

Book Reviews

Christ, Saviour of Mankind: A Christian Appreciation of Swami Akhilananda: by Heinrich Barlage, SVD. Steyler Verlag, St Augustin (West Germany), 1977. Pp. 283. Price DM 29.50 (a limited quantity of subsidized copies is available at the Sat-Prachar Press, Publication Department, Indore 452 001).

For nearly a century, Europe and America have been included in the itineraries of mendicant Hindu devotees of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, beginning with Vivekananda's much applauded apostolic tour of the West in the late nineteenth century. One of the few that stayed was Swami Akhilananda (1894-1962), the subject of the book presently under review. Though we have nearly forgotten, there was a time—until, roughly speaking, the second half of this century—when Westerners did not rush *en masse* to the lotus-feet of every freshly landed guru. Akhilananda arrived in Boston in this still reluctant period, and, instead of making his parish among the Bohemians of that day, began to engage leading American theologians in dialogue about the great problems of religion. The monograph at hand could not have been written if the swami had selected another audience than one comprised of Christian theologians, or if he had not been a disciple of Ramakrishna, whose reverence for Christ, despite its syncretistic tinge, has become proverbial. One finds in Akhilananda a fit subject for Heinrich Barlage, for to an extent unsurpassed by most other exponents of Hinduism, he not only admired Christ but also willingly identified the presuppositions lying behind this affection, which in others of his type so often seem touching yet disarmingly vague.

An adumbration of these generally hidden assumptions, drawn from Barlage's findings, now follows. Akhilananda's mission was based on the conviction that Occidental Christians suffer from a debilitating religious myopia, the result of a narrow provincialism which inculcates the idea of a God singly incarnated in Jesus Christ. He thought that, as an Oriental, he had easier access than Westerners to the mind of Christ (strangely ignoring the difference of Semitic or Jewish culture from both West and East). With this superior insight, almost yogic in its capacity to discern that which always eluded the Occidental Church, Akhilananda reveals what Christ really meant when he uttered his *mahāvākyas* (a typical example familiar to many is identifying "I and my Father are one" with the Advaitic interpretation of *aham brahmāsmi*). As one, but not the only one, whose emotions were "integrated," his will "one-pointed," and his mind "unified" in the knowledge of man's essential unity with the Absolute, Christ becomes, to the consternation of many, a fully

accredited Advaitic Vedantin affirming the cardinal tenets of Rama-krishna and much of traditional Hinduism. Yet he is more than merely one of the blessed few who have achieved enlightenment through strenuous effort: he is an *avatāra*, among others, in whom God graciously descended in order to equalize good and evil by raising mankind's awareness of its divine nature.

For some readers, such as this one, impatience is difficult to curb when Akhilananda claims that insight into Christ's thinking is his Oriental birthright. But this is not a fault to which Barlage is susceptible; his forbearance is truly remarkable. One reads the following on so many pages that it becomes a refrain: as a "sympathetic co-worker," Akhilananda has much to teach us about the Gospel and about the Hindu background against which it must be made meaningful. Barlage insists on this even though he concedes that the swami interpreted the Bible only "for confirmation (of his own ideas) but not for correction and hardly for extension of his view" (p. 173). There is much to admire and emulate in Barlage's indefatigable willingness to listen to Akhilananda; one only regrets that most of us who engage in dialogue with Hindus fail to do likewise. Yet one cannot help but feel that the deceased swami should have been more attentive to his audience and less certain that historic Christianity was thoroughly misguided.

What then does Barlage propose that we say to our partners-in-dialogue who think along the same line? He first urges us to accept the swami's "out-stretched hand" on the basis of what he terms mankind's "unthematic" experience of God. He means that our thematization of spiritual experiences is subordinate to their onset. Hindus and Christians, he says, encounter the same Being in a raw, subjective experience, but problems arise when we begin to thematize those moments and construct theological systems upon them. But to distinguish between thematic and unthematic God-experience is surely problematic. It would imply, for example, that Ramakrishna had no heritage as a Hindu prior to his preternatural experiences. Making an ally of others' transcendent experiences has limited value in dialogue with Hindus, but hardly any use at all when falsely based on the idea that our understanding of what happens can be abstracted from the experiences, leaving nothing behind but the transcendence itself.

Barlage's transition to the next step in his scenario for an ideal dialogue introduces doctrines upon which Christians have always relied for stressing the uniqueness of the Gospel over against the Herculean attempts by which Hindus strive to achieve their enlightenment. By means of a series of propositions notable mostly for standing in stark antithesis to the doctrines of Akhilananda's simplified Advaita, Barlage asserts that the true thematization of our God-experience is not one that posits a purely abstract plenitude of being, but rather one that finds this-worldly spiritual and moral renewal through God's grace. Making one's emotions "integrated," the will "one-pointed," and the mind "unified" does not insure renewal, the sole

guarantee of which is that Christ, as *avatāra* in the singular, raises us beyond our moral and metaphysical limitations. Jesus cannot be just a saviour, equal to others, but *the sōtēr*, a message which a host of earlier evangelists offered, who never knew how to distinguish between thematic and unthematic God-experiences. These are words, moreover, which Hindus are accustomed to hear and—sadly—often reject.

