In this volume the professor of religion at Princeton gives us brief accounts of the ideas of 15 philosophical writers. Each chapter is headed by a catch phrase, such as "Theistic Idealism" (Plato), "Medieval Mysticism" (Eckhardt), "Skepticism" (Hume), or "Absolute Idealism" (Hegel), but no indication is given as to how many such points of view the general subject of "Religious Philosophy" contains, and there is, in each case, little justification as to why the individual chosen illustrates the catch-phrase category. On the whole, the connective tissue which might bind these chapters into an organic whole is missing, and the book itself lacks any explicit general framework. It is not an analytical work, and it is equally not a historical study.

Analytically, no indication is given as to what is included in the subject "religious philosophy." I might guess that it would deal with three subjects: (1) the nature of God, (2) the nature of man, and (3) the relationship between God and man, with possible bridges over the gap between the two.

Prof. Thomas gives no indication of what "religious philosophy" means to him, and his discussion of his 15 writers does not show that he is looking for any specific topics, such as the three I mention. His inclusion of Feuerbach and omission of any reference to Pascal leave me doubtful as to what qualified a writer for admission to the book. Each chapter provides a concise potted summary of the outlook of the thinker, with his religious ideas emphasized not much more than his metaphysics or epistemology. Since the author denies any intention of writing a history of religious thought or of philosophical thought concerned with religion (p. xvi), we cannot criticize him for his failure to mention the most significant developments in these fields in recent centuries (such as those associated with Jansenism, Pietism,
Methodism, or practical Christianity), but the author's failure to provide either an analytical or a historical framework leave the volume with what Pitirim Sorokin called "the chief element of unity in most modern books — the binding."

— Carroll Quigley.

Please email the editors (editors@carrollquigley.net) with corrections, questions, or if you have other works by Professor Quigley you would like to see posted.

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