

REVIEWS

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

GOD. His Existence and His Nature. Vol. II. A Thomistic Solution of certain Agnostic Antinomies. By the Rev. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. Translated from the Fifth French Edition by Dom Bede Rose, O.S.B., D.D. (B. Herder Book Co.; 16/-.)

To have placed Père Garrigou-Lagrange's *Dieu* at the disposal of English readers is a work which must earn the gratitude of all who have at heart the formation in themselves or in others of that rarest of cultural products, a truly Christian intelligence. The first volume of this invaluable treatise was reviewed at some length in *BLACKFRIARS* of last July; the second has now been published. So far as the translation has been compared with the French, it appears to lose no more of point and incisiveness than is imposed by a less philosophical idiom. It would be as irrelevant as ungracious to point out an occasional "broadening" of the author's meaning in a work which must have cost so much labour and maintains such substantial fidelity to the original.

In the first volume the author—for whom "theological researches which are not directed to contemplation are to no purpose"—has expounded comprehensively the proofs for God's existence and combatted the objections deriving from the Kantian epistemology. His conclusions verify once more the verdict of common sense so vigorously expressed by Dean Inge: "Every attack upon the possibility of knowledge is foiled by the impossibility of finding a ground on which to fix its batteries. If we try to plant them on anything within the intelligible world, we assert the knowableness of that world in the act of denying it; and there is no place outside the intelligible world on which they can be fixed."

The present volume treats of the nature of God and His attributes; in the light of the Thomistic doctrine of analogy the agnostic antinomies, with reference to the divine attributes *inter se* and divine pre-determination over against human liberty, are resolved. As was inevitable with such a theme, the questions "Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate" must here be debated at length. Père Garrigou-Lagrange expounds the classical Augustinian-Thomistic thesis that the dependence of the human will upon God is but a particular case of the universal dependence of the entire creation on the Creator—with all that such dependence involves. The logical rigour of such a position can prove sustaining only to those who know what manner of God it is "in whom we live and move and have our being," but it is a position as far removed from the Psychological Determinism of Leibnitz

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as it is from the view which can lead a modern apologist of a more recent tradition to declare that "God has allowed Himself to be dictated to by His creatures, to treat with them solely on the terms of their free choices." (Rev. M. C. D'Arcy, S.J.: *Mirage and Truth*, p. 160.)

The general scope of the exposition is well suggested by the following extract: "We cannot stress too much in these days of Agnosticism that, in one way, we have a more certain knowledge of God than of the intrinsic properties of plants or animals. These essentially material natures cannot be fully intelligible to us. They are within close range of our senses, but they are far removed from the source of all intelligibility, as Aristotle said. And we have a far more certain knowledge of God than we have of men with whom we are living in close intimacy. Reason alone actually assures us that we are more certain of the goodness of God in our regard than of the rectitude of our own intentions. We know the goodness of God better than we do the uprightness of our own heart." To say that this truth is brought home with the clarity and force we are led to expect from so distinguished a theologian is to say all that need be said. AELRED GRAHAM, O.S.B.

GUIDE TO PHILOSOPHY. By C. E. M. Joad. (Gollancz; 6/-.)

"Variations on the theme of cosmic lying." This phrase, quoted by Mr. Joad, gives delightful expression to a common attitude of impatience with views in which the traditional definition of metaphysics, the science of the nature of reality as such, becomes re-written as "the study of reality in contradistinction to the commonsense world of appearance." It is a fact that the latter definition, Mr. Joad's, is almost universally applicable to what are now called metaphysics; it is also a fact that, only last year, there were Thomist reviewers (not in BLACKFRIARS) for whom the omission of *ens ut ens* from an "Introduction to Metaphysic" was sufficient reason for slating a fellow-Catholic, Prof. Siegfried Behn of Bonn University.

Now to the uninitiated to question the obvious is at least foolish, perhaps dishonest; the distinction between appearance and reality is not younger than Parmenides, yet it is hardly recognized outside philosophical circles. Mr. Joad has tried to make clear to the "intelligent layman" why the obvious is called in question, how the metaphysical craving is engendered. He has aimed, with amazing success, at expressing himself in language intelligible to those who have read no philosophy; and this has necessarily meant a considerable limitation of scope. Yet he has managed in under six hundred pages to give a lucid sketch of nearly all the problems now considered of first importance in metaphysics.