Barlage laments that Akhilananda “did not see the real point of Christian belief” (viz., that which was outlined above). Can it not be that the swami actually did understand the essence of our message and rejected it anyway? Are there not some who see yet do not believe? That this possibility appears not to have occurred to the author suggests to the present writer that Barlage has misconstrued what Indologists call Inclusivism with the European meaning of tolerance. The two are easily confused and a few clarifying remarks may be helpful.

Akhilananda wrote about Jesus Christ almost as much as about Ramakrishna. Given the customary silence of Hindus towards our Lord, these references make fascinating reading. Yet Barlage admits that the swami kept Jesus at arm’s length. Is not the “out-stretched hand,” then, a defensive rather than merely cordial gesture? An Advaitic Christ requires neither readjustment of perspective nor denial of cherished beliefs. What appears so appealingly like tolerance can in another light prove to be its opposite, even if quite benign in this case.

Historically, one sees that the Hindu *darśanas* often glossed over the real differences between themselves by claiming that each was a step down from, or step up to, itself. Likewise, Vaishnavas subordinate Shiva to Vishnu, and Shaivites follow suit. Nowadays some say that Ramakrishna and Christ are equal, with the proviso that the former is more so than the latter because of his superior insight into the unity of all religions. The modes of Inclusivism are diverse, but subordination, in hierarchical fashion, is always at its root. By turning Christ into a mouthpiece for propagating Advaitic ideas, Akhilananda follows the well-trod path of Inclusivism. Might it not be that the swami wrote affectionately about Jesus because he transformed his words so completely that they began to echo a master whom he loved even more, Akhilananda?

Moreover, one finds in the history of Hinduism’s inter-religious relations that competing salvation-theories are initially viewed with hostility, but subsequently assimilated once the threat they pose has diminished. The Buddha, now considered one of Vishnu’s ten “incarnations” was originally viewed by Hindus as a false *avatāra* whose mission was to propound a false religion (*mōhadharma*; vide *Viṣṇupurāna* 3.17.9-45 and 3.18.1-34). Only after Buddhism largely vanished from India, did its founder become a positive *avatāra*. Anti-Christian literature in early nineteenth century India viewed the missionary God with the same jaundiced eye. Such notions as these surely seem ludicrous to present day Hindus. But it is a suggestion

worth pondering that this transition to a more sedate state of inter-religious affairs has occurred because India realizes that Christianity is not the fearsomely overwhelming juggernaut that it once appeared to be. Tolerance is a privilege that Hindus now enjoy because they are no longer seriously endangered by alien religions.

Both the longstanding Hindu proclivity to Inclusivism and the historical reality of India for the last half-century, in which the *Sanātana Dharma* has survived hale and hearty, make Akhilananda's attitude to Christ both possible and comprehensible, without being equated with tolerance.

Barlage stands by his subject steadfastly, yet signs of embarrassment occasionally emerge when he apologizes for Akhilananda's smugly confident Advaitic reformulations of prominent biblical passages. One must never cease to listen to a man whose faith differs from our own, but to what extent should we apologize for their haughtiness just because we Christians, too, have had, and persist in having a bad record where pride is concerned? And in lamenting that Akhilananda did not understand our message, does one not deny that honest, intellectual opposition to Christ may sometimes occur—that men may choose another way precisely because they do comprehend our message and nevertheless reject it?

These criticisms notwithstanding, *Christ, Saviour of Mankind* remains an oddly alluring book, challenging in its call to never lose one's patience when listening even to those who are not equally concerned with paying heed to us.

RICHARD FOX YOUNG
Tokyo

The Book of Common Order (1979). St Andrew's Press, Edinburgh, 1979. Pp. xvi+182. Price £ 3.50.

This book is a revision of the Book of Common Order 1940, carried out by the Committee on Public Worship and Aid to Devotion of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. As might be expected the revision has taken a number of years to complete. Some of the texts were published from time to time for comment and criticism by those who used the revised services. This revision therefore has been in the light of experience.

It is interesting to compare the 1940 and 1979 books. There are three major differences which are to be found in most revisions which the various Churches have undertaken in the last twenty five years or so.

First, there are fresh theological and liturgical insights and an ecumenical awareness. Modern liturgies of all Churches owe much to one another. We study and learn together and borrow from one another. This book is no exception. It acknowledges material from the Joint Liturgical Group, the Church of South India, Alternative

Series 2 and 3 of the Church of England and other common sources to which we are all indebted. Yet it preserves the distinctive cultural background and ethos of the Church of Scotland. Extracts of Scripture are taken from AV, RSV, NEB and JB.

Second, in common with all Churches revising their order of worship the Church of Scotland had to face the challenge of the language to be used, traditional language or the language of today. The Church of Scotland has answered that challenge by providing both forms in all but one of the acts of worship contained in the book. Its reasoning for this is well worth quoting in full. They say in the Introduction: "It is clear that the language of today must be pressed into the service of the Church not just because it is modern but because it has a contribution to make to the worship and mission of the Church. It is equally clear, however, that traditional prayer language must be used and developed in the service of the Church, not just because it is traditional, hallowed by usage centuries-long, but because it has a contribution to make to the worship and mission of our Church, because an art form of rare quality and part of our culture." A wise approach to a thorny problem.

