

REVIEWS

SCIENCE AND WISDOM. By Jacques Maritain. Translated by Bernard Wall. (Bles; ros. 6d.)

There are two considerable essays here, one on the philosophy of nature, the other on philosophy in faith, or Christian philosophy considered not as a pure essence, but as a rational habit, or complex of habits, in a given historical state. Apart from a slight essay on the synthesis of wisdom within and of wisdom without this world, the remainder of the volume is taken up with reflections on moral philosophy arising from criticisms made by two Dominicans, Fr. Deman and Fr. Ramirez. The point is the degree to which human nature may go abstracting from grace; M. Maritain not going so far as his opponents, playing Cajetan to their Ferrariensis, Michael Angelo to their Bramante. The student will require the context of the controversy, and I fancy this translation could have been slimmed to advantage by the omission of these tangled pages.

The first essay alluded to is of importance to the English reader. It is easier to recognize the need of a philosophy of nature than to define its status. This lies somewhere between a general grammar of the sciences and a particular application of metaphysics. An uneasy position this, an order within changing and corruptible things that does not reach the security of metaphysics. Yet to make the attempt at such an order is one test of being Aristotelean rather than Platonic; the refusal to escape from the dubious world we are inside to an outside world of certainty, the effort to see lasting truth in the things we touch and see and hear.

The first flow expected too much from such a science. M. Maritain notes the intellectual precipitancy of ancient and medieval thinkers who covered the particular sciences with natural philosophy, using its principles as a substitute for their detailed processes. From the time of Francis Bacon the ebb set in, the particular sciences were uncovered, and the whole of nature was given a mathematical reading. Presently natural philosophy was well out of sight.

The result was not unlike the shore above high-water mark, all powdery and blowing about, discomfort and grit. The tide has turned again. It is seen that the particular sciences cannot explain themselves, and that while mathematics may help to arrange them, it cannot explain them. Hence the need of squarely facing the problem of the philosophy of nature. M.

Maritain shows how we may profit from the mistakes of the past, the mistake of expecting rough scientific fact to provide philosophical criteria, the mistake of constructing a natural philosophy independent of refined scientific facts. His essay is worthy of a commentary, as it stands small allowance is made for readers unfamiliar with scholastic terms.

On a point of detail, M. Maritain rules out as unauthentic the use of *scientia* to mean a way of knowing that likes the tang of created things. Yet the *Secunda Secundae*, treating of the Gift of Knowledge, allows for this cast of creatureliness and its penalty, known by Ecclesiastes and comforted by the second Beatitude.

THOMAS GILBY, O.P.

THE FOURTH GOSPEL. By the late Edwyn Clement Hoskyns, Bart., D.D. (St. Andrews). Edited by Francis Noel Davey, Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Two vols. (Faber and Faber; 30s. the set.)

In a long introduction to this work, Hoskyns undertook to expound his central conception of the character and purpose of the Fourth Gospel. It is with this declaration, obviously, that a brief criticism must be concerned. Hoskyns only roughly completed this undertaking; but the Editor has been able to supply a supplementary Essay based on certain of Hoskyns' notes.

One forms the impression that Hoskyns' position is ultimately confused and inconsistent. His general conclusion is that both the theme and also the very subject-matter of the Gospel is 'the non-historical that makes sense of history, the infinite that makes sense of time, God who makes sense of men and is therefore their Saviour.' That is to say, Hoskyns maintains that nothing (or scarcely anything) of what we should simply call historical fact is contained in this Gospel. It is wholly concerned with what faith—and faith alone—can discover in, or through, the facts of the New Testament. It withdraws from the order of humanly observable history, of successive, chronological happenings, in order to set forth the Absolute of the Gospel. Here are no 'episodes,' such as the Synoptic Gospels provide. Indeed, Hoskyns supposes that a principle motive behind the fourth Gospel was one of rescuing the Christian truth from being identified with such 'episodic' material, and thereby nullified.

This broad conclusion is, of course, opposed to the Catholic view of the character of the Fourth Gospel. But the interest

of Hoskyns' thought lies in the groundwork of theological speculation upon which this conclusion is based. It is here that confusion enters. For he seems to maintain one attitude of mind in which he accepts the Catholic view of the original historical embodiment of the Gospel truths—and so long as he keeps to this attitude his theorising amounts to no more, or no less, than a most illuminating re-statement of the traditional estimate of the Fourth Gospel as being a Spiritual and a Theological Gospel which regards all history *sub specie aeternitatis*. But there also appears to be a strain in his thought, representing perhaps the most active drift of his mind, which is somewhat dualistic in character. One would be less inclined to treat this as being more than a vague undertone if it were not for his so formal rejection of the traditional Catholic position, as represented by Lagrange.

