

REVIEWS

already sketched are easily discernible—Dr. Brock directs attention to the efforts of Jaspers and Heidegger to conceive existence as human existence, the existence in which *we find ourselves*. Perhaps it is in place here to recommend to readers Fr. Przywara's parallel attempt to conceive existence as Christian existence.

In such a short space it was inevitable that little more than an atmosphere could be conveyed, but Dr. Brock has succeeded in doing this. In a three-page Conclusion he leaves it to a problematic future to decide whether philosophy will once again succeed in fulfilling a universal function beyond the capacity of special sciences: "to interpret existence in a more universal sense and so once more give strength and significance to human life." Christianity does this for the masses, but Dr. Brock considers its hold insecure, as three of the forces philosophy is striving to control are continually shaping the mass mentality closer to mundane ideals; these three forces are technique, economic life and the State. Philosophy, he thinks, is essentially opposed to Christian authority "by its unlimited search for truth and its will to freedom."

Is it petty to notice the careless mis-spelling "Aquinus," found in the index and the two passages referred to? It seems to reflect the arrogance of the claim to autonomy. Methodological independence is freely admitted by the Church; to assert more is a dogmatism for which there can be no justification in view of the Church's claim to divine origin. QUENTIN JOHNSTON, O.P.

DAS EDLE UND DER CHRIST. By Richard Egenter. (Kösel und Pustet, Munich; RM. 2.80.)

VOM SINN DER EHRFURCHT. By Paul Wolff. (Kösel und Pustet; RM 2.50.)

The ideal of the superman and the relation of others to him has long been a matter of more than merely academic importance. But too many who have tried to realize their ideal of nobility, whether on paper or in flesh and blood, in their own person or that of another, have been blind or even expressly hostile to Christian values and virtues. Here are two books which deal with the subject from complementary points of view. Dr. Egenter examines the nature of nobility in general and of moral nobility in particular, and from the ideas thus gained leads on to a statement not only of the compatibility of the highest nobility with Christianity, but of the actual necessity of Christianity as the soil in which alone absolute nobility can reach its most perfect growth.

Paul Wolff, on the other hand, treats of the emotion of reverence which is evoked precisely by the presence of nobility and

BLACKFRIARS

the possession and use of which puts a man in his right and proper relation to the objects of his cognitive and reasoning powers, whether in philosophy, religion, theology, or everyday life. Both writers show a sympathetic understanding of the various views they oppose, and Dr. Egenter further endeavours to correct mistaken views current among Christians themselves. In his treatment of humility, for instance, the most maligned as it is the most fundamental Christian virtue, he attacks a common popular misconception of that virtue with no less force than Nietzsche's view of nobility. In another place too (p. 42) he derides a common notion which acts equally as a deterrent to attempted holiness to believers, and a scandal to unbelievers, namely that a thing can become noble by being spiritualized at the expense of its nature. Human perfection is not gained by man trying to become an angel (cf. p. 74). His explanation of the significance of Christian love of one's neighbour, humility and mortification (p. 93) links up admirably with Paul Wolff's account of reverence for oneself and one's neighbour, both founded on one's reverence for God.

While Dr. Egenter is quite consistent with himself in "no more daring" to apply the description "noble" to God, some of the four marks of nobility on which he lays so much stress being obviously inapplicable to the divine nature, this seems a curious and difficult position to adopt in view of the ontological foundation which he lays for nobility. Paul Wolff here adopts far safer ground in emphasizing the analogy of being, which enables him to explain how reverence, whose primary object is being, can be felt for myself and my fellows as well as and because it is felt for God. Thus nobility, as the plenitude of this or that nature under the guise of which being evokes reverence, is predicated analogously, is genuinely convertible with the other transcendentals, and attributable to God. Dr. Egenter's four marks might be preserved in some form by restating them so as to show an analogy between the stable, wholly actual dynamism of God, and the progressive dynamism of the human agent.

Special praise should go to Dr. Egenter's defence of Aristotle's "Magnanimity," frequently scorned as a most unchristian character and the personification of worldly pride. It is again quite a false view of humility which is responsible for this stricture.

HUGO CASTERMANN.

SPIRITUALITY

THE FIRE OF LOVE. By Richard Rolle; translated by G. E. Heseltine. (Burns Oates; 7/6.)

DIVINE COMMUNICATIONS. By the Abbé Saudreau. (Burns Oates; 2 vols.; 12/-.)