

biography. It might have confirmed her fantasy of the 'cruel' institutionalism of Rome, which the sensitive musician, the man of imagination and of instinctive response to heart rather than head, found too hard to bear in the priesthood to which he was ordained. In fact Mr Robertson's candid story does credit both to himself and to the Church, and especially to Cardinal Hinsley whose constant charity and understanding healed the pain of a decision which conscience demanded. Mr Robertson has much to say that is interesting about his career as a musician and broadcaster, and his fidelity to the Church remains untouched by his realization that he had to abandon the exercise of his priesthood. And this he did in obedience and love.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

WAYS OF THINKING ABOUT GOD, by Edward Sillem; Darton, Longman and Todd; 18s. 6d.

At last a book of real value has been written about St Thomas' argument for God's existence; lively though untidy, in intelligible English, and meant for the public who since the war have learnt to appreciate philosophical books in this country.

Fr Sillem begins by stating some modern objections to the arguments given today for God's existence, but like St Thomas keeps us waiting until the end for the answers. Instead he investigates what the original, very different arguments were, and were meant to do—a surprisingly rare procedure, he points out, among modern writers on the subject. He concludes that the Five Ways were not meant to be taken in isolation as 'natural theology' before St Thomas began theology proper; the *Summa* is entirely theological, but its author included five arguments actually given by former philosophers, as part of his purpose in showing that reason does not contradict faith. The first four of these arguments at least have now been shown to come directly from the pagan Aristotle, not from medieval sources: St Thomas never meant them to be taken in isolation as his own 'proof'. The extreme brevity of presentation, the lack of serious objection, and the inconclusive 'conclusion'. 'all call this God', probably meaning 'all philosophers', are an indication of this. St Thomas' own argument is spread over the first eleven questions of the *Summa*, and include the highly original metaphysics of essence and existence; the Five Ways are merely its jumping-off point. It is, moreover, a theological argument, for it purports to show that the being whom philosophers called 'God' is the God of revelation, *ipsum esse subsistens*. Whether or not a purely philosophical argument can be produced is another matter; as the first question of the *Summa* shows, St Thomas' purpose was to produce a new theology designed as an Aristotelian 'science', using reason to make our *belief* intelligible, and this is precisely what these first questions achieve.

Though this view is not entirely new (Fr Sillem remarks, for instance, on his debt to Victor White) it is worked out here extremely well and convincingly.

I am only surprised that he does not make more use of those remarks in which St Thomas points out that revelation itself involves a passage of thought from created effects to their divine cause (*Summa Theologiae* Ia 1.7ad 1 and 12.13 ad 1), since these throw further light on the unity of the *Summa*. The structure of the argument to God is eventually the structure of all theological reasoning.

In the second part of the book Fr Sillem rather quaintly constructs an imaginary conversation between some more recent philosophers and the resuscitated saint, in order to show how the argument might be presented today. St Thomas first shows that the arguments taken to be 'traditional' since Kant's day are not his at all, but come from Leibnitz and Descartes. There is, for instance, no question in genuine Thomist thought of making use of the ontological argument to pass to the idea of infinite being from the idea of necessary being, since for St Thomas the ideas we have to construct in order to say anything at all about God are more negative in content than positive. Our gaze has always to be on the created effects rather than on their cause. This leads Fr Sillem's St Thomas on to the most important section of the book, in which the basic structure of any argument to God is analysed (pp. 125-142). The argument starts from the universe of things, but 'universe' is rightly taken by Fr Sillem in a distributive sense, to mean no more than the sum of its contents. The first step is to ask the metaphysical (non-scientific) question why it is there, not why one part or another of it is intelligible. I am not sure that Fr Sillem makes it clear, despite an ingenious analogy from railway accidents, just what role the intelligibility of the universe plays in forcing us to look for the cause of its existence; nor am I sure that throughout the book he is consistent in rejecting the invalid form of argument which asks us to examine the way things are, rather than that they are. But in any case he passes to the second step of showing that the 'necessary, uncaused, unlimited' being which answers such a metaphysical question is in fact God. He can then answer the objections made at the beginning of the book, objections often valid only against Leibnitzian forms of the argument. There is no need to accept the disjunction of factual and analytic propositions, to insist that statements alone can be called 'necessary', or to restrict causal words to a single 'natural habitat', and so on.

The last word hasn't been said, and probably never will be; but in a subject where words are a good deal more common than ideas it is a pleasant surprise to find so much that is so good appearing in this book.

LAURENCE BRIGHT, O.P.

NUCLEAR PHYSICS IN PEACE AND WAR, by Peter E. Hodgson. (Faith and Fact Book) Burns and Oates; 8s. 6d.

'Would it be possible to use small tactical nuclear weapons to repel an invading army without precipitating an all-out nuclear strategic assault on the centres of population? . . . The consensus of opinion is that there can be no sure way of