

But it is the second chapter which really makes one sit up. Substituting 'mere voluminousness' for *materia prima* is not going to satisfy any philosopher. Substantial form is the next to go (in its place we are left with unity of sentience), and then, as one might expect, we are given a doctrine of plurality of forms. The author hopes that his account of 'Thomistic man' is not Platonic or Cartesian!

The rest of the work, on moral philosophy, is not very deep. Starting with Kant and moral experience, we move rapidly into the Prichard-Moore-Ross debate, and on to some problems of special ethics: law and morality, reward and punishment, and property. The final chapter, rather unconvincingly, moves from morality through love to religion.

E. F. O'DOHERTY

GOD IN MODERN PHILOSOPHY. By James Collins. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 40s.)

There are two ways by which we can come to know something of God, the way up and the way down. The way up, the traditional *via ascensus*, is by a reflexive assimilation of the manifold data of the everyday world into a self-exigent pattern: it is, basically, a certain way of making life point beyond itself. The question is simply why there is anything at all, and the answer amounts to seeing the world as something that sets a problem, as something with a presupposition, a *primum principium*, which is what we call God. It has always been a hazardous and grudging way.

This book, by the professor of philosophy at St Louis, Missouri, is a reliable encyclopedia of what philosophers have made of it in the last five hundred years. The history of philosophy does not engage the interest of many serious philosophers in this country now, at least in as synoptic and compendious a form as this; and in any case it would not be easy to persuade many of them that there could be much sense in asking why there is anything at all. But even if there were enough curiosity and solicitude about the mysterious nature of human destiny to drive people to raise *die Gottesfrage* in earnest, if not in desperation, one might be forgiven for feeling somewhat depressed at the poverty and confusion of a great deal of what Professor Collins has to record. And even allowing for Newman, it must be said that there is very little in the way of any major, coherent act of philosophical reflection on the problem of God exercised from the heart of orthodox Christian experience.

Surely, one feels, something better might be said about God than all this? And yet perhaps not; or at least not until we have seen that the way up and the way down are ultimately one and the same. The way down, the *via descensus*, is the self-disclosure in the process of history of the God who searches the hearts of men and who raised Jesus from the dead. This is the God before whom we have the grace to be open, in faith, in the ordinary events of Christian living. Philosophy belongs to a whole form of life, and this God can never be in parentheses: perhaps we may look for more satisfying philosophical reflections about the problem of God to emerge from a renewed practice of the common responsibilities of what it is to be

Christian. It is only in the light of Christian experience that we can come to see, at least in the concrete, that all things were *created*, and that the everyday world can in fact be made to sustain the kind of metaphysical analysis which brings us to talk about God.

If we are able to talk about God from a position of Christian assurance, as Professor Collins is, then all these centuries of groping, disputable and often crazy speculation can be *placed*, and can offer more fruitful insights and directions than would at first appear. At any rate, this is a definitive work, and it goes as far as a book can to vouch for the continued relevance, and the urgent need, of fresh reflection about God.

FERGUS KERR, O.P.

REBELLIOUS PROPHET: A LIFE OF NICOLAI BERDYAEV. By Donald A. Lowrie. (Gollancz, 25s.)

Mr Lowrie tells us that 'Quantitatively, Berdyaev's works have been more widely disseminated in English than in any other' of the fifteen languages in which writings of his have appeared. It is therefore not inappropriate that what will probably prove to be the definitive biography of this 'great, lonely thinker', as Professor Maritain called him, should be written in our tongue. Donald Lowrie, an American, was closely associated with Berdyaev in Paris for a quarter of a century, and has since devoted years to collecting and digesting material, personal and documentary. In his preface he seems to imply that the result is simply a factual record. Mr Lowrie is too modest; facts, yes, but not bare facts: this is a whole portrait of a man. It is not a 'warts and all' picture in the vulgar sense, but a frank, loving story and study, well balanced, perceptive, and sensitively written. Without doubt its publication will mean an increased demand for Berdyaev's own writings.

From the start in Paris, Berdyaev 'had to combat a tendency on the part of non-Orthodox to consider him a spokesman for the Orthodox Church'. That he was not in fact representative even of Russian Orthodoxy is perhaps the first thing that the western Christian reader has to learn. He had considerable influence among Catholics in France; he knew Jacques Maritain, Étienne Gilson, Gabriel Marcel and Emmanuel Mounier personally, and was present at the meetings at which *Esprit* was projected. In England, his influence was predominantly amongst Anglicans; but it was a Catholic publishing house, Messrs Sheed and Ward, that first introduced him to the English-speaking world: *The Russian Revolution*, two essays on its implications in religion and psychology, appeared in 1931, and others followed. Through Berdyaev, more than one errant Catholic found the path again.

It is gratifying that, in 1947, the year before his death, Berdyaev was honoured by the University of Cambridge by the conferring of the degree of Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*. In the procession to the Senate House he was followed at some distance by Ernest Bevin and Field-Marshal Wavell. Berdyaev was not the man to bother about precedence, which was in fact that of the degree being conferred, but there seems a certain inner appropriateness about it, on more counts than one. He himself said of