

translated as "sex-love" it is a pity that the necessary explanatory footnote should have been deferred to p. 30.

These are minor criticisms which do not touch the substantial value of a work of great importance. Solovyev shows how love is meant to be the driving force which alone can produce that *unity* which was his greatest vision and aspiration: no need to stress the relevance of that vision, and the urgency of that aspiration, for the world of to-day.

GERALD VANN, O.P.

MODERN CHRISTIAN REVOLUTIONARIES: (2) REINHOLD NIEBUHR: Prophet from America. By D. R. Davies. (5) NICHOLAS BERDYAEV AND THE NEW MIDDLE AGES. By Evgueny Lampert. (James Clarke & Co.; 4s. 6d.).

Theology's most urgent need, vis-à-vis the world of to-day, is to show that it is indeed possessed of, and built upon, the "tragic sense of life", and the ultimate uniqueness of every personality and every event, and that its application through moral principles, to the world and its problems is based upon that awareness. Without that, the cleavage between Church and the world, and indeed between *docens* and *discens* can only grow wider. That is one of the reasons why thinkers like Berdyaev and Niebuhr are of such importance.

In many ways they are alike. The sense of the tragic destiny of man lies deep in both of them; both are 'dialectical' and 'prophetic' thinkers; both are fighters for human personality against the evils of the machine age; both are deeply concerned with the problem of evil; both have succeeded in making theology significant to the secular reader. In many ways, of course, they differ profoundly: Niebuhr the American, of German origin and Evangelical back-ground, led, as Mr. Davies puts it, to the left in politics, to the right in theology, by his first-hand experience of the Ford Age in Detroit; Berdyaev the Russian, influenced alike by marxism, the Slavophiles and Solovyev, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. In many ways they differ in their approach, their preoccupations, their conclusions. But in the last resort the differences are less striking than the resemblances.

These two books are eminently successful in that they not only give a clear account of their subjects but also inspire the reader with the desire to know them better at first hand. Mr. Davies's is the more purely biographical and expository; one's main regret is that space is sometimes used in repetition which could very usefully have been devoted to a fuller discussion of one of the main difficulties in reading Niebuhr, his theory of the precise relevance of Christianity to existing society. With Dr. Lampert's study it is principally the treatment of existentialism generally that one feels to be inadequate in view of the purpose of the book; there are statements, moreover, especially about existentialism itself and about reason, which call for discussion; incidentally, St. Thomas finds himself placed in queer company. And since the book is an

interpretation of Berdyaev to western minds, should the author have been satisfied merely to state Berdyaev's distrust of rational theology, without touching on the possibility of eventually synthesizing the two different approaches? Perhaps the question is an improper one, in view of the author's terms of reference; but it leads us back to the chief importance of books such as these, and of thinkers like Berdyaev and Niebuhr, for the Catholic theologian. For him it is indeed the question of the possible synthesizing of the two approaches, the investigation of the extent to which they are not mutually exclusive but complementary, that is paramount. That would be true in any case and at any time, for theology must always be growing and absorbing if it is not to stagnate; it is particularly true at the present time and with thinkers such as these, whose spirit and whose underlying intuitions do correspond to something very deep in contemporary life and experience.

GERALD VANN, O.P.

MODERN CHRISTIAN REVOLUTIONARIES. (1), (3) and (4).

THE WILD KNIGHT OF BATTERSEA: G. K. CHESTERTON. By F. A. Lea.

C. F. ANDREWS: FRIEND OF INDIA. By N. Macnicol.

Mr. Lea's book is rather bewildering. For he would have had Chesterton so different from what he was. The method he uses is to tell us what Chesterton said and thought, and then, often, to tell us how it would have been better if he had said and thought something else. The first great mistake that Chesterton made was to become a Catholic, since he thereby placed himself outside the religious traditions of his country. As an artist in words, Mr. Lea does not think that he attained the first rank, because his ability to use words was not the equal of the vision that they were required to express. As a distributist, he was sound when he was talking about England; but, to be consistent, he should have been a pacifist.

Mr. Lea leaves the impression that he thinks Chesterton would have been a greater man if he had been an amalgam of himself, Mr. Middleton, Murray and Canon Sheppard. Yet Chesterton is obviously one of his heroes; the final judgment of the book is that of Eric Gill when he described Chesterton as "a writer and as a holy man, beyond all his contemporaries". It is fair to add that the book was written before Miss Ward's biography was published.

In *C. F. Andrews: Friend of India*, Mr. Macnicol writes of a devoted Christian friend of Gandhi and Tagore. Andrews was a Protestant, with few dogmatic beliefs, but he had an immense charity, and a zeal that was at the service of Indians all over the world. Whether the methods that he used were valid, is a matter of debate; but no one could doubt his love of our Lord as he believed that he found Him in the Indian people.

B.D.B.