In a very short introduction of nine pages, Greeley explains that he has chosen 365 quotations that reflect Jefferson's free thought—which Greeley never adequately defines—in order to combat both the Religious Right who assume that all of our founding fathers were fundamentalist Christians and the Religious Left who conflate freethought with atheism.

Greeley's purpose for this little book is laudable, since the oversimplifications of both extremes in popular American religious thought need some correction. The Bible was written in too many different literary forms—poetry, history, aphoristic sayings and parables, and letters—and over too many years and by too many authors to be capable of sustaining the generalization of the Fundamentalists that everything in the Bible is literally true. Similarly, the freethought tradition in America from Thomas Paine and Ethan Allen through Emerson and Thoreau to John Dewey and Konstantin Kolenda is too diverse and subtle to sustain the generalization of the Atheists that all of them rejected theological concepts such as God, grace, and salvation. A rigorous conceptual and historical analysis of these and similar issues in this current conflict, which Greeley's book does not provide, would be very helpful to scholars and laypeople alike.

What do we mean by a "founding father"? Who were they? Did they all agree on religion? Should they? Is the Creator referred to in the Declaration of Independence the same being as the God referred to in the Book of Genesis? What are the similarities and differences between the current Fundamentalist/Atheist debate and the Calvinist/Deist debate in the early days of our nation? What does freedom of religion mean in America today?

In short, although Greeley's collection of sayings is sporadically interesting and Prometheus' green and gold cloth binding is very attractive, this little book will be of little interest to serious scholars of either Jefferson, the Fundamentalist/Atheist debate, or the nature of freethought in America.

University of Kentucky

Jon Avery


This offering by the SUNY Series in Philosophy, a leader in both fine scholarship and daring new thought, provides us with another opportunity to ask, Does Nicholas Rescher ever sleep? Rescher has written important works on every major philosophical movement—in fact, one might even judge a movement's importance by whether or not Rescher has written a book about it? When professional philosophers pick up one of the several dozen of Rescher's book, they expect nothing less than a model of perceptive detail as well as comprehensive vision. They will get just what they expect here. George R. Lucas, Jr., editor of the SUNY
Series, points out that it has been "over 30 years since a phi-
losopher of such national and international stature has chosen to
focus on the main issues of this extensive and neglected philo-
sophical school." It is high time that a prominent philosopher
wrote an introduction to process thought, and process thought
will be well served by Rescher's doing so.

While Rescher recognizes that process philosophy contains
many internal variations and is represented by a great range of
thinkers, he maintains that process thought, conceived as a
system, is quite consistent and perhaps better equipped to handle
traditional philosophical problems than rival theories. On the
one hand, it is true that process thought is a variety of related
metaphysical approaches that takes becoming as having primacy
over being, events over things, process over substance. But on
the other hand, Rescher shows that process thought is a world
view that provides a set of concepts giving us a "comprehensive
and harmonious overarching perspective" that renders "intelligi-
ble the world's developments as best we can discern them."

Charles Hartshorne has long held that elements of process
thought are found throughout the history of Western philosophy.
Rescher traces the features of this historical background in a
chapter of brief discussions of Heraclitus, Leibniz, James,
Whitehead, and others. This chapter is quite useful in pointing
out to the reader that although we often mention "process philos-
ophy" and "Whitehead" in the same breath, process thought as a
world view has shaped the history of philosophy since the preso-
crats. Substantialism, broadly conceived, has permeated West-
ern philosophy, but there have always been strong voices from
another sector. Indeed, one way of looking at this book is to
consider it in large part an introduction to anti-substantialist
thinking.

In most of the chapters here, Rescher considers a process
treatment of a classic philosophical issue and shows how process
thought can better handle these problems than other (substantial-
ist) movements. Among others, there is a chapter on particulars,
one on universals, another on persons, and one on theology (the
field that may have been affected most by process thought in this
century). Of particular note is a chapter entitled "Process
Logic and Epistemology." There is a tendency among philosophers
working outside of process thought to identify it with specula-
tive metaphysics, mostly due to Whitehead's articulation of a
grand cosmological scheme in Process and Reality. The result is
that many Anglo-American philosophers, interested primarily in
epistemology, have ignored (or condemned) the work of Whitehead,
Hartshorne, and other process thinkers who, in fact, have much to
say about the nature of knowledge. Rescher shows that process
thinkers have made valuable contributions to epistemology and
that their approaches, if given the attention they deserve by the
wider philosophical community, could bring about profound (and
required) changes in the way we think out knowledge.

Rescher's style is clear and critical. The structure of
each chapter loosely follows something of a pattern that would be a good model for similar introductory texts. An issue is identified, a process view is described advantages of such a view are explained, problems with the process approach are explored, and possible process responses are considered. All of this is done while avoiding (or clarifying) the difficult terminology employed by Whitehead and others. Part of that task is accomplished by avoiding the temptation to allow the book to be dominated by discussions of Whitehead. Rescher makes adequate reference to Whitehead's enormous legacy in contemporary process philosophy, but he makes sure to speak of the contributions by W. H. Sheldon, A.N. Ushenko, and others.

Most philosophers are now aware that the old analytic/continental division in twentieth century philosophy was never very clear in the first place. Philosophical movements are always much more complex, and the best philosophers are often the most difficult to label. Rescher's introduction to process philosophy is a good start for those who wish to take a first look at one of the currents that makes our philosophical traditions so rich.

Central Florida Community College Ron L. Cooper


Robert Richardson's biography is an exquisite story of Ralph Waldo Emerson, the man who has profoundly influenced the attitude and activity of the American philosophical grain. Richardson, in his preface, calls his endeavor a probing into Emerson's "intellectual odyssey." This is a journey that begins with Emerson's years at Harvard where he was only a "fair scholar," to finally his last performance in the Dowde Library in Boston, where he spoke of Thomas Carlyle to the Massachusetts Historical Society on the same day this "friendly antagonist" was buried. This is not simply a biography about the life of Emerson, but, as the title suggests, is an exploration of Emerson's "mind on fire;" his biography illuminates the sources, influences, and experiences that shaped and molded Emerson as scholar, writer, lecturer, essayist, poet, and philosopher.

Richardson's book contains eleven general headings representing stages of Emerson's life. Within these headings are a combined total of one hundred "chapters" which give a quick and specific reference to the text, e.g. "Ellen Tucker," "The American Scholar," "Essays on Power," and "Civil War." "Death of Thoreau." Also included are photographs, genealogies, and a chronology of Emerson's life.

As one reads and follows this biographical excursion, there is a definite sense of actually hearing Emerson's thought and seeing his actions and travels. This is due to Richardson's extensive use of Emerson's own words. Richardson, in a sense, lets Emerson tell his own story by citing numerous journal en-