The provision of modern and traditional forms of each service enlarges the size of the book but this book is limited in scope. It contains The Divine Service (four Orders of Holy Communion), Christian Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Admission to the Lord's Supper), Marriage, Funeral Service, Ordination of Elders, Lectionary, Collects, Proper Prefaces. Other material will be in a companion volume not yet published and will be of a less permanent nature than the revised Book of Common Order. It is made clear, however, that any liturgical material in the Church of Scotland is not in a definitive, rigid form but rather in the form of model. "The search for language and for forms that are appropriate at once to worshippers and to Christ, the Lord of the Church in the worshippers' midst, must go on tirelessly and without intermission." Revision is no once and for all affair but a continuing process.

The third new feature in this 1979 revision is that the orders for the celebration of Holy Communion stand first and provision for Morning Service when Holy Communion is not celebrated follows. The revisers consider this important and explain why this has been done. "By this arrangement the Committee gives clear expression again to the normative character of the service of word and sacrament which character was undoubtedly recognised by the Reformers as it has been down the centuries by the universal Church." In this book the one form for Morning Service when Holy Communion is not celebrated is also on the eucharistic pattern and the revisers give the reason:

Church of Scotland worship as it has developed since the Reformation has evinced a profound appreciation of the word of God, and in the reading and preaching and hearing of that word Scotland has had rich experience of the Holy Spirit. The Committee believes that experience is richest where

worship is ordered according to the eucharistic pattern, that is to say where the reading and preaching of the word lead to prayers of thanksgiving and intercession and all the fullness of eucharistic devotion save the partaking of bread and wine. This was the earlier tradition of the Reformed Church in Scotland and it is the order which the Committee believes best reflects the logic of the gospel.

It isn't made clear how there can be *the fullness of eucharistic devotion* without partaking of the sacrament. Surely something essential is missing? Also is the eucharistic pattern, the eucharistic sequence and movement, culminating in the taking, blessing, breaking and sharing of the bread and wine the best pattern for "a Morning Service when Holy Communion is not celebrated"? It would be a help if this could be spelt out and explained.

In the companion volume there are to be sixteen sets of prayers for morning worship, not based on the eucharistic pattern. There will also be other liturgical material relating to the Christian Year.

This Book of Common Order is a very careful bit of work, a valuable contribution to modern liturgy, very well produced and should be a real aid to worship. We look forward to the publication of the companion volume.

†CHRISTOPHER ROBINSON

Brotherhood of the Ascended Christ, Delhi

God's New Society: by John R. W. Stott. Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 1979. Pp. 291. Price £ 3.50.

This is the fourth volume by the author in "The Bible Speaks Today" series, and readers who appreciated his previous expositions of the Sermon on the Mount, Galatians and 2 Timothy will not be disappointed with this latest work on the message of Ephesians.

After a section on the opening of the epistle and introductory matters, its message is expounded in thirteen sections arranged under four headings: "new life," "new society," "new standards," and "new relationships." The author has an enviable gift for lucid and orderly exposition and application. Preachers will be glad to find each unit of thought, whether it be a paragraph, a sentence, or a single word, clearly explained, emphasised, and finally summarised. Interpretations with which the author fundamentally disagrees are firmly, generally briefly, and always courteously and irenically, refuted. Where alternative understandings of the text are equally possible on exegetical and theological grounds, the reader is presented with the options and left to make up his own mind.

When we turn from consideration of style and presentation to content, we find that the author has the following matters in mind. He is concerned to show that Ephesians teaches that Christians who claim to be faithful to its message must have a high but realistic doctrine of the Church, an appreciation of the intellectual element of

Christianity, a trinitarian theology, and an exegetically and experientially adequate doctrine of the Holy Spirit. It is also necessary to see the vital connection between doctrine and ethics.

The treatment of the latter part of the epistle gives sustained and judicious attention to four topics: relationships between husbands and wives (love and submission is *very* different from rule and obedience), obligations of children to their parents (normally to obey, always to honour), the question of slavery (Christian principles and reasons why attempts at wholesale abolition were both impractical and inappropriate *originally*), and finally the "principalities and powers." It is argued that to identify them with social and other structures, as is the contemporary trend, is both theologically and practically unsound. But this plea to recognise the independent reality of the demonic powers (whilst acknowledging that they use structures) is complemented by a detailed consideration of the superior reality of the spiritual resources available to the believer, the "armour of God" (Ephesians 6: 13-20).

It is generally unwise to criticise books for what they omit rather than for what they contain, and that is especially true of this one whose length has dictated a price that few students in India can afford (could not an Asian edition be produced more cheaply, and with a binding that would survive the climate?), but all the same, two related matters seem worthy of comment.

It is a shame that in the five years of studying this epistle and expounding it to audiences all over the world, from America to India, the author has apparently noted so few examples of contextual application. It may well be that discussions and debates following his expositions were devoted to such questions, but the reader of the present work has few glimpses of them. The only one that springs to mind concerns application of the injunction to show obedience to parents (Ephesians 6: 1-3), about which the author observes that it must be remembered that different cultures have different understandings of the attainment of adulthood and independence (p. 243). Immediately following this, on the question of the reciprocal duties of parents towards their children, we have one of the few extended illustrations in the book taken from the non-biblical world, and the only quotation from a modern novel—in fact, a very apposite and memorable one (p. 247).

