

first part, which the reader who is not familiar with theology is likely to find very tough. But the three central chapters which review the Christian experience as presented in the New Testament, while they demand no little concentration from the reader, will have a more general appeal. The chapter on 'the experience of the Spirit in St Paul' is particularly good. The characteristic mark of the Christian experience, suspended as it is between 'the security that comes from God and the insecurity that comes from us', is no imagined feeling of assured salvation, but 'a hope that is both fully confident and at the same time goes in fear and trembling; we are saved by hope'.

EDMUND HILL, O.P.

BLESSING UNBOUNDED. By Harry Blamires. (Longmans Green & Co.; 12s. 6d.)

Here is an entertaining and original book, a satire of our religious times. We open it to find the hero of the tale, newly dead, walking along a road towards Heaven. What will he find at the top of the road? we ask, our curiosity aroused. What is it going to be like in this world beyond the grave?

The first thing to be discovered is that Creation is all of a piece, that 'there is no severance, no final discontinuity between the world of Nature and the Kingdom of Heaven'. Our hero is walking towards The City (Heaven) but it might have been Kettlewell.

In a way that seems entirely natural, he runs into angels and old friends. He learns that in order to reach Heaven, he will have to *choose* Heaven fully. He will have to relive much of the past recapturing what was good and repenting of the evil. He will have to enter as a member of a worshipping body and not in individual isolation, 'for that would not be Heaven at all'.

We follow him from group to group of pilgrim bands as he searches for one to whom he may attach himself. We become slightly irritated by the many hesitations and deviations which delay the progress of the story (to that extent the book fails as good allegory) but interest is always kept alive by the shrewd comments that the author has to make on the different religious bodies. No one is spared. The Ritualists with their 'phoney Gadzooks', the Modernists with their 'earthbound chatter about carburettors', the Evangelicals with their zealous biblical piety, all come in for a thrust but it is one of the charms of this book that there is no bitterness here, no sneer. Something of value is discovered in them all, and when at the end of the journey we arrive at the Ark, we find that all of them have, by their devious routes, arrived.

The hero's journey is a serious one but it is far from solemn. We have plenty of laughs. We turn aside with him from one group of pilgrims

because they seem 'too cheerful to have read their Kierkegaard'. We recognize another group as Upper Class because its members talk so very loud. We run into a philosopher friend. 'And when I say that he was a philosopher, I don't mean that he studied Philosophy but that he liked to philosophize.'

Five groups of pilgrims are visited and the hero finds something that repels him in each one. It is only when moved it would seem by a certain desperation that he finally attaches himself to one particular group. Why this particular band of pilgrims was so very, very wrong-headed, why it is described as having no redeeming feature, as being farcical to the very roots, I leave to readers to discover for themselves. The discovery will give them something to ponder over because underneath all the fun and the fantasy in Mr Blamires' book there is plenty of hard thinking.

Although it made me feel vaguely uneasy to find on this side of the grave such a total absence of what I can only call love—of that love and longing that impels the saints towards God—I enjoyed the book from beginning to end and found it most refreshing to have my theology served up to me in this lively and entertaining way.

M.G.O'C.

BEGINNINGS: GENESIS AND MODERN SCIENCE. By Charles Hauret.

Trans. by E. P. Emmans, O.P. (Dubuque: the Priory Press; \$3.25)

THE STATUS OF MAN IN THE UNIVERSE. By Albert Van Eyken. (Longmans; 7s. 6d.)

Science raises well-known problems in the interpretation of *Genesis*, which many authors have tried to resolve: M. Hauret is one of the more successful. He has the learning for the task; it appears in the notes and references which form a valuable part of his book, but does not overweight the text. He insists on the neutrality of the Bible to scientific theory, and he has no need to make rash judgments against evolution or the possibility of synthesising life. His openness of mind appeals to scientists, and his explanations are natural and convincing, so that the original French version of this book is deservedly popular. Here the translation is laboured, and the book-production unpleasing; the heavy type to emphasize obvious points is rather childish.

The Status of Man in the Universe is a philosophical attack on some of the scientific theories that worry Christians. They feel, for instance, that the scientist's account of the world, and particularly of our sense-perceptions, invalidates the ordinary account. Mr Van Eyken answers this objection on the lines familiar from Whitehead and Ryle. He next argues for a Lamarckian version of evolution against Darwin's emphasis on chance causes, and in his central chapters attacks the bases of