

There is not only a logical but an ontological difference (beware: this is *not* Heidegger's ontological difference) between the act of being and the essence. Activity is 'the self-actuation, the self-realization of the acting subject' (91). A number of old friends appear at this point: substance, accident, finality. . . . Yet this is in some ways the most successful chapter. From this success, however, the section on the 'principles of being' should be excluded, as it is marred by some avoidable logical woolliness.

In chapter four Coreth, who works from the act of questioning, turns to the inquirer, of whom the question is a self-actuation; to man, in other words, but to man as that being which is spirit. 'As a spirit, the finite spirit reaches out towards the infinity of being. But as finite, the finite spirit can never catch up with the infinite range of the horizon of being' (106). This good chapter too is marred, by a rather confusing and confused treatment of analogous and univocal concepts.

Chapter five takes Coreth into an 'explication', in effect, of conclusions of chapter one. Questioning demands being as one, as true, as good, as a condition of its possibility. In discussing being as truth, Coreth distinguishes knowing and willing, which are both attempts of the spirit to realize a subject-object identity. When the identity is realized in the subject, there is knowing: when the identity is realized in the object, there is willing. At this point comes a treatment of 'the problem of evil' which is not only unsatisfactory but integrates very poorly into Coreth's overall plan. Equally jejune and forced are the sections on 'beauty' and on 'freedom and possibility'.

Chapter six introduces the material world briefly, but integrates it well as a response to Coreth's questioning. The human world is less happily integrated. Free behaviour, love, intersubjectivity and historicity are sketchily dealt with: and not really according to Coreth's own principles; though the brief treatment of 'morality' (163-169) gives an idea of what could have been done.

In chapter seven the absolute being of chapter two has become the absolute Being and is also called God. 'Whenever through reflection we make explicit the metaphysically transcendent nature of the human spirit, we have a proof for

God's existence—or rather we have *the* proof of God's existence, which is the ground and foundation of all other demonstrations' (181). As for philosophy, it is finally 'sublated' into religion (194). This is not all: we 'should stand open and ready . . . for a possible word of God to man in the world and in history' (196). *Haec finis*.

The difficulties one normally expects from metaphysics are unduly augmented by Coreth's use of expressions like 'horizon', 'ontological truth', 'ontological difference', in quite a different sense from that in which, after Heidegger or Husserl, say, they are widely understood. Coreth's use of 'univocal concepts' and 'analogous concepts' may be another example of the same order; or it may simply be an instance of a disregard for logical or analytical detail.

The 'proofs for the existence of God' are a voice from the past. The act of inquiring, says Coreth, 'presupposes the possibility of an infinite answer, which puts an end to all questions' (179). This sounds a fate worse than overpublicized death.

The presentation of the book is good, and the proofs have been carefully read. But there is no index: and why, when only some eight references are given, must they be put at the end, on an unnumbered leaf? When the main work has been so ruthlessly pruned, the 'editor's preface' is too long for what it has to say. The Lonergan review article (197-219) of the first German edition is where those already familiar with recent continental philosophy should begin the book: but it comes from a reasonably accessible periodical.

On the credit side, the book speaks for itself. Coreth comes through this edition not only as a philosopher but as a genuine metaphysician, especially in chapters three and four. The tension (ch. 4) between the medieval and the post-Kantian views of the relationship of men and nature is very interesting indeed.

There is a less fecund tension, however, between the book *of* metaphysics which this essentially is and the book *on* metaphysics (which occasionally suggests that it was composed with one eye on the Congregation of Seminaries and another on the American college market) which it sometimes becomes.

LAWRENCE MOONAN

WRITINGS IN TIME OF WAR, by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. *Collins*, London, 1968. 302 pp. 30s.
SCIENCE AND CHRIST, by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. *Collins*, London, 1968. 223 pp. 30s.

