not to take the Introduction by Philip Mairet too much *au pied de la lettre*. Mairet's description of phenomenology and his attribution to Kierkegaard of direct influence upon Marcel are misleading, while it is difficult to know what to make of the statement, repeated from Sartre, that 'Jaspers is a professed Catholic'. Wherever else Jaspers professes his Catholicism, it is certainly not in his philosophy.

Professor Bobbio has taken a somewhat easier line by treating Existentialism as an '-ism' connected with other '-isms', and by explaining it in terms of the latter. True to the fashion which we have now come to associate with Croce and his disciples, Bobbio thrusts Existentialism into his own categories of decadentism, mannerism or Hermeticism, whence they emerge slightly the worse for wear. So despite his many profound and interesting observations on the existentialist within us all he never transcends the psychological level; the ontology of it all remains untouched. And if psychological motivation is to be invoked so generously one might ask how much responsibility for present-day nihilism is to be laid at the door of the Catholic tradition? Men may be divided into two classes. On the one hand there are the open-souled whose initial act is a cry of gratitude for the gift of being, who take upon themselves the pain and hurt of life so that through them the Spirit may renew the face of the earth; on the other side are closed souls, so much turned inward that they only perceive their own existence suspended in nothingness and wail over it, instead of seeing that He Who is has caught them up into the fulness of his being. Existentialists belong to the second class, and so does much post-Reformation Catholic spirituality. D. NICHOLL

LECTURES ON GODMANHOOD. By Vladimir Solovyev. (Dennis Dobson; 18s.)

Vladimir Solovyev's significance lies rather in his aims and ideals than in his positive achievements. He regarded it as his task 'To justify the Faith of the fathers, to elevate it to the highest level of rational consciousness, and to show how this ancient Faith, freed from the chains of inner seclusiveness and national self-love, coincides with the eternal and immutable truth.' As Professor Zouboff remarks in his admirable Introduction,

> The whole creation had room in Solovyev's heart, was genuinely, organically, dear to him. Not only did he throw himself into the one-man crusade for bringing together the Orthodox and the Catholics; he defended the Protestants as certainly a part of the Church of Christ, however much they may have deprived themselves of the fullness of grace and truth because of their separation from the main body of the historic Church; and he prayed fervently all his life for the Jews, that they too would come into the fold of Christ's sheep, according to the word of St Paul that in the latter days they will be released from their 'unbelief,' i.e., their inability to perceive the Messiah in Jesus. Solovyev regarded all men, of whatever faith or station in life, as in some way, in some measure, carrying out God's will and purpose.

Eclectic in philosophy, while keeping within the main stream of German idealism, and insufficiently grounded in the positive sources, Solovyev had not the equipment to bring about, even on the theoretical level, a fusion of Eastern Orthodox and Western Catholicism. But the work he did in fact accomplish cannot be ignored by any who would contribute to that all-important undertaking, The present series of twelve lectures was published, in Russian, in 1878; when first delivered two

years earlier, at the University of St Petersburg, there were present the leaders of the intellectual world, including Dostoyevsky and Leo Tolstoy. The notion of 'Godmanhood', though doubtless patient of a Catholic interpretation, appears here to be a syncretistic amalgam of orthodox Christianity, ancient Gnosticism and Hegelian monism; it is well summarized by Professor Zouboff,

> The nativity of the Christ-child in Bethlehem, the first manifestation of the Incarnate Word, had been preceded by countless preparatory stages in the progressive subjugation of the 'chaos of disjunct elements' to the unifying power of the 'absolute idea', or Logos, acting through the nascent Sophia; and has *continued* after the Ascension of Christ, mainly (but not exclusively) through the Church He founded and empowered with the Spirit of God at the Pentecost for action, in the *continued* incarnation of the divine idea, 'or the deification (theosis) of all that exists by bringing it in'—as a subdued captive of the unifying power of the divine Love or Idea—'into the form of the absolute organism' of Logos-Sophia, or Christ, as the ever-widening manifestation of the Subject of being in its 'other one', i.e. in the phenomenal world of nature. For Sophia is not only the ideal humanity but also the 'world-soul', the unity of all created world.

The lectures clearly substantiate the remark the 'The idea of unity is the central, cardinal conception of all Solovyev's philosophy, the cornerstone of all his ideological constructions, the fundamental criterion in his approach to any and all problems'. From this significant viewpoint he has much that is both enlightening and moving to say of sin, suffering, and of the forces which set men at enmity with one another, and how they find their only solution in Christian love. A.G.

THE THEOLOGY OF WILLIAM BLAKE. By J. G. Davies: (Oxford U.P. 12s. 6d.)

The chief value of Blake's poetry lies in its revelation of what psychologists have until lately called the unconscious mind. More recently they have preferred to call it the autonomous psyche. Blake called it, more simply, the Imagination, and indeed to call this reservoir of images the unconscious in his case would be misleading, for to him it was not unconscious at all. He regarded this symbolism as of tremendous importance, and if anything over-rated it, calling it man's eternal world. But Mr Davies is not interested in the symbolic figures which crowd Blake's pages, and only refers to them once. His interest lies in the mental framework with which Blake surrounded his symbolism—his theology and ethics. He gives us therefore a very much over-intellectualised Blake. Blake was not primarily a thinker; he was a poet, and the chief office of the poets is to reflect either the outward world of Nature or the inner symbols of the mind. Blake did the latter. Thought, to him, was a secondary function, but in thinking he was always original and because of his very originality tended to over-stress the truths he had discovered and to present them as it were out of context. His 'deliberate severance from institutional religion was undoubtedly to the detriment not only of his art but also of his whole system of theology, since it rendered him too apt to over-emphasize those truths which he perceived, while neglecting other important aspects of the Gospel.'

Mr Davies gives a very accurate picture of Blake's thought, and comes to the conclusion that he was, on the whole, an orthodox Protestant Christian, somewhat inclining towards the left wing, but who could have repeated with conviction most of the articles of the Apostles' Creed. He was a monotheist, whose occasional