Reviews

The Survival of God in the Scientific Age. By ALAN ISAACS. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966. 224 pages. $1.25.

Faith and the Physical World. By DAVID L. DYE. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966. 214 pages. $2.95.

Each of the authors of these two paperbacks is a competent scientist who has made himself knowledgeable in scientific disciplines other than his own and has read widely in the broad areas of religion and philosophy. Each was moved to write his book by what he conceives to be the decline of religion and morality in modern life. Each has some very important things to say and some of those things are well stated, with incisive cogency. But I must confess that each book was a disappointment to me.

Thus Dr. Isaacs answers the question implicit in the title of his book by his concluding sentence: "The concept of God is still available for those who need it—those who do not, have no longer to be ashamed and no longer to be afraid." The reader will of course want to know what concept it is for which this agnostic reaction is justified. Apparently it is a concept of "a supernatural agency" (see, for example, p. 143), although on page 142 reference is made to "the concept of a superhuman power" (presumably within the natural order) as though that concept might be equivalent to the "concept of God." That idea unfortunately disappears in subsequent pages and God is conceived only as a supernatural power. The chapter, "The Evolution of the Concept of God," ends with a reference to "the minds of paleolithic men"!

The dichotomy between the natural and the supernatural is also apparent in Dr. Dye's book and partly accounts for my disappointment with it. But Dye is not at all an agnostic. He wrote the book now under review "to demonstrate the existence, if not the uniqueness, of a world view that (1) is scientifically consistent, (2) is Christian, and (3) provides fully satisfactory meaning and goals for life" (p. 17).

This is a highly commendable objective, although extremely difficult to attain. Unfortunately, Dye handicaps himself by his attitude toward the Bible, which for him is "the record of God's special revelation of Himself to men." Its statements "comprise a data category" for the Christian world view, which, when properly interpreted, are consistent with appropriate interpretations of the data secured by scientific research. Thus the "true believer" finds the principle of evolution to be compatible with the account of creation presented in Genesis, chapters 1–3. The "days" are "eras" and "the order of events is strikingly close to that inferred by biologists from the existing physical data." Here he overlooks the fact that the geologic record of life development indicates unmistakably that the simpler forms of animal life were in existence long before the higher forms of plant life appeared, whereas in the Genesis story all forms of plant life, including the "tree yielding fruit," were created on the third day of the creation week, and it was not until the fifth day that any animal life appeared.

Dye has much difficulty with the creation of Eve from Adam's rib, and for a moment he seems almost ready to accept the Garden of Eden and the events that happened there as an allegorical myth rather than a historical record. But he stops halfway, with the good advice to "remember the need to consider the purposes of the recording historian in interpreting the history." He states correctly that the purpose of the rib allegory is to drive home the idea "that married life is a unifying relationship," but why insist that the myth is history?

Both of these troubled scientists, Dr. Isaacs and Dr. Dye, have limited their concepts of God to that of a supernatural agency, interfering now and then with the events that take place within the "order of nature." Neither seems to have given any consideration to the concept of God as a superhuman but not supernatural agency, operating at all times within the natural order. There is plenty of room for such a reality in the world view of contemporary science. Its thorough investigation is essential to the viability of religion in an age of science, but neither of these books makes any significant contribution here.

KIRTLEY F. MATHER

Harvard University

Prophecy in a Technocratic Era. By AREND THEODORE VAN LEEUWEN. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968. 130 pages. $3.95.

Admirers of *Christianity in World History* will probably be delighted to know that another book by Arend van Leeuwen is available, with an introduction by Harvey Cox to boot. Those who are not truly believers in the Dutch theologian's brand of the theology of secularity may be befuddled, frustrated, and disgruntled by what they may be tempted to regard as a book which ought never to have been published.

Part of the problem is the style employed by the author. The book, which seems obviously to be a collection of speeches, consists mainly of epigrammatic statements and schematic outlines. This approach works very nicely in a speech, provided that the audience has a discussion period to raise questions and explore tantalizing leads. But to a reader—unless he happens to be already "in" on van Leeuwen's thought—all this is infuriatingly disconcerting.

Consider, for example, chapter one, "Prophecy and Technocracy." Its twenty pages include the following: two pages defining the two key terms of the title, two pages giving random comments on John R. Mott and Bonhoeffer, two pages on *1984* and *The World in 1984* (which are bad "secular prophecies," in contrast to the good secular prophecy of *The Triple Revolution*), two pages on Toynbee's theories concerning America and revolution, three pages of exegesis on Matt. 24:1–14, four pages on history and eschatology, and three pages on the conversion of America and all mankind. Wow!