The publication of Teilhard's works in English translation continues steadily. The two under review constitute the tenth and eleventh

volumes from Collins alone (others have appeared in America), and they contain some of the most significant essays for anyone who

wants seriously to study the development of the thought of this extraordinary man. Too many people have tended to make up their minds about Teilhard too soon and on the basis of too little evidence. Though there is a growing appreciation of his importance, there are still a good many who seem to have heard only of *The Phenomenon of Man* and *Le Milieu Divin*, and who seem then simply to indulge in either unstinted praise or equally emotional condemnation. Pioneer thinkers, of course, always stimulate emotional controversy, especially if their thinking is concerned with things that really matter. Critics so minded found it easy to pick out from his most famous but most difficult book (*The Phenomenon of Man*) a set of phrases or expressions that together, and taken out of context, made him seem either a fool or a knave or both. But it was in his shorter essays that Teilhard himself wrote penetrating answers to many of the criticisms that have been levelled at him. Throughout his life he wrestled with great issues. If he finally came to see the enormously complicated problem of the meaning of existence (individual, collective, cosmic) in terms of a fairly straightforward set of principles and laws about the nature of the real world that science progressively discloses, he did so only on the basis of careful investigations of particular aspects of the whole, which he set out in essays or articles such as are now available in volumes like the ones under review. One hopes it will not be long before they are all available. Certainly no-one who wants to discuss Teilhard seriously can afford to neglect these two. The translation in each case has been carried out most skilfully by René Hague.

The two volumes sit very well together even though, because of legal problems over publishing rights where his manuscripts and published essays are concerned, they originally appeared in France under different auspices both editorial and publishing. *Science and Christ* is volume IX of the collection of his works being published under the direction of his literary executrix. The French edition carried an Introduction by the general editor of the series, Fr Norbert M. Wildiers, the Franciscan theologian. This does not appear in translation, which one would regret the more if Fr Wildier's *Introduction to Teilhard de Chardin* had not recently appeared in the Fontana series. *Writings in Time of War* was originally edited and annotated by Henri de Lubac, S.J., and Mgr Bruno de Solages. Their detailed and penetrating foot-

notes have been incorporated into the English version, and they contribute a great deal to its value and interest. The essays in this volume were written between 1916 and 1919, when Teilhard was in his late thirties and serving in the trenches. They represent his first attempts to write down, in case he was destined not to survive the war, something of his 'testament', that appreciation he had through both his science and religion, that one day we might see an end to all forms of isolation, exploitation and alienation, a time when mankind would work and pray and play together *ad majorem dei gloriam*. This would come about through man's recognition of the marvel of God's creative work in evolution, and the wonder of His coinherence, through the Incarnation, in matter-in-duration. The first essay is fittingly entitled 'Cosmic Life', and the last 'The Universal Element': this, for Teilhard, is the force that 'effects within itself the union of *God and the World*. The two supreme loves, the natural and the supernatural, that, seen from one angle appear to draw our hearts in contrary directions . . . are reconciled in the impassioned quest for the cosmic Christ.'

Those who instinctively dislike and distrust talk of anything so *big* as the 'cosmos', and who shy at the lyrical or poetic (except when kept firmly in its 'proper' place) will find much at which to cavil. Sometimes the medium, instead of *being* the message, appears rather to distort it. (That is, and is meant to be, a highly ambiguous sentence, specially constructed to see what kind of positive and negative reactions it might provoke.) But there are also some essays in a different style, and one would draw attention especially to 'The Struggle Against The Multitude', which makes more sense of 'the problem of evil', and of our redemption through the merits of Christ, than anything else I know.

Science and Christ consists of a specially selected group of essays that continue development of the same theme between the years 1919 and 1955. It includes the last essay he wrote, just a few weeks before death, on the theme of 'Research, Work and Worship'. Written for his colleagues in the Jesuit Order, it begins as follows:

"Go quietly ahead with your scientific work without getting involved in philosophy or theology. . . ." Throughout my whole life, that is the advice (and the warning) that authority will be found repeatedly to have given me. And such, too, I imagine the directive given to many brilliant youngsters who are now, when

the time is so opportune, entering the field of research. Such too, the attitude of which, with all respect and yet with the assurance I draw from fifty years spent living in the heart of the problem, I should like to remark to those it properly concerns that it is psychologically unviable and, what is more, directly opposed to the greater glory of God.'

