

Book Reviews

The Doctrine of the Trinity: by Rev. Peter May, M.A. (The Christian Students' Library No. 7, C.L.S., Post Box 501, Madras 3. Re.1-2-0.)

'This book is written in the conviction that the doctrine of the Trinity is *the* supreme Christian doctrine.' Indeed there is no doubt that this contribution to the Christian Students' Library Series must be considered as essential reading for students, and I am delighted to see that it has been arranged in such an attractive and helpful style. We see the wealth of a teacher's experience in the way he has presented his subject; that is, in the treatment of his subject from the Biblical and theological aspects, set in the life and worship of the Church, with some consideration of the evangelistic task in Modern India. But also in the manner of his writing where he expresses some difficult ideas with remarkable clarity and understanding, and helps the student by dividing up his work into sections that can hardly be said to strain or over-tax one's concentration. I must also mention that footnotes are reduced to an absolute minimum, and the directions for further reading are very liberally and helpfully introduced. It is quite obvious that in this treatment of the subject in a matter of 80 pages, it is not possible to consider all the arguments, and it is not necessary. But I do feel, reading through the suggestions for further reading, that the writer has given every help for the student to pursue the subject further, and become familiar with the views of modern writers.

On the section Trinitarian Theology I was rather interested to see how the writer would deal with the great controversies arising in the early Church over the Trinitarian formula 'Three Persons in One Substance'. I was somewhat relieved that he did not attempt it. Yet if the student would read something like the Right Rev. J. W. C. Wand's recent 'Four Great Heresies', he will find that the debate is not so dull and irrelevant to modern needs as he might imagine.

Calcutta

W. S. REDD

The Gospel according to St. Matthew: Introduction and Commentary: by J. R. Macphail. C.L.S., Post Box No. 501, Madras 3. Rs.4-12-0; Cloth, Rs.5-6-0.

The amount of painstaking scholarship that has been compressed into less than 300 pages in this book is amazing. Besides a detailed commentary on the text with a large number of longer notes, there are 'Essays' on such a variety of subjects as, e.g. The Geography of Palestine, the History and Literature of Israel, the Holy Spirit, Parables, the Son of Man, to mention only a few. The author says he has written especially for 'readers who are inclined to study the beginnings of Christianity thoroughly': but one cannot but wonder how many Bible students will have the earnestness and perseverance to work through this varied mass of material, and emerge with any clear idea of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world, to the confession of which the writer claims it to be his chief aim to lead them. It is indeed difficult to see the wood for the trees.

One has only praise for the excellent work of the Wesley Press in the printing and general set up of the book. But it is unfortunate that many

of the most important points are made in quotations from other writers, printed in small type, while large type is used for the author's notes on such lesser matters as the unnecessarily detailed description of synagogue services (p. 44) or of the dress of the Jews (p. 61).

The writer is so anxious to 'detect the underlying assumptions in his own mind, and to give the reader the means to judge for himself', that he appears to go out of his way to belittle or discount the traditional interpretations of the Church, though he is ready to give credence to an unsupported theory of Otto that our Lord expected his death to be by stoning, and even builds on it an untraditional interpretation of the symbolism of the institution of the Lord's Supper. Also a closer study of the O.T. quotations in St. Matthew in their original context might lead to a less disparaging conclusion than that 'Matthew's texts are interpreted literally with little regard for their context and original meaning'. The First Gospel has suffered already too much from this kind of criticism.

In spite of much that is of value in the notes and comments, one misses any sense of the value and importance of the Gospel as a whole—what has been called its 'massive unity'. This is obscured by the undue emphasis laid on the real or supposed 'peculiarities' of the evangelist. It may well be that Matthew arranged his material on the ministry of our Lord in five blocks in conscious imitation of the Pentateuch; but there is surely something wrong with an analysis of the Gospel which relegates the story of the Passion and Resurrection to the position of a mere 'Epilogue', and misses the point of 'God with us' at the beginning and 'Lo, I am with you always' at the end.

Behala, Calcutta

SISTER GERTRUDE, O.M.S.E.

The Protestant Bishop: The Life of Henry Compton, 1632–1713, Bishop of London: by Edward Carpenter. Longmans, Calcutta, pp. 398. 35s.

Canon Carpenter tells us that it was Professor Norman Sykes who suggested Bishop Compton to him as the subject of a biography. Prof. Sykes has done much to remind us of the solid achievements of the English episcopate. Too often English bishops of former centuries have been painted in too strong a colour, as either complete scoundrels or complete idlers. Bishop Compton has been the object of fairly sweeping denunciation.