This quasi-Dualist in Hoskyns, then, appears to hold that the Gospel truth of its nature could not be set forth in terms of literal historical events, since there were no literal historical events in which it could be said to have been embodied. Not, however, that he flatly rejects the historical character of the Gospel; but the history he allows for is a transcendent, timeless history, recognizable only by faith, in which the Gospel truth was not precisely embodied but with which it was identical, or at least so indissolubly united that there must be no talk of Flesh and Spirit, of Body and Soul, and no scope permitted for the operations of historical criticism. Accordingly, the traditional Catholic position becomes unacceptable with its assertion that the characteristic method of the Fourth Gospel is to attain its theological end by means of literal historical facts so presented that their divine meaning should become symbolically apparent. And likewise the position of a Loisy and a Holtzmann must be repudiated, since their theory of imaginary history invented for allegorical purposes no less implies the original embodiment of the Gospel truth in literal historical events. For Hoskyns it is only by some method of *abstraction* that the divine reality could be expressed.

One is inclined to think, therefore, that the most advanced strain in Hoskyns' thought reaches to a position which is subtly anti-sacramental, anti-Incarnational; and that it is not without significance that he omits to dwell on the anti-Gnostic purpose present in the Gospel. Most decidedly, however, he deserves to be read. What may be false is always stimulating, for he is never perverse; and what is sound is wonderfully invigorating and enriching doctrine. The Commentary was only partly

written, or rather re-written, in the light of his final convictions. It wavers in its outlook, therefore; inclining perhaps rather more to the pole of orthodoxy. It is full of brilliantly suggestive thought. But it is also equipped with a masterly complement of technical information. It deserves—perhaps only just deserves—to be rated as the *great* Commentary which every one had looked for.

RICHARD KEHOE, O.P.

THE POWER AND THE GLORY. By Graham Greene. (Heinemann; 8s. 3d.)

The greatest obstacle to *pietas* is complacent piety. It bolts and bars the soul against divine intrusion; it evades the divine pursuit because it cannot think of such a pursuit as conceivably necessary. Conscious of sin—its own notion of sin—only as an alien ugliness, it has discovered or dreamt of the deepest love: 'We wouldn't recognise *that* love. It might even look like hate. It would be enough to scare us—God's love. It set fire to a bush in the desert, didn't it, and smashed open graves and set the dead walking in the dark. Oh, a man like me would run a mile to get away if he felt that love around.' 'I love God, father,' she said haughtily. He took a quick look at her . . . another of the pious . . . 'How do you know? Loving God isn't any different from loving a man—or a child. It's wanting to be with Him, to be near Him.' He made a hopeless gesture with his hands. 'It's wanting to protect Him from yourself.'

To have missed, to fail to suspect, the deepest love is to miss the tears of God, and the deepest glory. For the deepest glory is revealed when the heart of God seizes on the weak, the negligent, the cold, for its service; entrusts to their care the Christ-life that is light to the world; and even batters them into beauty themselves, and into love, through their grudging service.

This story presents us with two contrasting portraits: a plump, sleek priest, surrounded by his admiring guilds and societies, accepting homage easily, performing his duties ably, respectable, respectably ambitious, repeating correct professional platitudes which have no meaning for him, loving nobody, living for himself; and the same priest, hollow cheeked, whisky-sodden, father of a child, neglecting all his personal duties, but discovering, with the sense of his own shame and weakness, the essence of the priesthood—the power to give God to men; discovering, in the mire and misery, the meaning of love; and dying for God. It is the story of the sole surviving priest in a

persecuting Mexican state. Ought he to relieve the faithful of the scandal of his life; or is it more important that he should stay, to give them God? Finally he does escape; the old sleek life beckons him; and he turns back at the call of a dying man, knowing that he is walking into a trap, still weak, still shivering, still tortured by his own worthlessness and sin.

The skill with which the story is built up is outstanding: the Mexican scene, the heat and the squalor; the vivid, terrible, contrast provided by the passages from the pretty plaster-saint life of the other martyr; the figure of Padre José, married and settled down to a life of humiliation on a Government pension; the cold idealism of the Red lieutenant; the recurring portrait of the priest himself in earlier days; the scandal of ecclesiastical commercialism ('The boy, father, has not been baptised. The last priest who was here wanted two pesos. I had only one peso. Now I have only fifty centavos'); all these things are organic elements in a single vision, gradually achieved, of extraordinary intensity and depth. It needed great skill to write such a book; but it needed more than skill. That is why it is one of the most moving novels, and one of the most illuminating, that one has read for a long time.

