

BOOK REVIEWS

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God-Experience, Fransalian Vidya Niketan, Kamagaon, 1984. pp. 240 (+ a few unnumbered pages in the beginning). Price: Rs. 30/-

Not only spiritual contemplatives like Bede Griffiths but even secular writers, acknowledge that the period of scientific materialism has given place to a resurgence of religious forces. In India the religious and the secular have never been dichotomized. Christianity in the West, the rationalism of the modern period, tended to develop a theology that was too 'rational' and less 'spiritual'. This may be the reason why the Christian West, in recent years, has shown a renewed interest in all that pertains to spiritual experience, especially that of Hinduism and Buddhism. This search for the 'experiential' has given rise in India to the *ashram* movement. All over the world Christian bookshops now display a wide variety of books on *sadhana*, Zen meditation and other Oriental spiritual traditions, most often integrated with the Christian approach to faith and religion. The book under review is another search for a synthesis of Christian and Hindu spiritual endeavour. In it an attempt is made from different view points to answer the question: How can the fallible, finite man realize the infallible, infinite God?

Ouseparambil takes into consideration the religious pluralism of the modern world especially of India, and suggests an open approach to various spiritual traditions. Punchekunnel provides a basic biblical perspective of Christian spirituality. There follow two chapters on the relation of *ashram* and *yoga* ideals to contemplation (Mendes and D'Sa). The stories of Nichiketa (Vedpathak) and Tukaram (Dabre) are presented as models of authentic Hindu God-experience even for the common man.

While Lederle shows the great advantage a Christian devotee can reap from the spiritual approach of *Bhagavat Dharma*, Sr. Nihita Maria describes her own enrichment in Christian experience of God and that of her companion, as they ascended some of the Himalayan holy shrines. Mookenthottam compares the experiences of Arjuna and Francis de Sales of God as compassion. Abreo argues in his brief article how