

particular reference to Mgr Jolivet's earlier book *The God of Reason*) that this cannot be done, and this is not the place to pursue the topic.

ILLYD TRETOWAN, O.S.B.

PROSPECT FOR METAPHYSICS, edited by Ian Ramsey; Allen and Unwin; 25s.

PERSONS IN RELATION, by John Macmurray; Faber and Faber; 30s.

*Prospect for Metaphysics* is the title given to the collection of papers read at Downside Abbey in 1959. It is perhaps a rash title, which must surely produce disappointment, for very little prospect appears—at least in this milieu. It would seem that if one is going to contribute in any way towards showing the prospects of something, there must be at least some unity of mental attitude towards it. Most of the papers in this collection exhibit a definite uneasiness with regard to the very possibility of metaphysics, and none of them show any indication of an explicated awareness of its nature—a sine qua non for a dynamically directional, and therefore humanly relevant, metaphysics: those qualities in fact which would make the word *prospect* significant. The papers by Professor A. H. Armstrong (*Platonism*) and Professor H. D. Lewis (*God and Mystery*) give us however genuine expressions of metaphysical thought in action, although the paper on Platonism is unfortunately slight and somewhat casual and has even to be printed with what amounts to an apology as post-script. Professor Lewis' paper is very interesting, showing as it does how the relationship to God in metaphysics has an essentially 'trans-rational' element. This is most important; but unfortunately his paper is such, I should have thought, as only to be really appreciated in a context where the possibility and nature of metaphysics is well established and its prospect is being questioned (reflexively) rather than merely queried. The general impression given by these papers is that the subject, though certainly not intentionally, is hardly being seriously treated. Is this book then to be taken seriously as a contribution to English thought? It would be almost inconceivable by contrast for any book with such a title to be produced on the Continent with such an essentially amateurish content.

*Persons in Relation* is a very different matter. This is the second volume of the Gifford lectures delivered in 1954. The contents are written with both seriousness and living spirit, and the work can be considered as a valuable contribution to psychological-metaphysical thought (with all its sociological relevances.) The aim of the author is largely to eliminate the vast content of unreal abstraction which so frequently enters into such considerations, and to show personal being as essentially rooted in, and drawing its life-sap from, its contact with other persons. Professor Macmurray at times lets his vigorous iconoclasm get too much the upper hand and condemns many a traditional concept which would in fact probably serve him if he were to re-evaluate it in terms of his own philosophical outlook. This is however but a small criticism.

GILES HIBBERT, O.P.