

about new forms of "Christian perfection" since Vatican II. As far as Anglicanism goes, Forsyth (an Aberdonian by birth) is superbly pre-ecumenical (page 123): "one may call the average Englishman semi-Roman, not only because in temperament he is the Roman of the modern world, but because, ecclesiastically, his moral culture and type have been so largely moulded by the half-reformed Church which he still tolerates, and which he prizes more as an organisation of energy and society than of faith".

Forsyth, who studied with Ritschl in Germany, started out as a liberal theologian much influenced by Hegel. In fact he is a good case of a theologian who had his idealist metaphysics shattered by further reflection on the fact of the crucifixion. What Hegel himself taught about religion, and in particular what he believed about Christ, may remain ultimately undecidable, so dense and obscure do his statements become at key points. But the upshot of Bernard Reardon's very clear and fair analysis is that Hegel leaves the reader with the impression (page 116) "that truth is capable of being presented in ways so diverse that one statement of it can be virtually negated by another". In this double-truth theory it is not surprising that reference to what is the case becomes unimportant and the question arises as to

whether "the sheer singularity of the revealing *event* is not suppressed" (page 113).

For over half a century, until his death in 1924, F. H. Bradley lived as a recluse in Merton College, Oxford. It is appropriate that G. R. G. Mure, Warden of that college for many years, has been the one to keep the study of Hegel alive in Oxford through the many years of neglect that have now ended in an admittedly very different approach from his own, with the advent of questions from Marxism and the social sciences. He seems to have been a Hegelian since about 1920. It is fascinating to find him saying that as the faith in which he was confirmed at Eton declined he found idealist metaphysics the most congenial and plausible way of retaining Christian values without Christian faith (page 3). He even provides a splendid confirmation of Donald MacKinnon's central thesis, by citing with approval a judgment from Bradley's *Introduction to Appearance and Reality* (1893, page 5):

"Our orthodox theology on the one side, and our common-place materialism on the other side (it is natural to take these as prominent instances), vanish like ghosts before the daylight of free sceptical enquiry. I do not mean, of course, to condemn wholly either of these beliefs; but I am sure that either, when taken seriously, is the mutilation of our nature".

FERGUS KERR O.P.

ULTIMATE QUESTIONS, AN ANTHOLOGY OF MODERN RUSSIAN RELIGIOUS THOUGHT edited and with an introduction by Alexander Schemann. *Mowbrays, 1977.* pp. 310 £3.25.

The publication of this selection of substantial extracts from Russian religious philosophers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is perhaps a more important event than its editor would claim. His aim, he tells us, was "to give to those who are studying Russia, her history, literature, and religious life, at least a general idea of that area of Russian culture which Russians usually define as 'religious philosophy'." Yet a good deal in these pieces is verterbrate enough in theological structure to stand on its own two feet, whatever incidental support it may claim by virtue of illustrating the life and times of the Russian intelligentsia. A glance at the bibliographies provided for each author

shows how little of this tradition of Christian thought is available in English, always excepting N. A. Berdyaev, the subject of a crop of critical studies in the 1950's and partially excepting V. S. Solovyov, to whom S. L. Frank devoted a personal anthology, with an excellent introductory essay, published in 1950. The style may not commend itself to Anglo-Saxon taste, for a combination of Greek patristic Rhetoric and the language of German philosophy is not a recipe for any pudding known to Yorkshire but the effort of reading is, on the whole, well-rewarded, more so than a short review can display.

The first two essays, by Father Sche-

mann himself and by Vladimir Weidlé, are useful attempts to give what these writers, far from being official theologians of Russian Orthodoxy, are essentially independent and mostly lay thinkers, behind whom nonetheless lies the liturgical and devotional life of the Russian church. In their concern to express faith in a fresh idiom, addressed particularly to people conscious of a rupture of sensibility in the nineteenth century of Romanticism and Revolt, they seem comparable with the more familiar Catholic Modernists. That most orthodox 'Modernist', Friedrich von Hugel, certainly would have found sympathetic their combination of metaphysical and social comment, as well as their willingness to be fed by the worshipping tradition of the church. But if in one sense a writer like Solovyov belongs with Dickens, in another sense these men were and remain remote from us. The crisis they lived through was a peculiarly Russian one, the encounter of the still largely pre-Petrine society of their country in the steam age with the newly dynamic and disruptive West. Weidlé's essay charts this difficult relationship, arguing convincingly that both the 'Westernisers' and the 'Slavophiles' got the equation wrong. They shared the conviction that Western Europe was an alien culture, even though one group wanted to transplant it to Russia and the other to resist the weed at all costs. Neither saw the common rootedness of Russia and the West within the unity of Europe. The Russian religious philosophers, engaged as they were in a meeting of minds fed by Russian sources with the Western intellectual tradition in effect, he says, rediscovered this unity.

