

thesis—acknowledges the frequent priority of the common good (as who must not?), but clings to the unsupported assertion that some rights must never be subordinated. They must only be ‘co-ordinated’. This is a new and unexplained concept. In fact, the whole section is a curious one—as if Fr D’Arcy had suddenly seen all the objections which might be raised to his theories and would have re-written the book if he could. Let us hope he *will* write another, really dealing with the difficulties of his thesis, and not merely, as he suggests in a postscript, ‘proving’ that freedom of conscience is the best policy. The application of principles simply cannot be left to the political scientist (I speak with feeling); everyone is confronted with the need to apply them almost daily. Here we are left with the conclusion that only one’s right to the private enjoyment of conscience—and perhaps the desirability of as much public freedom as is possible—has been *proved*; in the background lurks a jungle of problems which we have been left to solve. Yet the book leaves a very sympathetic impression, since wherever Fr D’Arcy argues a case to the point where we must abandon him, we find him bringing back our own objections, if not on the next page, in the next chapter. This must be the hardest subject in the world to write a book about.

BERNICE HAMILTON

Reviews

LETTERS TO A FRIEND, 1950-1952, by Rose Macaulay, edited by Constance Babington Smith; Collins; 25s.

MORE THAN MUSIC, by Alec Robertson; Collins; 21s.

‘They’re not for other people to see’. Rose Macaulay’s instructions were that the other half of this correspondence should be burnt after her death, and it is hard to see what principle can justify the publication of her own letters—intended, as every one of them obviously is, for Father Hamilton Johnson alone. But, now that they are published, and so much that might properly have been left to silence has been evoked, her friends at least will recognize with delight—and sadness—the generosity and fun, the maddening inconsequence and brilliant observation, the extraordinary triviality of some of her religious interests, combined nevertheless with insights of simplicity and a longing for the love of God.

For many years Rose Macaulay had abandoned the practice—and in any serious sense the faith—of her Anglican upbringing. A chance letter from a Cowley Father, stationed in New England whom she had known in London

thirty-five years before, started the enquiry into religious belief, and the return to its practice, of which these letters are the moving record. In its way this correspondence is a classic Anglican text: here is a deep respect for learning and tradition, a love of decent prose and ordered worship, but beneath it all is a suspicion of doctrinal authority and the conviction that any claim to absolute truth must be a religious illusion.

That is why the constant girding at 'R.C.s', the tit-bits of party gossip about Catholic authors, the (often inaccurate) references to bits and pieces of Catholic history can easily be forgiven. Rose Macaulay was wholly unsympathetic to the formality of theological debate. She was much more at home, as these letters everywhere show, with the by-ways of liturgical history, the texts of collects or hymns, and—at a much lower level—with the niceties of 'High' and 'Low', to which she constantly refers. But there is a certain irony in her—justifiable—complaint about the manners of some Catholic apologists. One can imagine the asperity of her comments had she read letters of this sort, written in another direction.

She is certainly kind about *Blackfriars*, and perhaps its editor may be forgiven for recalling that his first meeting with her was at a dinner, when, after praising the Dominicans, she enquired of the identity of the clergyman (unspecified) sitting beside her, only to find he was a Dominican and its editor. 'Of course', she said, 'What a typical R.C. plot'. The truth is that Rose Macaulay had inherited so deeply the English identification of religion with all that made England lovable—for her, one might say, autumn evenings in the Cotswolds, King's College chapel at evensong and the prose of Hooker were genuine motives of credibility—that Rome, the 'Unreformed Church', seemed altogether alien and bizarre. 'What a heritage we have. I mean, we Anglicans. It is so incredibly beautiful. And such good fortune not to be an Anglican of a century or more ago (or, indeed, a good deal less than that) or a Roman Catholic, or any kind of sectarian, or any Church without our liturgy, our particular ceremonial and dignity without fuss'. She never says it is a good fortune to belong to a Church that claims to teach the truth about God and man. It would have been inconceivable to her that religion should make demands so absolute. Thus she quotes with approval Stephen Spender's saying that, 'although he couldn't believe much of what Christianity taught and held, he was an Anglican because he thought it such a good "framework for moral aspiration".' One might reasonably ask why a Church should be necessary for such a purpose: would not the Freemasons or an Ethical Society do as well? '“Validity”, no, the word has no meaning to me'. Such remarks as these—and they are frequent—are offset by the sense of peace and purpose that her return to the Anglican Church gave her, but the shorthand—so to say—of her letters rarely develops her ideas enough for the reader to be other than touched or bewildered. The printing of these letters is in its measure a sad betrayal of a friendship. She is somehow left unprotected, and that should not be.

Rose Macaulay would have had a lot to say about Alec Robertson's auto-

biography. It might have confirmed her fantasy of the 'cruel' institutionalism of Rome, which the sensitive musician, the man of imagination and of instinctive response to heart rather than head, found too hard to bear in the priesthood to which he was ordained. In fact Mr Robertson's candid story does credit both to himself and to the Church, and especially to Cardinal Hinsley whose constant charity and understanding healed the pain of a decision which conscience demanded. Mr Robertson has much to say that is interesting about his career as a musician and broadcaster, and his fidelity to the Church remains untouched by his realization that he had to abandon the exercise of his priesthood. And this he did in obedience and love.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

WAYS OF THINKING ABOUT GOD, by Edward Sillem; Darton, Longman and Todd; 18s. 6d.

At last a book of real value has been written about St Thomas' argument for God's existence; lively though untidy, in intelligible English, and meant for the public who since the war have learnt to appreciate philosophical books in this country.

Fr Sillem begins by stating some modern objections to the arguments given today for God's existence, but like St Thomas keeps us waiting until the end for the answers. Instead he investigates what the original, very different arguments were, and were meant to do—a surprisingly rare procedure, he points out, among modern writers on the subject. He concludes that the Five Ways were not meant to be taken in isolation as 'natural theology' before St Thomas began theology proper; the *Summa* is entirely theological, but its author included five arguments actually given by former philosophers, as part of his purpose in showing that reason does not contradict faith. The first four of these arguments at least have now been shown to come directly from the pagan Aristotle, not from medieval sources: St Thomas never meant them to be taken in isolation as his own 'proof'. The extreme brevity of presentation, the lack of serious objection, and the inconclusive 'conclusion'. 'all call this God', probably meaning 'all philosophers', are an indication of this. St Thomas' own argument is spread over the first eleven questions of the *Summa*, and include the highly original metaphysics of essence and existence; the Five Ways are merely its jumping-off point. It is, moreover, a theological argument, for it purports to show that the being whom philosophers called 'God' is the God of revelation, *ipsum esse subsistens*. Whether or not a purely philosophical argument can be produced is another matter; as the first question of the *Summa* shows, St Thomas' purpose was to produce a new theology designed as an Aristotelian 'science', using reason to make our *belief* intelligible, and this is precisely what these first questions achieve.

Though this view is not entirely new (Fr Sillem remarks, for instance, on his debt to Victor White) it is worked out here extremely well and convincingly.