It may well be argued that limitation of illustrations to the biblical world makes a book like this universally useful, as relevant in the East as in the West. But there is also a strong case for maintaining that a solid foundation in thorough exegesis and faithful general application, although essential, is not enough. It is right to stress, as the author does, the intellectual element of Christian belief, which helps guard against distortion of doctrine and life by emotional, social, or other factors. It is also right to go on to link intellectual and experiential knowledge, but there is one other essential quality that is not mentioned here: imagination

Imagination has a vital place both in the stimulation of the love which applies faith (the love which makes real the principles given in Ephesians 4 and 5), and in the stimulation of the preacher to apply these principles in a way which will be real to his hearers. A prime example of a contemporary author who knows this is Kosuke Koyama. As was noted in a recent review of his *Three Mile an Hour God* (*IJI* vol. 29, no. 1, pp. 64-65), he seems to be able to combine fidelity to the biblical revelation with a vivid pictorial imagination and sensitivity to illuminating illustrations from everyday life. Although these belong to specific cultures, their very particularity gives them a universality through the way they bypass a reader's conventional stock of rather unfocused and stale images and shock him into new ways of thinking.

Is it possible for one author to learn from the other? Or should we conclude that it is asking too much for masters of different approaches to come together? If the latter is the case, then perhaps the conclusion to be drawn is that readers should obtain books by both and be grateful for what each contributes.

PHILIP N. HILLYER
Bishop's College, Calcutta

Science and Religion in India: by David L. Gosling. C.L.S., Madras, 1976. Pp. 176. Price Rs 12.50.

This two-part study is based on a thesis, a fact which is obvious from poor editing which has not removed at least nine references to appendices not included in the book. The reference (p. 151) to p. 243, should presumably be to p. 98 of the present volume. Truncation of the original has also resulted in 39 statistical tables being scattered through the book with no clue to their location, and the point of printing the field study questionnaire as an appendix is rather lost, as the lack of a detailed contents list or index makes it impossible to find out where the individual questions are discussed. However, these irritations apart, the argument of the book is easy to follow, especially in the first, historical, half. An appreciation of the field study in the second half does not depend on an understanding of the statistical tables.

Gosling investigated the interaction between the scientific and religious beliefs of 800 young scientists at five major institutions. Research, based on a questionnaire and interviews, seemed to confirm the third of the original hypotheses that "the degree of perceived conflict between science and religion has an inverse correlation with the importance attached to religion" (p. 81), and to suggest that the other two be reformulated. The first might become: "The study of science can either strengthen or reduce the religious beliefs of individual scientists, but the overall tendency is to diminish them"; and the

second, that "the greater the extent of scientific commitment on the part of scientists the greater the felt need on their part to relate their scientific and religious beliefs" (p. 154).

For, contrary to popular belief, between 60 per cent and 90 per cent of the students asked claimed *not* to keep their science and their religion in separate water-tight compartments (p. 156). They saw a need to relate them, but it seems that in practice the task was not pursued with much rigour, for "there was a tendency to rationalise apparent conflict between the two by resorting to either religious or scientific authorities!" (p. 173). In addition, conflict often sprang from a superficial "scientism" rather than from accurate knowledge of science.

Some conflicts, like those about Darwinism and the scientific-historical approach to Scripture, had roots in the nineteenth century, but unease about the traditional Hindu understanding of reincarnation was new. Yet neither the nineteenth nor the twentieth centuries seem to have made the relationship between astrology and astronomy or the other sciences a controversial matter. Is this just an example of compartmentalised thinking, or is it, as Gosling suggests, something to do with an implicit belief in the underlying unity and interrelation of all things? This, he claims (p. 3), "has always been the most distinctive feature of Indian science aform of integral insight, a kind of intuitive ability to hold together ideas which have elsewhere remained unrelated."

This holistic intuitive approach is mentioned several times in the first part of the book. After an account of the introduction of western science to India, the response of two groups of people, the scientists and the Hindu Reformers, is outlined. The scientists gravitated towards theory and practice congenial to Hindu belief, whilst the Reformers divided between capitulation, reaction and adaptation to new scientific thought. Gosling discusses representatives of each position, mentioning especially the intuitive and boundary-crossing outlook of the famous scientist J.C. Bose, and S. Radhakrishnan's adaptation of Hinduism for the twentieth century, following the example of Vivekananda and Aurobindo. However, Radhakrishnan's work in general, and his thinking about intuition in particular, seemed to be little known amongst today's scientists, perhaps because the examples illustrating his arguments have become outdated.

From a theological point of view three things stand out from this book. The first is the complex development of the encounter between western science and Hindu faith, far different from Alexander Duff's hope that the former would eventually destroy the latter. The second is the fortunes of a Hindu version of the "God of the gaps" approach, in which imaginative adaptations to contemporary scientific thought were later proved to be superficial and out of date. The third is that both the historical survey and the field study demonstrate that the relationship between an individual's explicit and implicit religious

and scientific beliefs is complex, if not apparently inconsistent to an observer. This does raise questions about the validity of a statistical approach to the subject, but to be fair to this author, he makes no claims to spurious precision and his conclusions are modest.

All in all, apart from the editorial blemishes, a well-written and interesting study.