To my mind the most stimulating essays are those by Solovyov, Pavel Florensky and N. F. Fyodorov. Three difficult essays by Solovyov are taken from some short writings of the period around 1890, *Beauty in Nature*, *The Meaning of Art*, and *The Meaning of Love*. In his aesthetic theories, as in his philosophy of erotic love, Solovyov took his cue from moments of heightened awareness in the appreciation of nature or art, and in romantic love, to draw out latent metaphysical depths in our experience. In nature, he regards beauty as matter sharing in the 'end-in-

itself' quality of persons, something unconditionally valuable that by its very presence grants a joy and satisfaction to man. Before beauty in nature, therefore, we find ourselves enjoying an anonymous experience of the Creator God. Before beauty in art, on the other hand, we find ourselves ushered into the presence of the Redeemer God, the God of the end of time. An artwork is matter become capable of expressing and thereby realising what Solovyov calls 'ideal being', the depth of possible value in things bestowed by the divine creative act. Art, on this view, is a foretaste of the new heaven and the new earth, implicit eschatology. Solovyov's essay on sexual love is as wholehearted a christian affirmation of the goodness of erotic love as one could hope for. Unfortunately it is so wholehearted that it seems to make the erotic experience the only satisfactory mediation of the beatific vision there is. Not everyone can be a Dante gazing into the eyes of his Beatrice.

Pavel Florensky's Letter to a friend *On the Holy Spirit* forms part of the pre-Revolutionary collection *The Pillar and Ground of Truth*, which Nicolas Zernov sees as the theological overture to 'the Russian religious renaissance of the twentieth century'. Florensky who dies in Siberian obscurity in 1952, argues that the comparative inarticulacy of the christian tradition about the person of the Holy Spirit derives from the fact that his self-manifestation is the real content of the biblical metaphor of 'the Kingdom' and is our hope for the end of time, the transfigured world. Florensky warns against our claiming too much for our own, necessarily fragmentary, experience of the Spirit here and now. This is coercing the eschaton, and it destroys the balance of the christian life.

Fyodorov, a little known influence on Dostoevsky is represented by a piece on *The Restoration of Kinship among Mankind*. The resurrection of the dead (of the literally dead and of the spiritually dead among the living) into a single family of brethren is the primary meaning and the central task of Christianity, according to this essay. It is accomplished sacramentally in the Liturgy, but will only become

fully effective when Christians universalise their power to grieve for and to love all human society—of which the dead are continuing members. The need to redeem the unfinished past is as vital as the need to redeem the future with which Liberation Theology concerns itself. "Christianity would not be Christianity (i.e. worldwide love), Christ would not be the Son of Man (the son of the departed fathers), He would not be heart and soul in the grave of the fathers (in hell), He would be completely incomprehensible, if the connection between His Resurrection and the universal resurrection were broken."

Other essays are by A. S. Khomyakov on Eastern and Western accounts of the church, and by V. V. Rozanov, Berdyaev and G. P. Fedotov on the relation of the church to the world. The collection ends fittingly with an Easter homily of Father Sergei Bulgakov, where the themes of the gift of the Spirit, the transfiguration of nature and the joy of the age to come—the most characteristic motifs, I think, of *Ultimate Questions*—are finely orchestrated.

AIDAN NICHOLS O.P.

ST TERESA OF AVILA by Stephen Clissold *Sheldon Press* £8.95.

A clear and lively biography of that great lady, which is easy to read and which covers, as well as Teresa's immediate activities, the greater part of the reform movement amongst the Carmelites in 16th century Spain. Aspects of her life, e.g. the ancestry and its significance, are dealt with better than anywhere hitherto; but what does it all really add up to if what we have presented to us is little more than the 'facts' of her life and their immediate context? No really great woman emerges from these pages, though an interesting and powerful one does, for we are never really shown the genius of her spirituality, or shown how this affects, or grows out of, her relations with others. In fact it is precisely with regard to this latter, her relationship to others, that this book, along with practically all other similar biographies, shows its severest weakness. The

clashes, or indeed the fruitful cooperations, which took place within the reform movement are entirely attributed to personalities. Nowhere are we really given any idea of how the characters involved were affected by their cultural and political circumstances. The pressures they were undergoing, and to which they responded, arose from the fantastic opening up of Spain, both imperial and cultural, which was taking place at that time; and the tension between this and their heritage was having a considerable influence upon them. People were swept up into and affected by what was happening in a way which was often far from clear to them themselves; yet it was radical to their achievement. Unless this is taken into account we will never get an accurate picture of Teresa's greatness or historical significance.

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