GERALD VANN, O.P.

'WHAT IS LITERATURE?' By Charles du Bos. (Sheed and Ward; 5s.)

To attempt to provide an answer to the question 'What is Literature?' is to join oneself to a distinguished line of critics: Arnold, Sainte-Beuve, Coleridge, de Gourmont. 'I would have no right to approach the question at all,' M. du Bos rightly says, 'if I pretended that I am not in possession of at least the lineaments of an answer.' There are two fundaments of his answer which are presupposed by any real aesthetic: the objectivity of beauty and the exemplarity of God: 'beauty is *objective* before being *subjective*,' and the response of the soul 'depends upon the immutable objectivity of the appeal addressed'; and 'the mystery of Beauty is tributary of God's presence . . . and herein lies the deepest ground not only for the objectivity of Beauty, not only for its immutability, but for all the mysterious truths residing in the essences of the things of Beauty themselves.' It is a pity that, starting from such premises as these, the criticism of M. du Bos should show all those failures into which all criticism so easily falls, and perhaps especially French criticism: his language lacks critical precision, and, at those moments where he approaches the

centre of his subject, he takes refuge in quotation, hiding from immediate reality in rhapsodic intuitions. The very objectivity of beauty has the effect, apparently, of removing us from reality: it 'stirs in us the whole of dreamland.' It is, perhaps, this conception of literature as the means of entering into dreamland which accounts for his preoccupation with the poetry of Keats and Shelley, and for his being able to call Mr. Charles Morgan's *The Fountain* a masterpiece, an *absolute* novel. There is a certain lack of balance in M. du Bos' criticism: he is rightly insistent upon the timeless qualities of literature, but has no mention of the equally important 'sense of his own age,' which T. S. Eliot has shown to be present in all the greatest poets; and his insistence upon beauty and joy as criteria of greatness in literature must surely exclude work whose value has been recognised.

This, however, does not prevent his having many valuable things to say. The book gives contact with a man of great learning and wide sympathies, for which it will be read with pleasure even by those who believe that literature is a passage to something nearer than dreamland.

LUKE TURNER, O.P.

MEN, WOMEN, AND PLACES. By Sigrid Undset. (Cassell; 7s. 6d.)

The majority of these essays by the great Norwegian novelist are to do with England—with English writers, characters or scenes. One of the most delightful is an account of Margery Kempe of Lynn, whose strange career of religious exploration led her in her old age to Norway and the Baltic towns of the fifteenth century. Another is based upon the records of the Blundell family, whose vicissitudes are an ample illustration of what was happening to English Catholics in the seventeenth century. Lucius Cary is another of the English figures of that period to whom the writer's sympathies have gone out: her essay on his sufferings in the Civil War forms a clear-cut post-script to Matthew Arnold's famous study. But one could wish that, like Arnold, she had quoted the long and lovely prose elegy which, in the *History of the Rebellion*, Clarendon dedicated to this the dearest of his friends.

But the full vigour of Sigrid Undset's thought appears even more strikingly in such a study as that of D. H. Lawrence, or of modern Scandinavian spiritualist writers. Her analysis of the nineteenth century upper-middle-class dilution of Christianity from which these aberrations derive is especially clear.

' Evolutionary optimism has been translated by the spiritualists to a world which is assumed to be awaiting us beyond death . . . the development of the spirits to the " higher spheres " is accomplished by the good old means in which the evolutionary believers used to have such touching confidence : education, ranging from kindergarten instruction for the little child spirits to specialised studies for the undergraduate spirits. The more learned and highly cultivated spirits . . . give lectures.' Spiritualism continues the development away from the terrors and intimacies of mystical vision which Protestantism began. ' The impatient yearning for God which naturally borrows its imagery from eroticism ' is not here. ' The conception of God is never that of a bridegroom, but of a good breadwinner.'

To record admiration for the proud independence of this mind is a privilege at this time, for its owner is both a Catholic and of Norway.

F.P.

REVIEW OF PERIODICALS

With its April number *The Catholic World* celebrates its seventy-fifth anniversary. The number includes, as was to be expected, a multitude of warm and well-deserved tributes and congratulations, and some articles recording the magazine's notable part in the history of Catholic journalism. The Editorial is, naturally, more domestic than usual, but includes some characteristically pungent observations on the Catholic press, its ideal freedom and its actual conformism.

