

REVIEWS

Bloy certainly was not. He divided his works into two distinct and contrasted categories, the "aesthetic" and the "devotional." The former are not always the most lucid, but it is to these that *Philosophical Fragments* belong. One may question the wisdom of the choice of these with which to make his long belated introduction to the English-reading public—perhaps it would have been preferable to have given us first some more personal and "popular" documents—but they certainly give us much that is deepest and richest in his thought, besides some striking examples of its limitations.

We should be particularly thankful to the Oxford University Press for accompanying their translation with the critical essays of a great Catholic thinker. For Kierkegaard has much to give to Catholics, and many of the problems which he suffered to solve are also theirs. The dominant note of his message is the vital truth that we are too apt to forget: the truth that Christ is "sign to be contradicted, set for the rise and fall of many"; the truth of the uncompromising opposition between Christianity and the world; the consequent tragedy of the Christian calling and the sense which the divine "intervention" in history imposes of constant stress and "crisis"; the resolution of that tension by the power and the grace of God; its manifold applications to every field of human experience and endeavour. The "contemporaneousness" which discipleship of Christ demands of us is the profound theme of *Philosophical Fragments*. His vehement denunciations of Christians' betrayal of their vocation cannot leave us unmoved, and may make us conscious of infidelities which may otherwise pass unheeded and unrepented; and his life as well as his works may bring to our minds the relevance of the Christian revelation to everyday concerns of life and love, art, science and philosophy which we tend to pursue in complete isolation from it. Yet Kierkegaard must be read with understanding and caution, for, as Dr. Haecker says, "the historical conditions, his own personal position, and his hereditary distance from the 'Mother,' the Catholic Church, were a hidden danger for which he was not always prepared and to which he often succumbed." In Dr. Haecker's essays the Oxford University Press has given to Catholics (and, it is to be hoped, not only Catholics) a sure guide that will tell them what to look for, and where to be on their guard. VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

A MODERN JOB SPEAKS WITH GOD. By Peter Lippert, S.J. Translated by George N. Shuster. (Longmans; 7/6.)

The difficulty would be to find an Eliphaz, Bildad and Sophar for this "modern Job": so unexceptionably edifying are his doctrine and his attitude. He is often, it is true, sad to reflect that the ways of God are not more patified to our human understand-

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ing: very gently he will almost complain of this to the Holy Spirit—but he well knows his creaturely place; this is only a form of tender prayer, and the darkness is dew-laden. A more radiant mood mostly prevails: "O my God, thou art light, light! It seems to me that I must somehow press these words together so that all the sweetness may drip from them." He is worried however a good deal, it must be confessed, over what may be called the problem of evil; and this again becomes the theme of his honeyed converse with God: "How loyal and fair are the eyes of a dog; and how terrible is the look in the eyes of beasts of prey. See them rush on howling to strike their victims, then tear the gentle, motherly creatures asunder to make a meal. Ah, the lion even, when in a cage he approaches the bars! . . . Lord, Thy work in the realm of nature seems to be on the whole more evocative of fear than of confidence and kindness." The morning's meditation as affected by an overnight reading of Thomas Hardy. And there are various other subjects that can move him to sadness. But to bitterness, never for a moment.

To be sure, no ecclesiastical censor acting on his own authority would have the audacity, or the right, to release the old-time Job for general reading. "After this Job opened his mouth and cursed his day . . . 'Let the day perish wherein I was born and the night which said a man child is conceived.'" Only the Holy Spirit had the right to *imprimatur* the real Job—which He most graciously did (having also written it Himself) for the tremendous comfort and *katharsis* of our souls. But if we cannot have the wounded lion, it would be better to call the turtle-dove a turtle-dove.

RICHARD KEHOE, O.P.

PHILOSOPHY

THE MAJORITY REPORT ON ART. By Graham Carey. (John Stevens, Newport, Rhode Island; 50 cents.)

This is a good, brief exposition of the principles of one section of aesthetic theory, artistic creation. The author's direct and common-sense manner does much to help the reader towards understanding and conviction where unnecessary and useless subtlety can so easily rob the question of that air of common-sense that is its natural birthright.

He treats his subject in three main sections: Art is making things well, Beauty is not transferable, and the Four Causes of things made. By way of criticism we would suggest that there is evidence, particularly in the first and last sections, that truths have been imperfectly grasped and certainly wrongly applied. He summarizes the three sections by defining art as the well making of what needs to be made, and interprets the definition so