

methods of the *Groupe ment des Salles Familiales*, with its powerful and comprehensive organisation now covering almost the whole of France, will be read with very great interest. Père Pie Duployé, O.P., sums up the number with some brief but very sound reflections on the function of Catholic Action in the sphere of the cinema.

(CONTEMPORANEA will be resumed in October)

PENGUIN.

REVIEWS

RELIGION

HINDUISM OR CHRISTIANITY? A study in the distinctiveness of the Christian Message. By Sydney Cave. (Hodder and Stoughton; 6s.)

This small volume reproduces six lectures, given as the Haskell Lectures at Oberlin College by Professor Cave and intended, in the words of the author, to contrast the teaching of Hinduism and Christianity. Four subjects are treated successively—*Karman*, *Braham*, *bhaktî* and *dharma*—and to these are added one introductory and one concluding chapter.

In his representation of Hinduism Professor Cave, who himself spent eight—pre-war—years in Travancore, takes very great pains to be fair to it. Yet I cannot think that any Hindu would consider that he has altogether succeeded—nor can I. Take Cankara's realization that the reality of God's being (which we could call His aseity) is such that by comparison nothing else can be deemed truly real; and who, believing that only one can be real, God or world, with superb abandon proclaims that the world in that case must be an illusion: Professor Cave states the doctrine, but he does not, as does for instance Fr. G. Dandry, S.J.,* thrill to it. Or take that famous passage in the *Bhagavad Gîtâ* (II, 47—48):

'For the deed only strive thou,
not for the fruits thereof;
Let not the deed's fruit thy motive be
nor be attached to inactivity.
In success, in failure the same thou be:
cquanimity this *yoga* is called.'

* See his *Ontologie du Vedânta*; Paris, 1932.

Our author, who unfortunately does not quote this passage, refers to it thus: 'For this conception of selfless activity, the Christian message substitutes that of unselfish service.' Is that fair comment? Speaking for myself and knowing how this passage is set in the love of the Lord (which is the meaning of *bhakti*), this failure of responding to one of the sublimest passages in Paganism has frankly hurt even one who is not an Hindu.

The author, like so many Missionaries, reproaches Hinduism with calling God the Absolute and unknowable Brahman. But how can Hindus know God, Who has not specially revealed Himself to them? We know that the Absolute is the Triune God: but how should pre-Christians? With a religious insight, lacking in all other races, Hindus have felt the certainty that this Absolute God, Who in Himself must be unknowable, must needs concretize Himself in human form, to satisfy the deepest longing of the human heart: Him Whom the human intellect can only describe as the ineffable Brahman, must also be *Īvara*, our Lord, whom frail man can adore. They call Him *Kṛṣṇa*, *Rāma*, *Siva*: What sense is there in reproaching them that they do not understand that He is Christ—not a pious abstraction or fancy image, but a historical fact? It is much as if I could not wax enthusiastic over the exploits of discovery of the early Portuguese navigators and commented on Prince Henry in disparaging terms, because he did not use any steam or motor-driven vessels. All Hindus, *qua* Hindus, still live B.C.: it is thus that they, their religion and philosophy, must be approached to be understood; and only when one thus understands them, will one have a chance to be really fair to them.

So much for the Hinduism that Professor Cave wishes to contrast with Christianity. But what does he mean by Christianity? He says that 'it cannot be equated with the Christian Gospel,' that it 'partakes of the transiency and relativity of all human thought and organization' (p. 211). He refers in various places to 'the classic Christian faith,' which presumably is the one he holds himself. Whatever that may be, it is of course not the Catholic Faith, once for all delivered to the Church's guardianship. Far be it from me to reproach a Protestant divine for not being a Catholic (thus falling into the very pit which I have just pointed out to critics of Hinduism): but it is permissible to suggest that the presentation of even this 'classic Christianity' will not prove very convincing to a Hindu, neither for its contents nor as an alternative to that famous 'Rethinking Missions' Christianity which 'looks forward to the continued

co-existence of Hinduism with Christianity, each stimulating the other in growth towards the ultimate goal, unity in the completest religious truth' (p. 34).

Presenting Christianity, with the Church left out, must be, like presenting *Hamlet* with the Prince of Denmark left out, certainly none too easy a task.

H. C. E. ZACHARIAS.

ERNEST PSICHARI. *A Study in Religious Conversion.* By Wallace Fowlie. (James Clarke & Co., Ltd.; 3s. 6d.)

This brief study of the 'French Rupert Brooke' should be read twice over, lest the reader be too irritated by a first reading to give the book its due. For although Mr. Fowlie's manner is heavy and over-emphatic he has interesting things to say and he probes the young soldier's conversion with sympathy and some discernment. Perhaps there is too much sympathy, or rather what there is of it is too little checked and criticised; there is, on the whole, too little intellectual detachment, a too scanty sense of humour. Psichari is so dramatic a figure, his conversion is so 'sensational,' he can so easily be lifted up for a sign unto the nations, that whoever writes on him should be doubly on his guard against all sentimentality, even the tiniest grain of it. Mr. Fowlie is a little too excited to be doubly on his guard. His account of the positivism and naturalism of 'the sad eighties' is spoiled by text-book clichés, and he surrenders, much too easily and most ingenuously, the human intellect to Taine and Zola, when he says, for instance, of these writers' work: 'No place is left to the idealist or the mystic, for faith gives way to reason.'

Yet it would be unfair not to praise the warmth and vivacity of this book, especially of the concluding chapters, in which Mr. Fowlie seems to speak out for himself with more independence of the commonplaces of literary history. He finds a fine phrase to indicate that 'search for light' which fills the last two books of Psichari. For Psichari was first of all an *imaginatif*; and because Mr. Fowlie has something of the same gift, he can write that 'the sentiment of space, pure, limitless space . . . is a constant rhythm in Psichari.' The young Frenchman went to Africa literally as well as metaphorically to enlarge his horizon. He thought best in the open air under a vast sky. He has now a biographer who shows signs of being, as he was, primarily a poet.

A stricter analysis of this conversion remains to be done, perhaps by someone who will identify himself rather less with