

was not the balanced 'centre', truly traditional, but 'veterism', representing the 'non-historical-dogmatists' and integrists (traditional only in an impoverished sense) aided and abetted (unfortunately but not surprisingly) by the majority of the neothomists (a notable exception being the Louvain school) whose outlook was in sympathy with the quasi-fascist political backers of the anti-modernist movement. (The history of this period, well sketched here by Mr Dru, makes exciting but terrifying reading.)

Whatever the pernicious values involved here, however, they were more subtle and not so blatantly dangerous to the faith as the unbalanced liberalism of the Modernists, which rightly resulted in its condemnation. But the rigid terms of this condemnation (still very much in evidence today) came to Blondel, pious and profoundly loyal churchman as he was, as a deep shock, seeing so well, as he did, that neither extreme truly represented the depth of Christian tradition. He himself represents in fact that realist and dynamic appreciation of Christian life, with God's presence in the Church deeply felt, which has so largely triumphed in the present Council. And in Blondel we can recognize for example the spirit of Augustine, of Pascal and of Kierkegaard. His philosophy is personalist and real; he is one of the first of the genuine existentialists – an existentialism closer, however, to that of Marcel for example, than that of Sartre. And then there is another figure with whom Blondel must be compared: John Henry Newman. It has been

remarked that had Newman been born sixty years later, instead of the *Grammar of Assent*, he would have written Blondel's *L'Action*, and instead of *The Development of Christian Doctrine*, his *History and Dogma* – the second work presented in this volume. The dangers in this way of speaking are recognized, but what is implied is important, namely that this is where Newman can be seen to be aiming, and that Blondel is in a very real way his heir.

*L'Action* was Blondel's major work, but Mr Dru and Fr Trethowan have been right to present us now with the much shorter *Letter on Apologetics*. This not only fits better into their plan, it also presents the philosophical position which was worked out in *L'Action*. And the *Letter* also expresses another profound aspect of his thought – the relationship between nature and the supernatural. His insights in this field largely derive – as does all his philosophy – from his refusal to split man up into unrelated parts, his concern to see man as a whole. He was as a result able to give, even under such difficult circumstances, such a balanced picture of 'the action of the infallible spirit on the Christian community' – or in other words Tradition (see p. 217) – as is to be found in *History and Dogma*. Here perhaps more than anywhere else is evidence of Blondel's 'centrality', and it is here that he must be regarded as an historical witness of the first importance – and one who is at the same time still capable of helping us to achieve the fullness of the Church's revival.

Giles Hibbert, O.P.

THE NEW THEOLOGIANS edited by Russell R. Acheson, *Mowbray*, 5s.

ETHICS by Dietrich Bonhoeffer; *Collins (Fontana)*, 9s. 6d.

EXISTENCE AND FAITH by Rudolf Bultmann. *Collins (Fontana)*, 9s. 6d.

EXISTENTIALISM: FOR AND AGAINST by Paul Roubiczek. *C.U.P.* 22s. 6d., paperback 11s. 6d.

*The New Theologians* is a brief, unpretentious collection of four addresses arranged for the undergraduates of Bristol University by their Anglican chaplain. The addresses were given in response to the interest in their subjects provoked by *Honest to God* and the ensuing discussion. This is true of the subjects of the first three addresses

at least, Bultmann, Bonhoeffer and Tillich. The fourth, on Teilhard de Chardin, was added 'lest anyone should think that Germans and Protestants have a monopoly of fresh thinking'.

Needless to say, these addresses do not attempt to be exhaustive, not in 46 pages! But, in the limits at their disposal, the four

speakers tell the intelligent student what they believe to be the most important contribution made by their subject to contemporary thought and what are the most obvious difficulties to be raised against each writer's position. Thus, in the case of Bultmann, the reader will learn what demythologising is, what it tries to do, why it seems to be needed, and why it seems to many to be really emptying out the baby with the bath water.

Further, if the reader of this little book takes it up after putting down *Honest to God*, he will find to his relief that the references to 'religionless christianity' and to God as the 'ground of our being' make a good deal more sense than they do when expounded by the Bishop of Woolwich.

All of which goes to show that this book could widen the perspectives of the average undergraduate or for that matter of the average seminarist.

His horizons broadened, the reader looks, we hope, for more information on his subjects and where better will he find it than in the writings of these men themselves? Thus Fontana Books have recently done a great service in publishing paperback editions of Bonhoeffer's *Ethics* and Bultmann's *Existence and Faith*.

The *Ethics* could well be a basis for discussions between Roman and Reformed christians but, of course, its own theme is not any inward-looking christianity but the relations between the Church and a godless world. In what sense is the non-christian world already redeemed? How is Christ present in it? How does the Church of Christ extend to the whole of humanity? We find these questions briefly alluded to in the *Summa* but they are more alive today than in the thirteenth century as witness the encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* or the first article, all eighty pages of it, in the second volume of Rahner's *Theological Investigations*. The *Ethics* tries to answer some of these questions.