Certainly his political activities were controversial. He was involved in political intrigue and even military manoeuvres. (He was the last English bishop to appear in arms.) It was he who virtually organized the removal of the Papist English King, James II, and in the course of negotiations laid himself open to charges of underhand dealings. He alone of the English bishops signed the invitation to the Dutch Protestant Prince William to come over and be King of England.

But this book gives a fuller and fairer picture of him than has yet been available. Without in anyway evading the problems raised in our minds by the above adventurings, Canon Carpenter shows that the Bishop was also a true father in God: at court, where he influenced the future Queen Anne, with great consequences for good; in his diocese, where he held regular conferences for the guidance and instruction of his clergy and people: in his pastoral oversight of the American plantations: and in his relations with the French Huguenot, Greek orthodox and other foreign churches, which looked to him as their adviser and protector in Britain. He was not only a protestant, watchful for abuses, but also a churchman, building up his flock.

The book contains several misprints: on p. 32, line 23, '2089' should read '20,089': on p. 50, line 33, the word 'his' is added in error: and on p. 323, footnote, Prof. Sykes' book on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is dated '1918' instead of '1948'.

Calcutta

A. C. M. HARGREAVES

Making Prayer Real: by Lynn James Radcliffe. Longmans, Green & Co.
18s. 6d.

I must begin this review by a confession. When I saw the title, I said to myself, "I know a great deal about prayer and do not need instruction about "making prayer real"; I had read most of the authorities mentioned in the book. But as I read *Making Prayer Real* I found I knew very little about prayer, and I have learnt a great deal from reading this book. It is one of the greatest books I have ever read. It is written in very simple language, but it sounds great depths, and points to great heights. I quote words from the preface which I found true as I read the book, "There are no shortcuts in prayer. Techniques in themselves are not enough. I have therefore endeavoured to outline as clearly as possible the various stages in the prayer process and the objectives of the great movements of the Spirit as we turn toward God. If we can be true to the spirit of these approaches we shall, each of us, gradually develop personal methods of praying that are most helpful to us as individuals."

The book falls into five parts: the first suggesting ways by which we can make our prayer life more real and effective; the second dealing with the answering, and the not answering, of prayers; the third with Spiritual Discipline which prayer requires; the fourth with meditation and contemplation and the fifth with the way of Oneness with God.

The last chapter in the fifth part requires very careful and prayerful reading, as it tells how our self-centred lives can be transformed into God-centred lives.

Coimbatore, S. India

BISHOP H. PAKENHAM-WALSH

Religion as Salvation: by Harris Franklin Rall. Longmans, Green & Co.,
London, 1956. 19s. 6d.

I do not think that the main title, 'Religion as Salvation', of the book is well-chosen. Is not religion a disputed, perhaps an uneasy term in these modern days? Again, *is* religion salvation? There are many religions from primitivism to polytheism—some identifying religion with nationalism, some with morality, some with philosophy, some with a state of agnosticism, some with a future hell and heaven, some with a way of life. Thus religion has a variety of forms. Which form does the author intend to describe as 'Salvation'? Even if he chooses Christianity to be the form, it has different expressions—some differing fundamentally from others. Which form of Christianity does he put down as salvation? Further, religion as salvation sounds somewhat as a finished product, not as life abundant and growing as the author tries to show in the course of the book. Finally a test question can be asked: Has the author been successful in interpreting religion in general or Christianity in particular as 'Salvation'? While the study is wide and penetrating, one is lost in the mass of details—the paraphernalia of an established religion—and gets the impression that salvation is still to be sought and *is not* the religion.

The subject-matter of the book is divided into three parts. Part one deals with Man, part two with Sin and part three with Salvation. The author traces the current conceptions of Man. It would certainly be helpful if mention were made of the dimension of man's existence neglected by these modern views. In discussing the origin and nature of Man, he touches the depth of the problem underlying man's creation: 'But to hold to a divine creation, whether of man or of the universe, does not necessarily mean a creation out of nothing at some one moment or period of time. God's work of creation is related to natural processes just as his work of revelation and redemption is related to man's nature and the movement of history. Nor can we return to the Biblical literalism which saw the first chapter of Genesis, not as a great hymn of faith in a creator God, but as a literal account of the method of creation' (p. 21). 'Again, 'The important matter for us is not when or under just what conditions man appeared