PHILIP N. HILLYER

The Mind of the Master: by Robert E. Coleman. Fleming H. Revell Company, Old Tapan, New Jersey, 1977. Pp. 128. Price \$ 5.95.

Publishing of Christian literature is something of a puzzle. So many books are published that it is not very easy to find out what is trivial and transient and what is of lasting value. It is difficult to make up one's mind regarding the value of this book. As far as academic and intelligent study is concerned this book is trivial, but perhaps a Sunday School teacher will find it helpful for his class.

The author, R.E. Coleman who comes from an Evangelical background, has based his thinking only on the texts and disregards all the critical studies done in the New Testament although he makes passing references to them. His main intention has been to focus on some aspects of Christ's interior life. He is not concerned with a study of the methods of the ministry of Jesus but gives more importance to a study of Jesus' thoughts. The main question that he has tried to answer is, "What is that inner resource which gave Christ the direction and strength for his redeeming work among us?" To do this he accepts the Gospels as inerrant portrayals of the life of Christ. He has tried to concentrate on six areas of the Master's thought, which according to him point to a basic truth in which He disciples us. According to the author, there are six major areas that formed the inward source of His power: His unity with the Father and the Holy Spirit, His prayer life, His knowledge of the scriptures, His grasp on God's plan for dealing with mankind, His assurance concerning His own role within that plan and His vision of coming glory.

In all these studies he stresses that Jesus was guided by the Spirit of God and insisted that His disciples tarry until the promise of the Holy Spirit became an experience. Living in the fulness of the Holy Spirit is as much the privilege of Christ's followers today as of those first disciples who tarried in the upper room. Christ's life of prayer was displayed in crucial moments in His redemptive mission—His baptism, calling of the twelve, confession, transfiguration, crucifixion were occasions which were achieved through prayer. This also can be our experience in the midst of our problems. Jesus believed in the Scripture which He was fulfilling. We will also become like Him and believe Him as the living Word of God, and will want to share

His life with others. His understanding of the Gospel is the Word of God which spoke to the real need of the world. He saw the human tragedy—that man has become a prodigal with a deceitful heart and Satanic deception—and wanted men to heed to God's call before the day of opportunity is gone: that salvation is a free gift of God received by faith in Christ alone. Of this we may be assured: however great the strength of sin, the redeeming power of God is greater. Jesus realised that to make this Gospel a reality He must die—He lived under this mandate of God. At this point He emptied Himself, took the role of a servant and ultimately triumphed for this cause through His resurrection.

The book is simple and easy to read with simple and straightforward discussions and in many points quite convincing. Although this cannot be appreciated by people who are academic and critical, yet it can be recommended to Sunday School teachers and lay leaders to understand some aspects of the life of Christ as we find them in the texts of the New Testament.

Although this book cannot be considered a systematic study of the life of Christ, yet it is challenging and helpful for further reading of the subject with the help of the books mentioned in the footnotes. The price is quite expensive for the average Indian Christian reader.

A. BEHERA

Eastern Theological College, Jorhat

The Sermon on the Mount, The Lord's Prayer and the Problem of the Historical Jesus: by Joachim Jeremias. Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 1976. Pp. 146. Price Rs 5.00.

Theological Publications in India is to be congratulated on making available at a reasonable price this book of Professor Joachim Jeremias, with an introduction by John Reumann. With his characteristic penetration, Professor Jeremias sums up the teaching of Jesus on the Mount under the six antitheses: "You have heard but I say unto you." No doubt these six antitheses point to the matter of ethical perfectionism. And Professor Jeremias also highlights the other point that a Christian should know this Sermon on the Mount by heart word for word, but that he should be occupied with it daily as the daily bread of the soul, as Jesus' teaching on the Mount is regarded as the "New Torah" for the Christian Church. And yet Jeremias observes that "every legalistic understanding of the Sermon puts Jesus within the realm of late Judaism" (p. 24).

With the support of the necessary weight of scientific argument Professor Jeremias concludes: "The Gentile-Christian Church has handed down the Lord's Prayer without change, whereas the Jewish Christian Church, which lived in a rich liturgical tradition..., has enriched the Lord's Prayer liturgically" (p. 76). He concludes that

the first "we petition" is older in its Matthaean form ("Give us this day our bread for the morrow") than in its Lukan form ("Give us each day our bread for the morrow") (p. 77). And also, as for the matter of a final variation in wording between "as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matthew) and "for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us" (Luke), Jeremias clarifies that as Matthew has the more difficult form it must be regarded as the more original (p. 78). Jeremias underlines the fact that "the Lord's Prayer is the clearest and, in spite of its terseness, the richest summary of Jesus' proclamation which we possess" (p. 80).

As one of the exponents of the New Quest for the Historical Jesus, Jeremias holds the position that "a quest back through the kerygma will reveal a Jesus behind who, particularly in his sayings, is consistent with...the church's proclamation" (p. 114). The problem of the Historical Jesus has been discussed at length by Professor Jeremias and he comes to the conclusion that "it is not as though everything in the gospels is coloured and shaped by the faith of the church and the evangelists...only occasionally do we meet with traces here and there of Christological overlay..." (p. 129). As John Reumann claims, Professor Jeremias leads us into this debate in a lucid, judicious way.