*Existence and Faith* is not one work but a collection of twenty of Bultmann's shorter writings, from 1917 to 1957. The intelligent reader may have first learned of Bultmann's existence in the pages of *Honest to God*. If Acheson's

symposium leads him to ask the right questions, here is his chance to find the answers, not at second hand, but from the master himself. But, no matter how anxious the reader is to read Bultmann, he should not neglect Schubert M. Ogden's thoughtful introduction.

So much for what we might call theological existentialism. In the fourth book we have something rather different. Within the 184 pages of *Existentialism: For and Against* Paul Roubiczek gives an account of the development of this philosophy and the background of nineteenth century thought against which it has evolved, and proceeds to a partial evaluation of what he feels could be its lasting contribution to civilisation.

This book originated in two courses of University Extension Lectures in Cambridge, but the transition from the spoken to the written word has been made painlessly and the publication of these lectures was well worthwhile. They are erudite without being overloaded with scholarly references and one can well believe, as is stated in the preface, that they were 'found helpful by a wider audience than one normally expects for philosophical lectures'.

The lack of knowledge of existentialist philosophical writing among most British academic philosophers is a striking fact of the contemporary university scene and one trace of it can be detected in this book, in the three names mentioned as those of thinkers in this country who have taken notice of existentialism (p. 117). The three are certainly eminent men but none of them is exactly a typical practitioner of linguistic analysis. In view of what is, then, the well nigh complete disregard of existentialism in our universities, a book such as the present clearly fills a gap in our philosophical literature. Incidentally, it reads a good deal more easily than most works by writers of the analytic school.

The writings of Kierkegaard, Sartre, and others are discussed with sympathy but without the bigotry of the naive convert. Thus, we are told, the writer disavows 'absolute Existentialism', the doctrines of those who believe that existence can be grasped in isolation and that, by isolating it,

we can achieve absolute, ultimate knowledge.

He does not confine himself strictly to giving an account of existentialist writings and, in two chapters in particular, on 'morality – relative or absolute' and the 'irrational in science and religion', opens up the discussion on wider philosophical issues. On morality he concludes, 'if we admit experience as evidence, . . . it is belief in an absolute morality which agrees with the facts'. Again, discussing the irrational and the part it plays in philosophy of science and in religion, he concludes that Existentialism has

valuable contributions to make to philosophy as a whole. With them, philosophy 'could once again justify its claim to be one of the most important endeavours of the human mind'.

In style and content the book is not at the highest level of academic writing but to many it will doubtless be all the more welcome for that. It offers a good deal of information on subjects not easily accessible and along with the information come criticisms both percipient and constructive.

John Symon

DOUBT'S BOUNDLESS SEA. Skepticism and Faith in the Renaissance by Don Cameron Allen. *John Hopkins Press and Oxford University Press, 48s.*

The Middle Ages were little oppressed by doubt, and only in the Renaissance did unbelief become the object of scrutiny and denunciation. Nor is this surprising, for the same rationalism that nourished systematic theology in turn produced the quantitative empiricism which stripped nature of its divine *vestigia*. In this setting Professor Allen surveys the sea of doubt from renaissance Padua to restoration London. Few outright atheists appear for the chief concern is with the rejection of rational theology, not of faith itself. Pomponazzi is therefore described as a pioneer of fideism, a fair conclusion though there are grounds for accepting his submission of reason to faith as more than a 'rhetorical genuflection'. Cardano and Vanini are also analysed to reveal why Italy seemed to Giu Patin a land of 'pox, poisoning and atheism', but when the French 'atheists' appear the inclusion of Montaigne exposes the true connotation of 'atheism' in the copious literature of renaissance invective. Security is dear to the human mind and a slight corrosion of accepted patterns can easily suggest their total overthrow. This, combined with the narrowing of spiritual perspectives attendant on a dismembered Christendom, doubtless explains the morbid sensitivity of the orthodox. The temptation to identify practical immorality with

speculative heterodoxy was overwhelming: already, in return, some free-thinkers attacked religion as the invention of princes or the rich.

Against the threats of such scepticism rational theology prepared its great assault and this is fully if breathlessly described by Professor Allen. Pride of place goes to the Platonist Henry More though Cudworth, the greatest of the Cambridge men, deserves more spacious treatment than he gets. Ironically the broad doctrinal front of this appeal to harmony and design was equally suited to the pure air of Deism and in the final chapter we see the rake Earl of Rochester hovering between the deist Blount and Bishop Burnet.

The theme is a significant one and draws together a number of thinkers usually seen in comparative isolation. Inevitably there is a threat of monotony in such a quantity of summarized material but it is held back by a slightly anxious humour. The erudite footnotes are all that one expects from the Johns Hopkins school and the bibliography with its wealth of reference to minor authors – those true mirrors of an age – gives the contours of an area that merits further exploration. The book itself is set out very handsomely, but then it might well be at the price.

Dominic Baker-Smith