

an ideal, the Christian ideal of a life of service of God, leading to paradise with him hereafter. Christian education as often understood here, tends to become no more than a respectable accompaniment, and a sort of moral fortification contributing to the material excellence of the man. But the communists believe in education for an ideal: the most modern methods and technique are all openly directed to the godless paradise. We have our ideal: let it not become obscured. Let us not be blinded by the array of apparatus. We have traditional methods that do need reform, but let us bear in mind that the most modern methods miss the point if there is no ideal beyond the material world and citizenship of it. We have our ideal: let our methods be reformed and improved, but everything must contribute to our aim, which is the holy paradise of God.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

PHILOSOPHY.

FINITE AND INFINITE. By Austin Farrer. (Dacre Press; 20s.).

Mr. Farrer's study on the nature of Being has an especial significance for the future of Thomism in England. It would be quite misleading to describe the author as Thomist. The structure of his concise and compressed thinking is very characteristically his own. Both directly and by reaction he owes much to the Logical Positivists. But the debt to the *De Ente et Essentia* is patent enough and even possibly a debt to Père Penido, and it is perhaps the first time that a modern English philosopher, teaching in one of the greater universities, has discussed and utilized Thomism as a living system of metaphysics. The place of analogy in mental concepts and the recognition of a fundamental distinction between essence and existence help to form the main groundwork of his own thought. Even here much of his approach might have seemed strange to the great Thomist commentators, for it is so often an approach to problems with which they were in no way concerned. It is at least tenable that it is dialectically an advantage for the distinction between potency and act to be restated in terms of essence and existence in a period when modern philosophic terminology has been so thoroughly de-Aristotelianised. It is clear that a statement of analogy in terms of mental concepts can form the only bridge between Thomism and that Logical Positivist critique which has shown itself one of the most vital movements of our time. But any Thomist must part company with the author at the phrase 'an impoverished by-form of the essence-existence argument is that which substitutes the distinction possible-actual.'

This is not only to be regretted by Thomists. An assertion of the fundamental unity between the two distinctions might have given a further principle of co-ordination to Mr. Farrer's own thought.

It is interesting to note that if it were to be applied first to his distinction between the entertainment and the enactment of a project and then to his analysis of the specification of the will, the two main sections of his book would dovetail instead of lying parallel. For if Mr. Farrer is not a metaphysician with whom Cajetan could have agreed, he is one with whom Cajetan could have argued. Perhaps the first point that he would have wished to clarify is the theory of 'inescapable demonstration' attributed to Thomists in the preface. An 'inescapable demonstration' is an essentially Anselmian concept. No Thomist would admit that the validity of a demonstration is affected by its rejection or its acceptance by individual thinkers, grouped either quantitatively or qualitatively. The fundamental distinction between intelligible *in se* and *quoad nos* is illustrated by Mr. Farrer's own writing; if it will not always be intelligible to all it is because it is so intelligible in itself. It is precisely the close texture of his thought and the consistent absence of any unnecessary wording that makes it at times hard reading, but the thinking is always intelligible in itself, precisely because it is never unreal. Perhaps the most immediate impression given by *Finite and Infinite* is the complete absence of the bogus or of the superficial and the presence of a very considerable and at times sardonic wit.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

THE CATHOLIC CONCEPTION OF THE LAW OF NATURE. By Joseph Dalby, B.D. (S.P.C.K.; 2s. 6d.)

'If any excuse be needed for publishing what was originally written as a thesis for a divinity degree, it must be that very little has been published on a subject which is attracting increasing attention to-day,' writes Mr. Dalby in his Foreword. Indeed, if excuses be needed for his rather slight work of condensation and popularisation it is rather to his examiners than to the general public that they might have been directed. It is a work without pretensions either to distinguished scholarship or to original thought, but the need for a small and readable book for popular consumption which would explain the history and meaning of 'Natural Law' is too obvious to require an apology for any attempt to meet it. It has hitherto been almost impossible to direct inquirers to any source of information on this much invoked and little-understood subject apart from technical tomes and textbooks in dead and foreign tongues. Mr. Dalby deserves unqualified thanks for his brave and largely successful effort to meet an urgent need. He has essayed to cover the history of the whole subject from the Stoics to the present day in fifty-four pages, and to include a summary of the whole teaching of St. Augustine and St. Thomas concerning it, as well as to draw conclusions regarding its relevance to our present needs. It is astonishing that he has succeeded in including so much in so little space.

Yet, notwithstanding many excellencies of detail, it is to be feared