

BLACKFRIARS

Testament and on purely Scriptural lines built up an objective conception of the Holy Spirit . . . before him, however, such objectivity as was attained was mainly reached in connection with the phenomena of Scriptural inspiration . . . the first suggestion was derived from the Bible" (p. 84). But here we must take issue with him. How far his researches have led him to study the *Acta* of Chalcedon and Ephesus we do not know, but we feel sure that if he had read carefully St. Cyril's defence of the orthodox teaching on the Incarnation he would have realized that Cyril never insisted on the orthodox teaching *because* it was in Holy Scripture, but simply because it was "that which has been handed down to us"; he finds confirmation of this, of course, in the Bible; indeed he takes each book of the New Testament in turn to show that Christ was true man, and then goes through them all again to show that the same Scriptures also taught that He was true God.

Returning to Dr. Prestige's study of the technical terms used by the Greeks, we may note particularly the discussion on the use of the word "Spirit" (pp. 18 ff.—on p. 18 the word "in" is omitted); also on the distinction between "agenetos" and "agenetos" with one "n" omitted (pp. 42-54); but peculiarly valuable is the long account of the term "economy" and "economy" apropos of Divine Providence (pp. 58 ff.—see, too, especially pp. 65, 67, 98, 100, 111). It is no exaggeration to say that these careful investigations mark a new stage in positive theology and no student will be able to disregard them in the future.

It is refreshing, too, to find Tertullian restored to his true place; "the movement for minimizing the 'juristic' character ascribed to his thought, and emphasizing its philosophical quality, needs to be still further strengthened" (p. xxv, cf. pp. 97 ff. and 111). Even Eusebius is shown to have been frequently misunderstood in some of the less orthodox-sounding expressions he uses, while Dr. Prestige is not afraid to say that "Whatever difficulties Origen experienced in explaining the fact that Christ was truly God, he had no hesitation in proclaiming the fact itself" (p. 79).

We are tempted to quote still more from this fascinating volume—but we must leave readers to discover for themselves what a treasure-house it is.

HUGH POPE, O.P.

CHRISTIANISME ET PHILOSOPHIE. By Etienne Gilson. (Vrin; 15 frs.)

The problem of the place of philosophy in the Christian scheme of things is part of the wider problem of Christianity and humanism. If temporal values are to be despised, there can be

REVIEWS

no such thing as Christian philosophy: and this position has often enough been adopted in the history of the Church. "Nothing matters but eternal salvation"—so the argument would run; "but the Word of God is salvation; therefore nothing but the Word of God is of importance" (p. 14). It is the position of Peter Damian, of Bernard of Clairvaux, of the author of the *Imitation*, of a great many in the Middle Ages. And the Christian objection to it is the Christian objection to all anti-humanism: "Philosophy is the work of reason; reason is the work of God, His image; are we to despise the image of God within us?" (p. 16). M. Gilson in the early chapters of this scholarly book discusses the opposing views, more especially in relation to the position of Calvin (and of Barth), and elucidates the difference between the term "Christian philosophy" as used by Calvin and by St. Thomas. "If you sincerely condemn philosophy as harmful, says Luther to Erasmus, recognize first that the nature which philosophy interprets is irremediably corrupt. If you sincerely recommend a Christian philosophy, says Calvin to Erasmus, recognize that reason plays no part in it and that it is exclusively the work of faith. But the Catholic humanist could deny neither the nature which grace cures nor the natural reason to which faith restores sight" (p. 34). "The dangers which beset the Catholic are either a semi-Calvinism which leads him to despair of nature, or a semi-pelagianism which urges him to dispense with grace. The true Catholic position consists in maintaining that nature was created good, that it is wounded, that it can be at least partially cured by grace if God will" (p. 37). "For the Catholic, grace restores not only a religious aptitude but a natural aptitude: a Calvinist natural theology is therefore impossible but a Catholic natural theology possible, and hence the Catholic, unlike the Calvinist, has a right to a Christian philosophy properly so called" (p. 71, note).

The rights of the reason granted, in what sense can philosophy be called Christian and yet remain philosophy? This question treated in a different manner by M. Maritain in his *Philosophie Chrétienne*, is next discussed. "Piety can never dispense with technical excellence" (p. 156); "if we want to be scientists for God's sake the first thing is to be scientists for science' sake, or as though it were for science' sake, for this is the only means of acquiring it . . . to think that we're serving God by learning a certain number of formulas which say the right thing, without knowing why it is the right thing, is to delude ourselves" (p. 155). Not the debating answer, nor the desire of discomfitting the opponent; but the desire to get at the truth—these are the first practical principles. In England there is perhaps a tradition of text-book debating-replies; there is certainly a tradition, in historical text-books, which regards Thomism as mere apologetic;

BLACKFRIARS

and for these reasons one would hesitate to agree wholly with M. Gilson when he writes: "If our traditional philosophy does not to-day find the audience we could wish for it, it is by no means because it is suspected of being upheld by faith, but rather because, being so upheld, it pretends not to be" (p. 161). The idea still lingers that Christian philosophy must be merely ingenious *a priori* deductions from dogmatic propositions; it is the necessity of getting rid of the idea which makes the name Christian philosophy at present ambiguous in this country. Clearly one of the best ways of remedying such a situation is to make it clear, as this book does, that philosophy is upheld by the faith only extrinsically, that it retains and must retain its autonomy, though grace will have its restorative and strengthening effect on reason and on reasoner, and that the Christian philosophy is not an apologetic for what reason will not establish, and has no use for glib but unassimilated text-book arguments.

This book is mainly the enlargement of lectures given to Protestant theological students. It puts very clearly the opposition between Catholic and Protestant positions, making no attempt to gloss over lack of unity of thought among Catholics, but elucidating the teaching of the Church and the opinions of the great theologians. Its aim is thus to establish a clear understanding of differences, and is therefore of inestimable value in the work of reunion; for it is in so far as we try to realize clearly and sincerely where and why we differ, instead of being content to find arguments against one another, that the possibility of closer agreement begins: "a clear disagreement is often more fruitful and in the last resort more charitable, than the vague civilities of misunderstanding."

GERALD VANN, O.P.

DAS WESEN DER PHILOSOPHIE UND DIE PHILOSOPHISCHEN PROBLEME. By Hans Meyer. (Hanstein, Bonn; RM. 6.)

Though this is the seventh to appear out of sixteen fascicules, the author explains in his foreword that it is meant as an introduction to the whole series. Each fascicule is a complete essay, and the whole series, which can claim in some sense to cover the entire field of philosophy, is to be bound into some four volumes. When the series began to appear, nearly three years ago, the names of fifteen contributors were advertized; the list now shows that eleven authors are to be responsible for the sixteen essays, the present essay having been substituted for one by Prof. von Hildebrand which was already in the press in 1934. As these men are Catholics it is unpleasant to speculate on the reasons for the change.

In a subtitle Professor Meyer indicates his intention to make his essay an introduction to the philosophy of to-day, and considering