If the uninitiated reader can get past these stylistic difficulties, however, he will find occasional nuggets of wisdom. The chapter "Secularization and Secularism" adds little to our knowledge on this subject, and the chapter "Theocracy, Ontocracy, Technocracy" is a poor substitute for the typology presented in van Leeuwen's earlier book. But the chapter "The Role of Laity in Missions" is worthy of careful study, and the concluding chapter, "Devel-

opment and Revolution," offers some genuinely new insights. The best thing in the book is the author's imaginative definition of the laity:

> The true "laity" is not a host of "non-theologians," but it is the group which is ready to face the challenge of a "non-theo-logy," of an appreciation of God, man, and world which starts from the acknowledgment that the notion "God," as we have been able to conceive of this throughout the course of church history up to the present time, is in a rapid process of losing its meaning. This "non-theo-logy" is different from any "a-theistic" philosophy, for it only starts from the assumption that the traditional ways of approaching the theological issues are closed and that we are compelled to open new tracks. One of the tasks and opportunities which face us during this open adventure is certainly the dialogue with modern atheism in its pluriform manifestations; but this dialogue will only be part of a much more fundamental issue: the dialogue with the scientific and technological foundations of our era.
>
> In the course of this process there will, to be sure, develop a "Christian laity," which cuts across the familiar distinction between "clergy" and "layman," for this enduring teamwork will require a new series of ministries. When theology will be reborn and become relevant again for modern science and technology, there will rise a new type of scientist who will be anxious to plunge into the mysteries and perspectives of this enigmatic, ungraspable, and yet unescapable science; and it will, conversely, become normal for a theologian to combine his specialization with a profound knowledge of one of the exact sciences or with some special technological discipline.

This book cannot be read as a self-contained capsule: either you ignore it altogether, or you read it very carefully with a group of people who have a broader understanding of the theology of secularity in general and van Leeuwen's contribution to it in particular.

HENRY CLARK

Duke University

The Living Stream: Evolution and Man. By ALISTER C. HARDY. New York: Harper & Row, 1965. 292 pages. $6.95.

The Divine Flame: An Essay Towards a Natural History of Religion. By ALISTER C. HARDY. London: Collins, 1966. 254 pages. 30*s*.

In giving the Gifford Lectures, Hardy tried to carry out the will of their founder regarding the study of Natural Theology. As a biologist, he was able to make very full use of the available knowledge of man, who occupies the key position in this matter. Also he reviews the thoughts of many other biologists and gives a clear account of the current conception of man's origin and place in the universe.

He questions whether modern biology destroys "belief in an 'extra-sensory' contact with a Divine Power which *is greater than, and in part lies beyond, the individual self,*" and expresses the hope that the "materialism" of modern science will come to be dropped in favor of "a natural theology in harmony with a scientific outlook," "a dialectical theism." Considering that we are in an "early stage of feeling our way from a natural history of theology towards a science of theology," he merely makes "a plea for theology to be more natural," envisioning a world religion from "reasoning based upon the findings

of scientific studies in both natural theology and psychical research." He also writes of "further research into the nature of personality in the hope of finding out more about man's spiritual side and the nature of God." It is difficult to see how telepathy, in which he has faith, or psychical research and religious experiences can be strictly scientific. That they are not verifiable does not rule them out, so Hardy argues, since what is accepted as science may not always be verified. This loses sight of the failure in verification as representing scientific failure through inadequate knowledge. There is no very positive result from his effort to have science support theology and religion.

The very fact that he has two books, the first scientific for the physical side of man's nature, and the second religious for the spiritual side, implies a basic dichotomy between science and religion as well as in man. Although he quotes expressions of the need for settling the mind-body problem, he apparently sees this only as making a monism in which materialism prevails, and has failed to see that what is required is to make thoroughgoing use of science in getting rid of *sophisticated* thought, with its categories and artificial distinctions. This point needs to be emphasized because such thought is rampant in our chief seats of learning, even in science, with science as the only cure. Science sees men as being integral parts of the universe, with no basic distinctions either between the living and the "lifeless," or between Hardy's "living stream" and "divine flame." The science of man as biology solves the perennial problem of knowledge or perception, with which philosophers have vainly struggled. It replaces perception (grasping what is elsewhere) with active response of the self to stimuli from without. Science reveals in detail the character of the blazing actuality of one's waking relations with other beings through one's senses, as well as the limitations in space of that waking self and its varied experiences. It gives no support for any distinction between mind or soul and matter or body. Science fails to find inert matter, but finds only motion or life as the visible character of the space-time continuum of the universe. And it has to hypostasize from personal experience whatever may be responsible for the motion, call it power, energy, force, will, or spirit—as you may wish.

If by "god" is meant supreme power, science shows clearly how one's thinking as well as one's "physical" life, which are basically the same, depends upon power received from its supreme source "on high." From the fact that all organisms, from men down to atoms, attract each other, science can only suppose that such power radiates from each person to make him one with the universe. This power never fails, never changes, but is responsible for the change that is life.

A. G. HUNTSMAN

University of Toronto