

it is a welcome volume which succeeds in putting clearly before us the thought of St Thomas on the matter in its Aristotelian background. The author reaches the core of the problem when he writes 'the concept of right in its widest sense is not a generic but an analogical one. The unity of the concept is that unity engendered by analogy. Hence the doctrine of analogy is the pivot, as it were, around which the whole question of right revolves' (p. 32). Consistently with this statement Fr Lachance tackles his problem in a systematic way beginning with the notions of the Aristotelico-Thomist method of induction and analysis, and the idea of analogy, then going on to treat of right according to its causes, extrinsic and intrinsic, finally dealing with it in its relations to the social sciences. Modern jurists, not entirely free from Nominalist tendencies, are likely to balk at such a purely philosophical approach to a problem with which they are so much concerned, for the notion of analogy is one with which they are not very familiar, but they would do well to make a profound study of the thesis. Without its metaphysical foundations 'right' loses much of its meaning.

The chapter on the divisions of right in which he descends from the analogical concept to its particular determinations, giving schemata embracing all forms of both subjective and objective right, is especially useful. It is an extremely valuable volume although one regrets the lack of adequate indices.

G.B.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF EXISTENCE. By Gabriel Marcel. Translated by Manya Harari. (Harvill Press. Changing World Series; 5s.)

'Hardly a day goes by without my being asked what is existentialism. (Usually it is a society lady who asks for this information, but tomorrow it may be my charwoman or the ticket-collector on the underground).' This experience of Marcel's is by no means unique but his capacity for giving an answer may very well be so; for although any existentialist has the right to reply, with Berdyaev, 'L'existentialisme c'est moi', nevertheless Marcel had put himself on the market at such an early date that he fully deserves to enjoy a corner on his own. Nor will this present work weaken his claims. It consists of four chapters, 'On the Ontological Mystery', 'Existence and Human Freedom' (a criticism of Sartre), 'Testimony and Existentialism' and 'An Essay in Autobiography', which taken together give a very clear account of his position, and of how this position differs from others which bear the same label.

Only a review as long as the book itself could give an adequate impression of the stimulus to thought which it affords, with its phenomenological treatment of technics and the vilification of man, with its illustrations of how reliance upon material imagery leads to error, its description of testimony and its inherent transcendence. Such lengthy treatment being out of the question it may be helpful

to refer briefly to those points in Marcel's thesis which leave one unconvinced. The central difficulty which remains unresolved is that of thought and being; in other words, the existentialism which Marcel so ably represents has its origins in Kierkegaard's cry against the Hegelian and Idealist absorption of being by thought; that protest was so successful that we are nowadays threatened with the absorption of thought by being. Therein lies the paradox, for, as Marcel quite rightly asks, 'I wonder here if the author of *La Nausée* (i.e. Sartre on 'giving') does not fall into one of the worst errors which can be attributed to idealism?' And one may quite justifiably ask whether the blurring of the quite obvious distinction between thought and being does not in fact make it a matter of indifference as to which of the terms is stressed? As soon as a philosophy abandons that phenomenological method which was used, amongst others, by St Thomas, it lays itself open to either an idealistic or an existentialistic interpretation and abandons the ground from which it could refute either.

Marcel is very much aware of the ease with which an existentialist can slip off into an abyss of error, as his essay on Sartre shows; yet his criticism of Sartre might not unfairly be turned against his own position. On two occasions he suggests the need for a linking of the new philosophies to traditional thought—'it may be asked if the Aristotelian tradition should not be followed up on this subject' (i.e. of receptivity)—and on the last page he explains that 'the development of my thought was largely an explicitation'. In another place, however, he indulges in one of his not infrequent side-kicks at scholasticism in the sentence, 'Does not the very structure of duration and of life show that philosophical thought is unfaithful to reality whenever it attempts to proceed from conclusion to conclusion towards a *Summa* which, in the end, needs only to be expounded and memorised paragraph by paragraph?' Such pointed references to the aridity of neo-scholasticism lead one to suspect that in the last resort he does not accord both thought and being their full and distinct value; that he does in fact abandon his own phenomenological method at this point by refusing to recognise what is there. Briefly, reasoning from conclusion to conclusion must be recognised as an important process within reality even though it is about reality; unless we are to give 'reason' an intolerably narrow interpretation the process of reasoning towards a conclusion is in itself a very rich experience. Conclusions *are* experiences if they genuinely conclude something; it is a matter of observation that they do change lives. Perhaps his quarrel with traditional metaphysics is merely verbal since he demands that metaphysics should be mystical and poetical whereas the perennial tradition regards metaphysics as the science of being qua being—thus metaphysics traditionally does not deny the validity of either poetry or mysticism but simply states that its object is different; if Marcel replies that such a science is impossible he must call into play the same instru-

ment that he employs against Sartre, i.e. rational argument; he must do something which he declares to be impossible.

In view of the preceding remarks it should be obvious that this book must be read for what it does contain, mysticism and poetry, not for what is not to be found there, i.e. metaphysics; the mysticism will be found rewarding. These searching meditations of Marcel are admirably calculated to put an end to 'bouncing' Catholicism, the Catholicism of the slick answer and the toby-jug, which in all conscience has little enough to do with the cry from the Cross, the last days of the Little Flower or the 'heaven-handling' of a Gerard Manley Hopkins.

DONALD NICHOLL.

PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION. Enlarged and revised edition. By J. F. S. Ross. (Eyre and Spottiswoode; 15s.)

There is, of course, no need whatsoever to recommend this new and enlarged edition of Mr Ross's 'Parliamentary Representation' to students of political institutions; any serious student will have already made himself familiar with the earlier editions, and will have correctly anticipated that the additions to the volume maintain his high standards of accuracy, readability and sane interpretation. Part IV of this enlarged edition consists of 60 pages of entirely new material devoted to an analysis of the House of Commons which came into being at the 1945 election; several appendices have also been added on electoral reform, the redistribution of seats and election expenses. The statistics which he has collected only confirm the strength of his arguments in favour of the single transferable vote and of financial reform.

DONALD NICHOLL.

THE NATURALISM OF SAMUEL ALEXANDER. By J. W. McCarthy. (Cumberlege; 14s.)

This thesis is an honest piece of work with little pretension to originality; the author sets out to expound Alexander's philosophy as faithfully as possible whilst not neglecting to correct misinterpretations or to indicate those points at which the system itself seems to creak. He is convincing when dealing with Konvitz's misconceptions in that author's 'The nature of value', and the book becomes exciting when McCarthy announces his intention of applying the notion of analogy to Alexander's impressive metaphysical constructions. The promise is not realised, however, because the author's conception of analogy is not sufficiently worked out. It would seem that to 'analogue' Alexander would involve a much more radical change in the whole structure of his thought; however, McCarthy has certainly pointed in the right direction. His book contains a valuable bibliography.

DONALD NICHOLL.