

## REVIEWS

## POLITICS

CHRISTIANITY AND DEMOCRACY. By Jacques Maritain. (Geoffrey Bles; 5s.).

The decisive difference between the present phase of M. Maritain's political writing and the rigorous metaphysical essays which first invited his English readers to the labour and illuminations of Thomist thinking is a difference between ways of using language and ideas. While *Art et Scolastique* was an exposition and development of doctrine applying principles of metaphysics to the elucidation of the philosophy of art and fulfilling, as it incidentally, the civilizing Confucian task of rectifying terms, the present book is a work of rhetoric in the precise sense that its object is not so much to define as to persuade, and its achievement is to have expressed not precisely a truth but a hope.

*Christianity and Democracy* is a labour of compassion. "We do not change at will the names for which generations of men have suffered and hoped," he says, (p. 20). Maritain rather identifies himself with the suffering because it is the suffering of "the people" and "It is on the condition of existing in communion with the people that all efforts bear fruit in temporal history, and that the inspirational leadership which the people need keeps both its strength and its legitimacy" (p. 32). He embraces the hope because "the important thing for the political life of the world and for the solution of the crisis of civilization is by no means to pretend that Christianity is linked to democracy and that Christian faith compels every believer to be a democrat; it is to affirm that democracy is linked to Christianity and that the democratic impulse has arisen in human history as a temporal manifestation of the inspiration of the Gospel" (p. 24-5).

From the detachment of logic we should say that such a position is "voluntary". Voluntary indeed Maritain confesses it. It is motivated by charity and by hope: the hope that "The human race will emerge from the era of great sufferings" which will be possible "only when the activity of hidden stimulation, by means of which the Christian spirit moves along and toils at bloody cost in the night of earthly history, will have joined with the activity of illumination, by means of which the Christian spirit restores souls in the truth and life of the Kingdom of God." He continues, "It is not at the end of the present war that this goal will be reached. But the present war reveals to us as by an apocalyptic sign, the direction in which we must move; and peace, if peace is won, will denote that the creative forces in motion within human history are decidedly set in this direction" (pp. 25-6).

This apocalyptic strain, the stressing of the "hidden" and the "secret" in the heart of man and the movement of history is a dominant note in the present book as it was in "Redeeming the Time"

The soul of democracy, for Maritain, is "consciousness of the mission of our kind to bring about in its temporal life the law of brotherly love and the spiritual dignity of the human person." Its slogan is the liberty, equality, fraternity of the French revolution. As the frame of a lens can be held so close to the eye as to exclude nothing of the whole visual field, while at arm's length it encircles a single spinnery on the skyline, so it is with the slogans of liberty. The idea of equality, inhumanly narrow at arm's length, has been adjusted admirably in Maritain's recent work to take account of the intrinsic diversities of human existence.

Precisely from the critic's point of view "fraternity" interests as much for what it omits as for what it affirms. And it does omit what most of those who write of human brotherhood pass by without comment—all the vertical family relationships within society. The use of the word "paternalism" as a disparagement of various forms of state absolutism or of vested interest is indicative. Fraternity is an inheritance from the universality of Christian love—yes: and it is also the reflex emotional symbol of the reaction against whatever is established and rooted.

With regard to liberty, Bernard Wall wrote on the eve of the outbreak of war a book in which he contrasted the conceptions and the native expression of *liberté* among the French and *freiheit* among the German peoples: the highly stressed autonomous personalism native to France, and the sense of natural communion anterior and vestibular to the affirmation of the individual which conditions the German idea of freedom. He urged that the attempt to impose either *liberté* upon the Germans or *freiheit* on the French must involve blind cruelty and end in failure. In recalling democracy to its Christian origins Maritain has indicated the spirit in which such a warning is to be taken.

That the hope of civilization lies in the line of development of the democratic movement, not merely because democracy holds the floor but because democracy is the underground movement of the Judæo-Christian stimulation of society is the thesis of the book.

BERNARD KELLY.

THE FREE STATE. By D. W. Brogan. (Hamish Hamilton; 6s.).

This is a most refreshing book. Directing his attention mainly to the non-military causes of Germany's failure, Professor Brogan draws generously on his wide knowledge of history and keen observation of men to set forth the practical advantages of the free state and the ways of maintaining it. The approach is frankly empirical, with abundant concrete examples to delight the reader and make it easier for him to follow an argument presented with perfect confidence and without a trace of dogmatism. A free society is not one that corresponds to an ideal conceived by moody intellectuals, it is Britain, France, the U.S.A., as they have actually developed; there are great differences even in their free