This book has come to us in clear print. There are, however, two places where the printers' devil has crept in: "aware" (p. 115) where the letter "a" is missing and "Revelations" (p. 126) where the plural is unnecessary. The appearance of the book is obviously very heartening and salutary as it also contains very valuable and comprehensive lists of books from Jeremias' own pen and works by other scholars for further reading. I have no doubt that anyone who reads this book will enrich his biblical knowledge and his knowledge of recent scholarship concerning the three important subjects the book contains.

K. DAVID

Andhra Christian Theological College, Secunderabad

The Homosexual Way—a Christian Option?: by David Field. Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 1979. Pp. 48. Price 70p.

"No"—but this firm answer is given with a clarity and a compassion that will dispel much ignorance and fear about a very common pastoral problem. And about time too, for it is only in the last few years, as this booklet's notes and brief bibliography indicate, that sustained theological attention has been given to the probability that "a minister preaching to a congregation of two hundred should *expect* nine or ten people to have a homosexual orientation" (p. 8).

David Field does not say anything new, and indeed the content, except on the question of an indivisible connection between the re-

lational and procreational purposes of sex (p. 26), is almost identical to C. H. Peschke's *Christian Ethics* (volume 2, pp. 431-9).¹ But whilst the latter reads rather like a dusty textbook, Field writes in a much more direct and personal way, and adds at the end five pages of practical advice for the Christian seeking help.

This booklet, which is a timely addition to the Arena series on contemporary issues, began life as a Grove Booklet: one of a family of nearly 150 concise studies on ethics, ministry, worship and liturgy written from pastoral and teaching experience which deserve to be widely known. Details from Grove Books, Bramcote, Notts NG9 3DS, U.K.

PHILIP N. HILLYER

Pocket Guide to the New Testament: by Francis Foulkes, 1978.
Pp. 160. Price £ 1.25.

Pocket Guide to Christian Beliefs: by I. Howard Marshall, 1978.
Pp. 144. Price £ 1.25.

About People: by Derek Williams, 1977, Pp. 151. Price £ 1.30.

The Fight: by John White, 1977, Pp. 230. Price £ 1.20.

All published by Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester.

Francis Foulkes' *Pocket Guide to the New Testament* is a very positive and helpful introduction to each book with questions at the end of each section inviting the reader to go deeper. Theological students will have to be familiar with more than Morris, Nixon, Tasker, Temple and Westcott on John, but others who need just a little more than the *Good News Bible* prefaces offer will find this guide very useful.

Equally to be recommended is the *Pocket Guide to Christian Beliefs*. Professor Marshall wears his learning very lightly and suggests that his guide is only a preparation for tackling something more solid like D. F. Wright's thorough revision of T. C. Hammond's classic *In Understanding be Men* (Inter-Varsity Press, 1968, current price £ 2.75). Perhaps it is for this reason that Marshall deals almost exclusively with biblical teaching and only hints at later twists and turns in Christian thought?

It is to be hoped that Indian editions of both these guides will appear soon as their price has now crept up to the equivalent of nearly Rs 40. The other two books are unlikely to find such a ready market as they are written for very particular audiences.

¹ See the review in *Indian Journal of Theology*, Volume 29, April-June 1980, pp. 111-14.

About People is an attempt at presenting the doctrine of man to students familiar with quotations from modern science, philosophy, and literature. It is written in an engagingly light style, as can be seen from such headings as "God, genes and Genesis" and "People, plastic and potatoes," which do however lead eventually to Bible study. The numerous illustrations would need adapting, but they do kindle the imagination, as does the directness of Derek Williams' language which never lapses into lazy religious clichés.

Illustrations also abound in *The Fight*, but somehow this guide to Christian living for the new (teenage?) believer fails to communicate, at least to this reviewer, whose appreciation of much good sense on such topics as prayer, guidance or personal relationships was blunted by the first person singular and insistently didactic approach, which presumably stems from the book's transatlantic origin.

PHILIP N. HILLYER

Christian Indians and Indian Nationalism, 1885-1950: An Interpretation in Historical and Theological Perspectives: by George Thomas. Verlag Peter D. Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 1979. Pp. 271. N.p.

So accustomed are we to the usual order of familiar adjective-noun collocations, e.g., "Indian Christian," that a shift of ideological emphasis can be suggested simply by reversing them, as in "Christian Indian." Naturally, the noun carries greater weight than the adjective, and whether we assign primary significance to "Christian" or "Indian" depends upon the context in which we apply them. George Thomas, author of the monograph presently under review, uses "Christian Indian" in order to signify deliberately people who form part of the national community and yet have a separate Christian identity (p. 12). Within the confines of his research, which attempts to assess how and to what extent Christian Indians participated in and influenced the Indian independence movement, he is thoroughly justified in departing from normal parlance. However, having done so, he leaves open the possibility that Christian Indians to whom he draws our attention were Christians only incidentally, and that they may not have contributed to the independence process anything that could be differentiated from what their Hindu and Muslim compatriots were advocating. Whether or not Thomas closes this question to our satisfaction is the basis upon which we should judge his work.

