

the lecture is: 'the postulates on which *Principia Mathematica* is founded may perhaps invite further investigation from the metaphysical standpoint'. From that point of view it is not unlikely that Russell and Whitehead's work will eventually be seen to be an ontology rather than a logic, and so an unlooked-for verification of the traditional scholastic thesis that the foundations of the sciences can only be securely laid by metaphysics. Experience and reason alike show that 'as Descartes himself realised in later life, to attain his universal scientific philosophy without borrowing any data from empirical sources was inherently impossible'; it follows that either mathematics is irreducible to logic or that it cannot take the dominant place in philosophy which is here claimed for it. The half-dozen pages in which it is attempted 'to build up a rational framework into which we can fit our experience of the inanimate external world; and as its foundation a doctrine of space' contain some interesting suggestions but presuppose a vast amount of metaphysics which could not possibly be described as mathematical.

Ivo THOMAS, O.P.

EXISTENTIALISM. By Paul Foulquié. (Dennis Dobson; 7s. 6d.)

'Existentialism has brought into clear relief those ideas which are not, after all, although rather forgotten, anything but facts of common-sense.'

'But the assimilation of what is true in existentialism can only be done by a long process of reflection, of a kind that can only be disturbed by public debates and tub-thumping. Therefore it is desirable, for authentic existentialism, that the sudden fashion into which it has risen should pass.'

Perhaps the above quotation is the most valuable contribution to studies on existentialism that has been made for some time; equally praiseworthy is M. Foulquié's calling attention to the thought of Lavelle, the successor of Bergson and Leroy at the College de France. Otherwise the book contains nothing that is new, not even the statement that 'as a matter of fact St Thomas has not completely eliminated all traces of Augustinism' (sic!).

DONALD NICHOLL

MEDIEVAL MAN AND HIS NOTIONS. By Frederick Harrison. (John Murray; 7s. 6d.)

This little book provides a fascinating 'lucky-dip' for the general reader intelligently interested in the past; but its author is perhaps over-bold in claiming, as he does, that it will furnish him with 'a clear-cut picture' of medieval man, his way of life, ideas and beliefs. As a scholar of Canon Harrison's own cloth has written: 'The spirit of the Middle Ages is impatient of capture, insusceptible of analysis, though many have essayed the task'. This collection of illustrations, drawn at random from a wide range of sources spread over a period of some seven centuries, can hardly be