Towards the end of this inspiring communication, he says simply, 'We need a new theology, then, and a new approach to perfection, which must gradually be worked out in our houses of study and retreat houses, in order to meet the new needs and aspirations of the "workers" we live among.' His own work

has laid some of the foundations for the new theology of the future.

Many of the ideas expressed in these books will of course be familiar to those who have already done some extensive reading in the field. But special essays, composed for special purposes or events, are where one looks for treatment in depth of particular topics. Perhaps what Teilhard needs most, just now, is to have his work subjected to a detailed, honest and thoroughly scholarly criticism. Each of these books contains a useful index. But picking snippets out of a text by means of an index is not fair treatment for an author as distinguished and as important as Teilhard. BERNARD TOWERS

POETRY AND THE SACRED, by Vincent Buckley. *Chatto and Windus*, 35s.

The title of Mr Buckley's impressive new book is slightly misleading: 'Poetry and the Sacred' suggests the sort of thematic study which is in fact disclaimed on the first page of the Introduction, where the author confesses that he has really no substantial *thesis* to offer. What follows are three connected essays on the ideas of the 'sacred' and 'religious', and then six closely detailed analyses of Wyatt, Donne, Blake, Melville, Yeats and Eliot, which seem only loosely related to the propositions of the first section.

This slight structural discontinuity follows fairly logically from Mr Buckley's particular kind of critical preoccupation: the individual studies are not controlled by an organizing thesis because that, for him, would be a damaging encapsulation of the 'specific life, quality and presence' of literary texts. One has seen too often, elsewhere, the limiting corollaries of this apparently positive and unexceptionable gesture not to be a little suspicious: the anti-thematic insistence on specificity in criticism has often enough relegated the analysis of wider literary issues—substance, ideas, social connexions—to the status of 'dogma', which can then be placed in favourable counterpoise with an esoterically abstracted 'sensibility'. There are faint traces of this limiting pragmatism in Mr Buckley's book: he is reluctant to be drawn into a more substantial, explicit and 'systematic' analysis of literary meanings (except in the case of Melville, where he advances, surprisingly, into more broadly interpretative terrain), and his fine attention to tone, poise, rhythm and texture can shift on occasions into a mode of sensibility so refined as to be hardly there. This comment on Yeats, for instance: 'I think that what holds us is the

delicate checks and balances which create a sense that Yeats is obeying a ceremony of the mind by attention to which the spirit and the bodily poise of the mind's object can be not only indicated but realized': what exactly does this sort of self-parodying 'Lit. Crit.' jargon, replete with abstractions enclosed within abstractions, actually get *said*? Mr Buckley's sensibility, unlike Henry James's, isn't quite so fine that no idea can violate it, but the hiatus between his three general chapters and six specific discussions is obvious enough for one to feel the undertow of a latent pressure in that direction.

Having said this, the fineness of the sensibility needs equally—indeed, much more firmly—to be emphasized. Mr Buckley's discussions of Donne, Blake, Yeats and Eliot are elegant and authoritative, revealing a superbly sensitive and genuinely personal critical intelligence. The best that can be said for his study is that it triumphantly justifies, in almost every line, that concern for the specific power and presence of literary works which he sets as the key-note; his ability to feel into a poem, to render the intricate significances of every modulation, is remarkable.

The worst that can be said for the book is that its thesis, in so far as it has one (and the title, surely, must be given *some* weight) makes little headway. The general chapters are thin in comparison with what follows, held together at points only by the self-conscious, slightly rhetorical pitch of the author's tone. I've suggested that this limitation is in any case inherent in Mr Buckley's approach: these fragmentary generalizations are not what he can do best. But he also works with a notion of the 'religious'—as an opening to transcendent