

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF JACQUES MARITAIN. Selected readings by Joseph W. Evans and Leo R. Ward. (Geoffrey Bles; 25s.)

This book is to be welcomed in that it brings together in one volume those passages from the writings of M. Maritain that are both representative and expressive of his social and political philosophy. With certain exceptions, notably in connection with passages taken from *Man and the State* and *The Range of Reason*, the editors have made new translations from the French editions. Some of the translations are in places quite similar to earlier ones, whereas others are widely different.

The core of M. Maritain's social philosophy is to be found in his teaching on the Person and the Common Good. The book published in 1941 under that title (the English translation of *La personne et le bien commun*) was already too short and tightly condensed for clear understanding. In the book under review the excerpts from *The Person and the Common Good* total fourteen pages and represent less than half that short work. In view of the length of this new book of selected readings (nearly 400 pages) there would seem to be a lack of appreciation on the part of the editors of the fundamental importance of this notion of the common good in M. Maritain's social theory. While paying every respect to the greatness of M. Maritain as a thinker and as a Thomist it must be said that not every one can accept his distinction between individual and person (which lies at the heart of his doctrine of the common good) as that of St Thomas or indeed as valid. But the subject is too complex to pursue in a short review. The editors did well to invite the author to write a Preface. In expressing his gratitude to them 'for their interest . . . and for the pains they have taken in selecting these excerpts and composing with them a book with a unity and internal development of its own', M. Maritain has silenced in advance any possible criticism about the misrepresentation of his teaching by an injudicious selection of passages.

MURDOCH SCOTT, O.P.

NO MAN IS AN ISLAND. By Thomas Merton. (Hollis and Carter; 16s.)

*No Man is an Island* is an absorbing book which achieves a very difficult task in a remarkably simple and sure way. It is much more than a collection of aphorisms on fundamental questions affecting the Christian life, hope, conscience, intention, vocation. Its title rightly leads us to suppose that the book will be about the dialogue between God and man, and man and man, whereby they grow in knowledge and love of each other. Its method is to bring to light the often hidden questions which make these reciprocal relationships vital. The true