

REVIEWS

the great merit of giving us the Latin text in footnotes. But the references leave much to be desired; they are often incomplete, and it seems a pity to refer to the Benedictine edition of 1836 and not to *Migne* which is so much more accessible. In the Appendix, pp. 131-162, will be found a study of St. Augustine's debt to Plotinus.¹ This is peculiarly interesting as showing how completely St. Augustine had succeeded in shaking off his Platonic ideas, becoming more and more Aristotelian year by year, a fact too often lost sight of. Only an Aristotelian could write "*moveri pati est; movere facere.*" Indeed so marked a feature of his thought did this become that Julian dubbed him "Aristoteles Poenus" and "Poenus disputator," sneers which did not sound well on the lips of one who himself boasted of his "Aristotelian dialectics."

HUGH POPE, O.P.

GOD AND THE MODERN MIND. By Hubert S. Box, B.D., Ph.D.
(S.P.C.K.; 10/-)

"I am not so presumptuous," writes Dr. Box in his *Preface*, "as to maintain that Thomism alone possesses the truth and that all other philosophies are wholly false. Such an assertion would indeed be both intolerantly and intolerably arrogant. As Cardinal Mercier said, '*Nous ne sommes pas seuls en possession de la vérité, et la vérité que nous possédons n'est pas la vérité entière.*' We need to bear in mind Professor Taylor's warning that 'too much Neo-Scholastic writing tends to be mere denunciation, and denunciation never "refutes" anyone'. . . . There have always been those who are so stubbornly conservative of what is past that they relentlessly oppose whatever is modern. It is just this anti-modern attitude of the palæo-scholastics that has evoked the unfriendliness of many contemporary thinkers towards Thomism." To find these words at the opening of a book by a Thomist augurs well indeed for the sequel. The anti-modern attitude is more than bad manners or bad policy: it is bad Thomism. And one cannot but express one's gratitude that this profound study of the relation of the Thomist theodicy to that of modern and contemporary thinkers should thus explicitly uphold the central Thomist principle of synthesis.

True, when this has been said one is tempted to go on to suggest that it might have received yet fuller practical expression than it has. The wealth of quotations from modern thinkers shows indeed only too clearly how radically divergent are their views from those of St. Thomas; yet often, one feels, disagreement, however violent, with conclusions does not preclude hope of some measure

¹ See on this point a most interesting article in the *Journal of Theological Studies* for January of this year by Paul Henry, S.J.

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of common ground in premisses and therefore of fruitful discussion. Thomism, as Dr. Box remarks, transcends the limits of time and space; the corollary is that its expression, its method of approach, its emphases in exposition, can and ought to change with the change of outlook which the centuries bring; and contemporary thought will seem less remote from that of St. Thomas in so far as we approach the perennial problems from their standpoint rather than from his. So it is, for example, that Thomists are stressing the essential importance of intuition in the Thomist psychology, an emphasis which at the least makes it plain that Thomism stands *between* the anti-intellectualism discussed in this volume and the extreme rationalism which is its opposite; or again that by stressing the humanism of St. Thomas we are in a position to find common ground for discussion with the pagan humanism which, so anti-Christian in its conclusions, contains nevertheless so much truth in its premisses. Only thus, moreover, do we by learning and assimilating what is true in our age come nearer to possessing the *verité entière*.

These very tentative reflections are prompted by a feeling that, in the brilliant exposition of contemporary thought with which Dr. Box's learning provides us, and his masterly summary of the Thomist position, there is more of juxtaposition and less of exploration of possible rapprochement than there might well have been; perhaps this is to fall into the stupidity of complaining that Dr. Box's wine, which, as Professor Taylor remarks, is of the kind that needs no bush, is sherry and not port. For it remains that one would have to look very far to find such an exposition and discussion of the two types of thought in so small a compass; and though there are judgments here and there which one would like perhaps to question, the study must prove invaluable for the student of either side who wishes to enrich himself with the achievements of the other.

GERALD VANN, O.P.

CHRISTIAN FREEDOM IN THE MODERN WORLD. By J. E. Lesslie Newbigin. (Student Christian Movement Press; 2/6.)

Much of the most weighty criticism of current orthodox Christian teaching centres upon the question of legalism. The New Testament confronts us with St. Paul's dictum, "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified"; and a great deal of Christian teaching and practice seems to be in contradiction to it. What must be our reaction to those who criticize us on this score? Mr. Newbigin answers: "We are inclined to dismiss too easily the criticisms which are being levelled against Christian morality. We shall correct this danger if we take our bearings by the New Testament. . . . If we do so we shall find—I believe—that we must listen to these criticisms with the utmost seriousness, not