In the April *Thomist* Fr. Walter Farrell, O.P., applies rigorous scholastic method to the problems of democracy and representative government. E. F. Caldin contributes an important, pioneering article on Modern Physics and Thomist Philosophy, and Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange expounds the principle, ' bonum est diffusivum sui ' under the heading of ' The Fecundity of Goodness.' Professor Mortimer Adler continues his ' Problems for Thomists ' series. In *The Commonweal* (April 5) Professor Adler contributed an important paper on Docility and Authority and their func-

tion in education in the contemporary cultural environment.

The excellent *Central-Blatt* of St. Louis, Mo., is now more elegantly and aptly re-christened as *The Social Justice Review*; it has become a vigorous advocate of the Co-operative movement.

Fr. Martindale, before his ill-timed visit to Copenhagen, left behind him an outspoken and courageously realistic article on 'The Re-Christianising of Great Britain,' which is published in the April *Month*. It complements some of the excellent letters which have appeared in *The Catholic Herald's* 'Conversion of England' correspondence, and together with them is indicative of an awakening to the responsibilities and to the need of self-examination which confront English Catholics. Unhappily we may not expect to hear more from Fr. Martindale for the present; it is to be hoped that this article of his will be given all the more serious consideration.

In the current *Irénikon*, Dom O. Rousseau concludes his series 'Qu'est-ce qu'un Latin' This important contribution to the destruction of the walls of partition which divide Christendom should be speedily published in book form and translated.

The contents of the April *Theology* are as stimulating as ever. Mr. Paton's 'The World of God and the World of Wells' presents in uncompromising form a view of the irreconcilable opposition between Christian teaching and the ethics of the 'good pagan'; it is especially remarkable for its up-to-date paraphrase of the opening chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.

Among the numerous articles which have come our way about the war, and especially about its efficient and final causes, the following, from neutral sources (though far from agreeing entirely among themselves), are among the more thoughtful and informative—'Zur Theorie vom Lebensraum' and 'Vom Zynismus unserer Zeit,' both in *Schweizerische Rundschau*; 'Is this war different?' by Dr. J. F. Fletcher (of U.S.A.) in *Christendom*; 'War Objectives' by Fr. Daniel M. O'Connell, S.J., in *The Catholic World*; 'Confusions about the War'—a strong pro-Ally

statement by Mgr. John A. Ryan in *The Commonweal* (March 22); and 'L'Eglise dans la tourmente' by Abbé Jacques Leclercq in *La Cité Chrétienne* (March 20).

The Christian News-Letter continues its excellent work. Among its weekly Supplements, that of Mr. T. S. Eliot on 'Education in a Christian Society' and Dr. Oldham's reflections on Sir Richard Acland's momentous *Unser Kampf* were specially noteworthy.

PENGUIN.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- BURNS AND OATES: *The Light of the Anxious Heart, A Book of Spiritual Reflections for War-Time*, Rev. Aloysius Roche (6s.); *St. John Chrysostom*, Rt. Rev. J. F. D'Alton, D.D., Litt.D. (8s. 6d.); *Religion and Science, Cambridge Summer School Lectures, 1939*, ed. Rev. C. Latty, S.J., M.A. (7s. 6d.); *Treasure in Heaven*, Rev. John Kearney, C.S.Sp. (7s. 6d.); *Francis Cardinal Bourne, Vol. I*, Ernest Oldmeadow (16s.); *Neutral War Aims, Essays by Representative Writers*, Introd. Christopher Hollis (7s. 6d.); *History of Cotton College*, Very Rev. Canon W. Buscot (10s. 6d.); *Letters of Mrs. Fitzherbert*, Shane Leslie (15s.).
- CATHOLIC CAMPAIGNERS FOR CHRIST: *Jewish Panorama*, David Goldstein, LL.D. (\$3).
- COLDWELL: *Freedom under God*, Fulton J. Sheen (11s. 3d.).
- DESCLEE DE BROUWER: *Évangile et Patriotisme*, Mgr. Chevrot (18 frs.).
- EDITIONS DE LA CITE CHRETIENNE: *La Messe Romaine*, L. Carron, pp. 99 (n.p.); *L'Eglise et le Droit International*, Michel Zyzykine (20 frs. belges).
- FABER AND FABER: *Passion and Society*, Denis de Rougemont, tr. Montgomery Beligion (12s. 6d.).
- MOWBRAY: *Christian Healing*, Evelyn Frost (15s.).
- OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS: *An Essay on Metaphysics*, R. G. Collingwood (18s.).
- RONDINELLA ALFREDO (Naples): *Logica Sperimentale*, Annibale Pastore (L.40).
- SHEED AND WARD: *The Sweet Singer of Israel*, C. C. Martindale, S.J. (8s. 6d.); *Murder in a Nunnery*, Eric Shepherd (6s.).