

REVIEWS

PHOENIX AND TURTLE. *The Unity of Knowing and Being*. By Thomas Gilby. (Longmans; 15s.)

The appearance of *Barbara Celarent* clearly puzzled many of its reviewers. They did not know for whom it was written. Avoiding the fashionable jargon and displaying an unfashionable urbanity, written amidst the 'existential' turmoil of naval warfare but breathing the calm rationality of the Whig country-house, the book did not seem to have been written for any readers whom the reviewers had ever met. *Phoenix and Turtle* is meant for those same readers; it is an invitation to philosophise addressed to adult human beings. The class of human beings includes mature sixth-formers, intelligent farm-labourers, Bertrand Russell, and, if taken extensionally, book-reviewers.

Amongst those who will profit most by reading it are the professional philosophers, because Fr Gilby is not so much concerned to state fresh problems as to inculcate those sane mental habits which we have grown out of. When one reads some of the professional philosophers (whether extreme positivists or extreme existentialists) the need for a return to those sane mental habits becomes painfully apparent; if the philosophers suffered in their own persons for their waywardness in the same way that a blacksmith suffers personally for missing his anvil, much of Fr Gilby's enlightened common-sense could have been assumed; at the present moment it cannot be assumed, it has to be firmly stated in the excellent manner of *Phoenix and Turtle*. For just as one retires from the Carnapian Semantopia with its jungle of signs or from the Heideggerian black-forest of symbols as if waking from a nightmare, so one rises from *Phoenix and Turtle* well-fed but sober, the inner man ready to follow where reason leads.

The ease with which one reads the book should not lead us into reading it lightly. For instance, the Cartesian *cogito* has been the subject of many learned essays, but how many of these have attained the shrewdness of Fr Gilby's observation that 'What first is subjectively felt is not so much *I think* as *I know*. This is a less sophisticated reading of the original transaction, and therefore to be preferred'?

Probably most of those whose eyes grow dim over the pages of *Mind* or *La Revue Philosophique* will occasionally feel that sections of the book would have read more convincingly if Fr Gilby had addressed himself to 'philosophers' rather than to human beings. The section on *Possibles*, for example, seems to demand a fairly elaborate semantic apparatus which would have been out of place here. But let us hope that all this is in store for us, and that Fr Gilby and Longmans are going to maintain their cultured conversation. What the next topic

will be we are left to guess. From a Catholic admirer of the Whig tradition, such as the author, one expects a discourse on politics. May it be strewn with those footnotes from St Thomas which made the bottom of the pages in *Barbara Celarent* a re-introduction to Thomism, and which one rather misses in the present volume.

D.N.

THE POWER AND LIMITS OF SCIENCE. A Philosophical Study. By E. F. Caldin. (Chapman & Hall; 12s. 6d.)

The first part of this book provides an excellent introduction to the scientific method. Mr Caldin emphasises the radical nature of the abstraction involved in the physicist's view of the objects given in experience and makes it clear that the valuable element in physical discussion is contained in equations rather than in imaginative models, however stimulating these latter may have been in the construction of hypotheses.

In spite of, or perhaps in consequence of, a strong bias in favour of an empirical, as opposed to an *a priori*, interpretation of the method of science, which is apparent in his lucid account of Eddington's philosophy of science, Mr Caldin makes a good case for the view that current theories regarding the status of scientific generalisations do not avoid the classic difficulties of Hume.

Mr Caldin escapes from these difficulties by postulating a difference of insight between the scientist, concerned with measurable relations, and the metaphysician, whose task it is to render experience intelligible and to provide a basis for scientific faith.

Here we encounter a difficulty, for Mr Caldin seems to make a distinction between phenomena, which are studied in physics, and agents or substances acting as efficient causes in real changes, which fall under the consideration of the metaphysician. As it is stated the distinction seems to fall between a phenomenal sphere or inorganic world and a world which is revealed in organic behaviour, above all in our own self-conscious activities: that is to say between a phenomenal world of indeterminate status and a metaphysical (real?) world. Mr Caldin, it is true, because he insists that it is one of the tasks of the metaphysician to examine the presuppositions of the scientist and to criticise his somewhat naive belief in the regularity of 'nature' is far from intending to give expression to a radical form of Dualism. Yet although he assigns a task to metaphysics, he does not make it very clear how the metaphysician is to carry it out. It would be unfortunate if Mr Caldin were to leave the subject there and it is to be hoped that in the future he will carry his inquiries further.

I.H.