The author cogently argues that Christian Indians did not lag behind others in fostering legitimate nationalistic aspirations; that in fact they generally counteracted the fissiparous communalism to which the majority and other minority communities were all too often

susceptible; that they actually set precedents for the independence movement by struggling for autonomy from western missionary societies and ecclesiastical bodies at a time—beginning in mid-nineteenth century—when others seem to have been basking under rather than protesting against British rule; and that, in short, Christian Indians have had an impact upon Indian nationalism, independence and nation-building far in excess of their numbers. This is a heritage of which the author makes us justly proud, although, in the course of charting the abortive birth of the so-called National Church, the rise of the Christo-Samaj, the transition of the National Missionary Council to the National Council of Churches and other high points of Christian Indian activity, he is too clear-sighted to overlook the nadir of Christian communalism, which in its most detrimental form was expressed by agitation for separate electorates prior to the second war years.

Occidental readers, already sensitive to the mistakes of their missionary predecessors, will find little in Thomas' book to comfort them. A stringent test is applied to all and sundry who were related to the Indian Church and missions: anything less than total commitment to full and immediate independence is branded "missionary imperialism," and only a man such as C. F. Andrews can pass through unscathed. The point may be historically creditable, but belabouring it for more than it is worth surely impedes progress toward the rapprochement that is now so eagerly anticipated by younger generations of western missionaries.

Thomas' scope is truly encyclopaedic, and this reader has greatly benefited from it. Hardly a single facet of Christian Indian independence-related endeavours is left untouched, though on occasion more data and analysis would have been appreciated. A question applicable to the monograph as a whole is whether or not it could have avoided becoming a kind of numerical summary of the boards and committees that Christian Indians served on, the declarations they issued, and the demonstrations they joined or even led, and instead have elucidated more insightfully the biblical theology that compelled them to act. Motivated they clearly were, but why is still somewhat uncertain. They stood more consistently than others for equality and national solidarity, but Thomas has done little to prove that this stance was due to Christianity itself rather than to western democratic principles in general. Perhaps this limitation is imposed by the sources—chiefly journalistic materials, newspapers and so forth, which relate political decisions to the public usually without elaborating the process of religious reasoning by which they were reached—that the author had at his disposal. We look forward to future articles in which Thomas will inform us about how nationalism and independence were perceived by Christian Indians in a way that specifically reflects their Christian identity. It is possible but unlikely that their faith was incidental to them in their capacity as patriots; we hope for additional evidence that it was not so.

As is inevitable in all works of such broad scope, the author is only as dependable as his sources. Within his selected time-frame, 1885-1950, Thomas is on certain ground, utilizing his primary materials carefully. He is less reliable at the beginning when, in the course of sketching the origins of Indian nationalism and the search for a new Indian cultural and spiritual identity, he repeatedly quotes from David Kopf's *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance* (Berkeley 1969), a usually accurate book but flawed in some respects. One of these flaws is attributing to Rām Rām Bāsu, a sometime amanuensis of William Carey, a tract (*Jñānodaya*) purported to "endow the Brahmā of the Vedas with the attributes of Jehovah," which Thomas, following Kopf, alleges to have marked the "beginning of the modern affirmation of the monotheistic tradition in Hinduism" (p. 28). The present writer is fortunate to have in his possession a copy of the Baptist Missionary Society Archive's original of Carey's official translation of *Jñānodaya*. The tract berates brahminical prerogatives but says nothing whatsoever about Brahmā. Even if true, this would only be further evidence that neo-Hinduism's links with traditional Indian thought are extremely tenuous. This mistake is symptomatic of the author's rather dissatisfying understanding of neo-Hinduism as a reinterpretation of, rather than a break with, the past. In this connection, readers had better refer to P. Hacker's "Der Dharma-begriff des Neuhinduismus" (*Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft*, 1958:1-15), which is still the best treatment of the subject.

Apart from these few errors of fact and a certain limited success in accounting theologically for the involvement of Christian Indians in the independence struggle, Thomas furnishes us with useful information professionally assembled and creditably presented.

RICHARD FOX YOUNG

Atheism and Liberation: by Antonio Perez-Esclarin (trans. John Drury). SCM Press, London, 1978. Pp. 199. Price £ 3.95.

Antonio Perez-Esclarin is a Venezuelan Jesuit, who taught for several years as a professor in Caracas and has now left the academic life to work with the poor and oppressed. In this book, the author argues very clearly and distinctly that an authentic atheism can purify Christianity from its "pallid and ineffective" state, by demanding that faith should cease to be a substitute for courage or commitment to change the inhuman world. He claims that God is with those committed to justice, and he believes that "atheists and Christians are on the side of authentic religion and God, if they are committed to the cause of justice and love in the world."

To substantiate his views, Perez-Esclarin analyzes the thought and writings of Nietzsche, Feuerbach, Freud, Bertrand Russell, Marx,

Sartre and Camus, and shows how atheism is not something to be feared but even an "ally for faith." He thinks that the authentic Christian faith in its practice is a revolutionary and even a subversive force against a world of inhumanity and oppression, but has lost its creative vitality of love and brotherhood by the fact that the Christian civilization and culture managed to allow the rise of capitalism and then came to safeguard the interest of that system, while injustice, oppression and manipulation are the most striking features of that system. Surely, one can question Perez-Esclarin's views on the Christian influence in the formation of capitalism and its qualities.

