

and Christie and Ruth Ellis - all of which cast grave doubts on the rightness of existing legislation and Home Office practice. The Gowers Report is analysed, and its importance to the whole question of reform is properly estimated.

In the end one is left with an uneasy impression that what should be an issue that stands outside the day-by-day devices of politics was in fact determined by them. The present law, with its manifest inconsistencies - of which the arbitrary list of capital murders is the most obvious - is a monument to political manoeuvre, and as such wholly unacceptable in a matter of such moral gravity. It can hardly survive, for opinion can hardly go on supporting so uncertain, not to say wayward, an instrument of justice. The earlier campaigns and debates will not have been in vain, for not a single contention of the abolitionist case has been seriously questioned. And Professor Christoph's book is a useful document in a case that has still to be decided.

ILLTUD EVANS, O. P.

THE SPREAD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, by Leonard Beaton and John Maddox; Chatto and Windus; 18s.

This is the kind of book that begins to get out of date as soon as published, but serves a useful purpose for politicians, journalists and such like. Chiefly responsible for this one were Mr Alastair Buchan of the Institute of Strategic Studies, and the Rockefeller Foundation who made a grant towards it: the actual authors who did the research and international travel and wrote such a clear and readable book were two correspondents on the staff of the *Guardian*.

It is entirely a factual book, if we include fact-based estimates of possibilities. No guessing, no wishful thinking, no moral judgments. After a chapter on what it takes, in technology, finance, and man-power, to produce nuclear weapons, and another chapter on how far nuclear-sharing is likely between nations, the authors describe the situation in nine leading countries other than Russia and U.S.A., the most thought-provoking chapters being on China and Israel. After which there is a final summing up about future hopes and possibilities.

Apparently any industrialized nation can become a nuclear power, unassisted, in about seven years, but spreading seems likelier to come about through nuclear powers selling or giving bombs to their allies. No Government has ever given its people a choice about becoming a nuclear power; our own country's decision to have an independent 'deterrent' was made by the well-meaning Mr Attlee (urged on by Mr Churchill of course) about 1950; and moralists should note that the British deterrent's target has always been the Soviet cities (p. 75). The dangers involved in more and more nations getting nuclear weapons are generally recognized; seemingly only the French Government, with that extreme lack of practical psychology which is so French a characteristic, professes to think that the spreading makes war less probable.

The authors do not regard nuclear war as inevitable however. Nuclear weapons are indeed spreading, but rather slowly. A real non-nuclear club already exists, consisting of Canada and India; both industrial countries whose Governments have decided (partly for moral reasons, too!) *against* having nuclear weapons. Perhaps Japan can be added, at any rate as long as China remains non-nuclear. The abolition of nuclear tests (our authors think) would be a genuine first step. Russia and U.S.A. ought to unite, if only tacitly, to prevent other nations getting nuclear weapons; it would be to the interest of both the giants. There is no justification for a mood of helpless resignation, says this book; nuclear weapons need not spread; 'there is nothing inevitable about them'. Those who believe in human free will and conscience and the natural law of right and wrong can only murmur 'hear, hear'.

F. H. DRINKWATER

UPANISHADS, GITA AND BIBLE, by Geoffrey Parrinder; Faber and Faber; 21s.

This is an excellent book of a kind which is still very rare. It is a serious and scholarly attempt to confront the Scriptures of Hinduism and Christianity to see where they agree and where they differ. This is a matter of considerable importance, because in India to-day one of the greatest difficulties which confronts a Christian is that the Hindu generally insists that all religions are essentially the same, and consequently interprets Christianity in a way which ignores its essential differences. On the other hand, most Christians have not sufficient knowledge of Hinduism to be able to say in what precisely these differences consist. What is needed above all is a serious confrontation of the two religions, which will do justice to their distinctive doctrines. Dr Parrinder has attempted to do this by studying the teaching of the two religions in the light of their principal Scriptures. For Hinduism he confines himself mainly to the Upanishads and the Gita and for Christianity to the Bible, but the different doctrines are interpreted in line with the traditional teaching. He does justice to the different currents in Hinduism, monistic, pantheistic and theistic, and in his interpretation of the Bible he is in line with modern criticism but essentially orthodox.

This is therefore a really valuable book. It keeps close to the texts and expounds them with scholarly accuracy. At the same time it covers all the main themes of religion, God, man, creation, eternal life, spiritual discipline, mysticism and morality. Dr Parrinder is careful not to pass judgment on the relative merits of the different doctrines; he is engaged simply in confronting them with as much accuracy as possible. As his presentation is generally very compressed, it requires some effort on the part of the reader to see the exact significance of the different doctrines, but the material is there for anyone who wants to judge for himself. This is a real contribution to the Christian-Hindu dialogue. It is to be hoped that it will be read by both Hindus and Christians.

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