispels many of the frequent misunderstandings of private penance (and reminds us that Bonhoeffer felt himself driven to a form of it at Finkenwalde). He is well aware of its limitations, but is utterly convinced and convincing of its immense value for many members of the church. His emphasis that confession is not simply a negative and scrupulous pre-occupation with sin, but is concerned with the deepening of obedience and love is especially to be welcomed.

Even those who do not practise formal confession will find here much to deepen their pastoral understanding and care. But the book would be particularly useful to clergy of the C.N.I., C.S.I. and other united churches who might be embarrassed by their ignorance of this practice in situations where members of their congregations valued it. It is to be hoped that the book will appear in paperback and at a price which will enable such people to buy it.

M. R. WESTALL

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*Commentary on the New Lectionary*: by John Gunstone. S.P.C.K., London. Vol. 1, 1973. Pp. 230. Vol. 2, 1974. Pp. (continuing) 475. Each volume £ 1.95 (limp cloth).

John Gunstone is an Anglican scholar and writer with a special interest in liturgy, who has had experience both of pastoral and other varieties of work and therefore writes from a wide background. The New Lectionary for which he has provided this excellent commentary is that pioneered by the Joint Liturgical Group in Britain, where it has been adopted by (among others) the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church. It is also being used by the Church of Ireland and the Province of South Africa in the Anglican Communion.

It can be said at once that these two volumes together provide a reliable and useful scriptural and liturgical guide to the cycle of readings for Sundays and Holy Days. To avoid misunderstanding the author points out in his valuable Introduction that 'These commentaries are not intended to be sermons. Rather, I hope they will do something that biblical commentaries are intended to do when a sermon is being prepared'.

The Introduction is followed, before the commentaries begin, by a first-rate essay of 30 pages on the evolution of the Christian calendar, which adds immensely to the value of the book.

Books of this kind are not much use to any but those who use the lectionary on which they are based, and as far as I know it is not used anywhere in India. Nonetheless these commentaries are of interest to us because they raise the question of a satisfactory and generally accepted lectionary; and that is something which we lack in this country. I am thinking not only of the cycle of readings for Sundays and Holy Days—both the C.S.I. and some of the uniting churches in the C.N.I. can claim to have those, though they could be improved—but of a lectionary for the Daily Office as well, and the two cycles should obviously be related to each other. The Joint Liturgical Group in Britain also produced a lectionary for the Daily Office. Some of us who have used and are familiar with both the C.S.I. and the C.I.P.B.C. lectionaries for the whole year find neither of them satisfactory in practice, for varying reasons. It is also desirable that both the C.S.I. and the C.N.I., and surely the Mar Thoma Church also, as they move closer to each other, seeking organic union or at least close federation, should share a common lectionary. Is there any reason why we should not take advantage of the expert work of the Joint Liturgical Group, which has already been proved in practice, and adopt their lectionary?

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