

## FINE BUILDINGS

**THE PUZZLE OF ARCHITECTURE.** Robin Boyd. Melbourne University Press. Pp. 188 & 175 line drawings by the author. \$6.50.

**R**OBIN BOYD is well known to Australians and others as a most articulate controversialist in the realms of aesthetics and architecture; few who have read his "Australian Ugliness", or watched his series on the television last year, could have failed to have been moved by his claims for the artistic conscience in the fourth most prosperous country in the world.

In this elegantly produced and finely illustrated book he propounds the dilemma of the modern architects and gives an interesting history of the development of architecture in the past hundred years.

His account is judicial but exciting; illuminating and provocative, and explains to the laymen so much that is puzzling in modern architecture.

I imagine it will easily become required reading for architects and architectural students as well as being a book that most libraries will want to have on the shelves.

It is however a book for the professionals and it does not attempt to solve the pressing problems of the home, church, or office builder.

**T**HESSE problems are in effect, "What can I have for so much money?" The prospective spender will be led through an appreciation of the different solutions offered by functionalists, the Brutalists, the Ornamentalists, and the new architects of today who are desperately trying to combine two qualities of architecture: its honesty in construction (showing an image of society today) and, the lure for beauty when composing a useful shelter.

These two qualities have not always been in harmony and Mr Boyd is at his most illuminating when he observes that ornament is essentially parasitic. "The more strength it draws to itself the weaker grows the body of its host." This is a concept that must be of value to those who commission churches,

schools, and other public buildings.

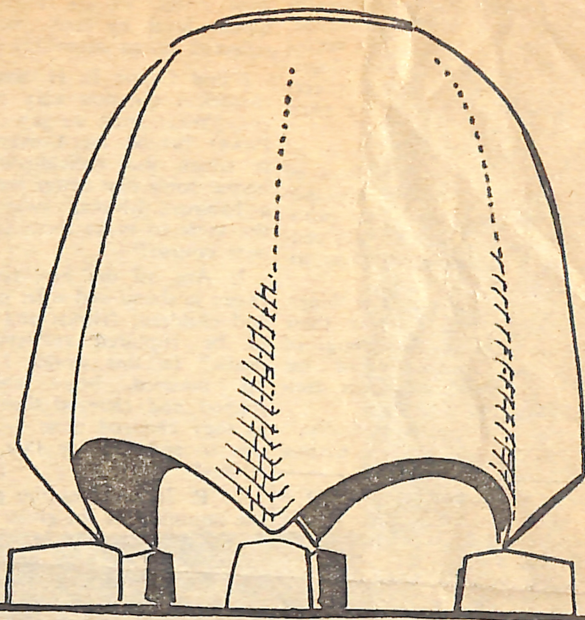
Mr Boyd ranges far. He discusses the social responsibility of the architect and then muses on the possibility that architects have simplified their profession out of existence.

That if society merely wants anonymous glass boxes then the architect can be replaced by the computer and the technologist.

It may also be a shock to the ordinary reader to learn that the average architect does little creative planning; his life is concerned with the attention to details that could well be done by other less creative people.

In all it is a fascinating book well worth two or three readings.

—J.T.



An illustration by the author from "The Puzzle of Architecture" —"Shrine at the 'roofless' church" by Johnson.

Readers are invited to submit questions for answer in this weekly question box on faith and morals. Letters should be addressed care of the Editor. Questions marked "not for publication" will be answered by post if a stamped and addressed envelope is enclosed.

piece of earth six feet long, or within the flames of an incinerator, the whole business of life seems so pointless. Why did it ever begin, if seventy years later, this was the only result?

Is it not reasonable to believe that values which we have been able to create, or which have played a part in our personal lives so that we are raised to a higher level by them, may be reflected in an after-life?

I find Canon B. H. Stretter's rhetorical question very pertinent. "What shall we say of the Power behind the Universe, if it treats the individuality of heroic souls like oyster shells at a banquet, whisked away from the table to make room for the next course?"

2. Are all the best ties between husband and wife, parents and children, friends and allies to be ruptured ruthlessly at death? In this world, I grew up, married, begot children, shaped and changed their lives as they changed mine — is all this to end the day that death strikes?

L. P. Jacks gives the gist of the argument of the greatest Christian argument for immortality as it is found in Plato's *Phaedo*. "All through that wonderful dialogue Plato keeps us thinking, not about ourselves and what is going to happen to us, but about Socrates, and what is

ing or purpose in the process. B, "It seems pointless to me. Here we are, with all we need, warm and comfortable, and one day it will end. We don't know how we arrived here, we've no recollection of a past and we've no hint of a future." While they are debating, suddenly A is born. (That would be like death to us.) Now if A could communicate with B, what would he tell him? Could he explain anything at all? B would need to experience it for himself. Lack of comprehension surely does not deny the possibility.

## ASSUMPTION

4. For the Christian, there is the Scripture's assumption that man is immortal. Not that anywhere the Bible says that man is immortal. A celebrated divine, Dr Adam Clarke, offered a thousand pounds to anyone who could find a Biblical passage saying that man's soul was immortal. It was not claimed. There is no such text. The Bible assumes it, and builds upon it. (See Ecclesiastes 3:11. Psalm 73:24. Job 19:25, 26 and Isaiah 26:19.)

It reaches its peak in Our Lord Jesus Christ who affirmed that "because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19). When He rose from the dead, His resurrection proclaimed His triumph over the power of death.

These are all positive, which, as I see it, are reasonable lines of evidence. Finally pursue a negative line of evidence. Those who reject a belief in immortality, tend to suffer simply because the value and hopefulness of their lives diminishes.

How many young people reject quite out-of-hand any belief in an after-life, and then, for kicks, engage in all forms of violence, and become addicts of alcohol and drugs! Did they believe in an after-life, they would have a higher estimation of their worth.

From the intellectual point of view there are various lines of evidence which, taken together end in a kind of general probability. None is individually conclusive, nor are all of them together.

You cannot prove these things. Yet, as we reason about these things, and take the plunge of faith, the probability of the reality of these things is conclusive for the Christian.

Let's list them numerically.

1. If life ends in a narrow

care less whether a man was a Christian or a Moslem; all he is interested in is what kind of a Christian or what kind of a Moslem the man may be.

The professor, we are informed, is an ordained minister of the United Church of Canada. I am not a learned man. All I