The book is also a critique of modern culture as the product of the capitalistic mode of production with its concomitant relationship to art, literature, science, philosophy, theology and social behaviour-patterns of our modern times, and points out their humanizing and dehumanizing functions. This book is written as part of a dialogue with humanistic atheists, and at the same time one can see a passionate call of the author for commitment. Every idea is "hollow" and valueless if it is not enfolded in real life towards a humane society; this is the essential message the author wants to convey to the world.

JOHN ROMUS

Morning Star College, Barrackpore

Frontiers of Theology in Latin America: ed. by Rosino Gibellini. SCM Press, London, 1979. Pp. xii+321. Price £ 5.50.

Liberation theology is a highly diversified series of theological reflections given by men who have committed their ministries to the process of liberation. Over the last decade, there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of "liberation theology," i.e., a theology which arises out of the encounter of believers with those who are forced to live in a dehumanized world. The theology of liberation is a theology of salvation in the light of concrete historical and political conditions of the present. Gustavo Gutierrez points out that the mediating factors of presentday history and politics, appraised and valued in their own right, change our attitude to and the way we live the mystery hidden from eternity and now revealed; the mystery of our heavenly Father's love, of human brotherhood, and salvation.

Theological reflections worked out in the perspective of liberation, therefore, have recourse to human sciences as well as philosophy, and above all, it gives a special attitude and value to historical praxis from the point of view of Jesus of Nazareth—the crucified and the risen one of God. All this implies a tremendous historical reprocessing of our faith-commitment and attitude as Christians. Like every brand of theology, liberation theology is the embodiment of a particular process of theological re-awakening and commitment to humanity in a particular historical context.

The personal involvement in the process of liberation constitutes a profound and decisive spiritual experience at the very heart of active political commitment. It is a call to live one's experience of God in Jesus Christ within different socio-cultural categories. The theological reflections of Latin America, therefore, operate as a mediator between a new way of living the faith and communication of that experience.

Gibellini points out that this new brand of theology is not just a "Latin American" theology, as if European theology were "the only theology of the universal church." He further stresses the fact that the new theological development in Latin America is to be a summons and a challenge to the conscience of all Christians. It is to be a prophetic witness offered to the universal Church.

In view of all these considerations, in the present book Gibellini seeks to provide an articulate, up-to-date, and representative sample for this theological trend in the Church and its main spokesmen. As Gibellini mentions in the Preface, this book could be treated as an anthology of thirteen articles by thirteen different Latin American theologians. The 13 articles could be divided up into 6 sections. The first section contains the article by Gustavo Gutierrez which provides an overall introduction to the new type of theology. In the second section, Raul Vidales, Joseph Comblin and Luis Valle deal with a new theological methodology. The third section presents articles by Leonardo Boff and Hugo Assmann on the formulation of Christology within the framework of liberation theology. In the fourth and fifth sections, Ronaldo Munoz and Segundo Galilea give critical reflections on the Church, pastoral activity and spirituality. The sixth section contains articles by Enrique Dussel on a critique on historical and philosophical background to faith-propositions; Juan Carlos Scannone on popular culture as the hermeneutic locale for any liberation project; Juan Luis Segundo on the need to make an option between the capitalistic and socialistic forms of society; Jose Miguez Bonino on liberation theology and Protestant theology; and Ruben Alves on a theological autobiography centered around the theology of captivity. The book provides also two appendices of biographical and bibliographical notes on each contributor.

JOHN ROMUS

Christian Hope and the Future of Man: by Stephen H. Travis.
Inter-Varsity Press, 1980. Pp. 143. Price £ 2.85.

The book under review is one of the series in "issues in contemporary theology." The author is a lecturer in New Testament at Nottingham and the topic he has selected for study is of considerable interest in the post-war world, particularly in Europe.

The title indicates the subject matter. Many books on eschatology, apocalyptic, parousia, resurrection, immortality, judgement and the

hope of man have been surveyed with a critical mind, especially in the light of scholarship which the author has gained as a student of the New Testament. His personal conviction is remarkably felt in this critical study. He does not leave the reader without mentioning what he thinks right in the light of his study of the New Testament.

The book is divided into seven chapters. In all these the author shows his grasp of current literature on this topic. He is very open and frank in evaluation and does not hesitate to make his dissenting voice heard concerning a particular viewpoint (cf. pp. 49, 58, 94, 122). On such occasions he depends on his understanding of the New Testament. One does not forget the fact that the authors about whom he makes the critical comments also have the freedom to disagree with his understanding and interpretation of the New Testament.

According to the author, "the different aspects of eschatology are related to each other because they are all related to Christ" (p. 24). He finds useful doctrines in the apocalyptic literature. It was these writers who brought forth some of the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith, such as resurrection and the judgement after death (p. 40).

The author concludes by challenging those who have only "other-worldly hopes." They fail to do justice to the fact that the God of hope is the creator of this world and has taken action in it: the kingdom of God has been inaugurated by Jesus Christ. Those who have "only worldly hopes" make a mockery of all those who in past generations have hoped and worked for the transformation of this world but have failed to see it; and such a hope is unworthy of the God who was revealed in Christ and in His resurrection (p. 138).

The language is simple and lucid and one would gladly recommend it to those who are concerned about the hope and future of mankind, particularly to students of theology and pastors as a useful guide on matters of eschatology.

K. V. MATHEW

Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam