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indirectly, much of Barth and Brunner in Protestant theology; Jaspers and Heidegger and the phenomenologists generally; much, it would seem, in the "tragic" philosophers like Unamuno; and much in contemporary German Catholic writing. And now, into French Catholicism, and into the "Thomist" camp at that, comes the "existential" philosophy of the convert playwright, Gabriel Marcel. The fact has elicited from Marcel de Corte, the brilliant young thomist professor of the University of Liège, a series of essays on Marcel's philosophy, but which are of greater importance as a critique of existentialism generally. He contends that Kierkegaard's original existentialism was due, not to a rejection of objective thought rightly understood, but solely to the specifically Hegelian pretensions which so enraged him. De Corte is profoundly sympathetic, and essays "an integration of existentialism into a realistic ontology." In this brief review it must suffice to say that it is convincingly and brilliantly done.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

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LA PATRIE ET LA PAIX. Textes Pontificaux commentés par Yves de la Brière, S.J., et P. M. Colbach, S.J. (Collection "Cathedra Petri.") (Desclée, de Brouwer; 25 frs.)

A most valuable collection. The authors have assembled translations of all the passages relevant to the problems of peace in the pontifical documents of Leo XIII, Pius X, Benedict XV and Pius XI, with notes explanatory of the historical circumstances, allusions, exegetical problems. The book is first of all a striking demonstration of the immense labours of the Popes in the cause of peace; and such interesting diplomatic documents as the letter from Cardinal Gasparri to Mr. Lloyd George (Sept. 1917) concerning the peace proposals of Benedict XV are included. The arrangement of the book is calculated to help the reader to deal easily with this mass of material: the pontificates are taken in chronological order, each is preceded by a summary of the documents which follow, the documents themselves are given headings descriptive of their circumstances and purpose. At the end of the texts an *Essai de Synthèse Provisoire* is given, summing up the general principles and conclusions which may be drawn from them. There follow, in the second part of the book, the original versions of the texts, chronological lists, bibliography, indexes. The immense labour involved in the production of such a volume is obvious; its value should be equally obvious.

G. V.

THOMAS BECKET. By Robert Speaight. (Longmans; 6s.)

Mr. Speaight is too modest in his protest that his work "does not claim to be in any sense a work of scientific history." It is good history and therefore scientific. His estimation of Saint Thomas, in the various offices spiritual and temporal he was called upon to fill, is eminently just; and it does not seem in any measure contrary to, or exceeding, the facts of the Saint's history as preserved to us by contemporaries. The author has brought out very clearly the cause of the quarrel and all that it included. A study of the reigns of such kings as the Conqueror and his two sons William II and Henry I, his nephew Stephen and grandson Henry II makes only too patent their determination to dominate the Church in spirituals as in temporals. This aim was frustrated for two centuries by Saint Thomas' sacrifice of his life; but it appeared again in the middle of the fourteenth century in the policy of Edward III. How it triumphed under Henry VIII is better known history. The death of Saint Thomas gripped the minds of an age more Christian than those of the Renaissance days of Saint John Fisher. Henry VIII, in his passion almost as mentally unbalanced as Henry II, having slain Saint John outlawed Saint Thomas' memory. "Therefore his Grace strictly chargeth and commandeth that from henceforth the said Thomas Becket shall not be esteemed, named, reputed, nor called a Saint, but Bishop Becket, and that his images and pictures through all the realm shall be put down and avoided out of all churches, chapels, and all other places." But let us leave this buffoonery to Victorian historians who admired it. W. G.

BETRACHTUNGEN UEBER DIE GOETTLICHE LITURGIE. Nicholas Gogol, translated from the Russian by Reinhold von Walter. (Freiburg i.B.: Herder, pp. 100; n.p.)

This German presentation of Gogol's commentary on the Orthodox Mass is No. 4 in a series of essays entitled "Witnesses of the Word," published by Herder. The purpose of the series is: "to supply the Christian of to-day with witnesses of Christian being, thinking and doing in all ages, in order to lead to the deepening of the spirit of faith and the actuation of life by that faith."

The book itself is, in the main, a setting forth of the Orthodox "liturgy" (i.e., Mass), in a straightforward, explanatory way and might serve as a short missal for those who follow this rite. As was noted in the case of Père Salaville's *Eastern Liturgies*, recently reviewed in these columns, a study of the Oriental rite is of great use in deepening our appreciation of the Mass in our own Western rite, and the Mass, as Gogol tells us in his intro-

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duction, is "perpetual repetition of the inexhaustible work of love, accomplished for us." Hence, he says in his Conclusion, "All who wish to make progress in the way of love should assist as often as possible at the divine Eucharist . . . for it builds us up and ennobles us imperceptibly . . . Mighty, immeasurable, can the effect of the Eucharist be upon us, if we take part in it in such a way as to absorb our experience there into our daily life."

C. R.

DAS SIEGEL DER VERSOEHNUNUG ("The Seal of Reconciliation").

Von Eugen Walter. (Freiburg i.B.: Herder; RM. 2.—.)

Yet another Walter! And this one deserves a very special welcome. Into its 118 pages it contrives to squeeze an unusual proportion of noble and original thinking on a subject whose essential nobility the author ably defends against the contempt and misunderstanding of impenitent Germanism. He will have none of your cringing "poor sinner" attitude, but he reveals to the full the deep significance and beauty of the gesture of one whose fault has dawned upon him and who turns then, with infinite submission and pleading, to the One whom he knows to take a delight in forgiveness. "In the act of repentance we become conscious that we must give ourselves up profoundly, in order to find ourselves anew and in truth, that we must leave life in order to win it." (p. 47.)

The deep psychology of the book makes it transcend frontiers of race and country. It is theology for the people of God.

C. R.

THE GREATEST DRAMA EVER STAGED. By Dorothy L. Sayers.

(Hodder & Stoughton; 6d.)

"'Perfect God and perfect man . . . Who although He be God and Man, yet is He not two, but one Christ.' There is the essential doctrine, of which the whole elaborate structure of Christian faith and morals is only the logical consequence. Now, we may call that doctrine exhilarating or we may call it devastating; we may call it revelation or we may call it rubbish; but if we call it dull, then words have no meaning at all." The whole essay, which appeared first in the *Sunday Times*, is a brilliant expansion of this; and must be invaluable in any case where a feeling lingers that religion would be all right if it were not for the accretions of dead dogma which mummify it.

A second essay is added: *The Triumph of Easter*, a meditation on the words of Augustine, *O Felix Culpa!*, a discussion, as alive and convincing as the former, on the problem of suffering and evil. "They had seen the strong hands of God twist the crown of thorns into a crown of glory." "God did not abolish the fact

of evil: He transformed it. He did not stop the crucifixion: He rose from the dead." The implications, the dangers of mis-interpretation, are drawn out with a sure hand. One point: ". . . the ultimate question which no theology . . . has ever attempted to answer completely. Why should God . . . create anything?" *Amor diffusivus sui* surely gives the mind at least something satisfying to grapple with—as Miss Sayers herself, noting the importance here of the analogy of creative art, perhaps implies.  
G. V.

REGARDS CATHOLIQUES SUR LE MONDE. Dominique Auvergne.  
(Desclée, de Brouwer; 18 frs.)

Fourteen well-known Catholics are interviewed: Claudel, Fumet, Maritain, Ghéon, Le Roy, Mauriac, Canon Cardijn, Mounier, Père Forestier, etc. Each interview is preceded by a very brief (for foreign consumption a too brief) biographical sketch, and an excellent photograph of its subject. The interview itself is devoted to answering the question "What do you think of the present state of affairs?" And the answers, though inevitably perhaps giving a somewhat piecemeal and inconclusive impression, together make a most inspiring book, which forbids pessimism. Perhaps this is due most of all to the revelation of the personalities themselves, of the strength of their *catholicisme vécu*. The force which has produced, and which informs, such movements as the Catholic *scoutisme*, the *équipes sociales*, above all, the J.O.C., is an answer to the Pope's words to Cardinal Verdier: "Let us thank God every day for having caused us to live in these times . . . Mediocrity is no longer permissible." It is the consciousness of this force which enables Canon Cardijn, at the conclusion of his interview, to say "This is not the hour for panic. For my part, I cry to the whole world: 'It is the hour of hope, of optimism, of faith; because it is the hour of sanctity.'"

This is a book to read; because it must fill us, in England, with a salutary sense of shame.  
G. V.

LE PERE LATASTE, Fondateur des Dominicaines de Bethanie.  
(Librairie Saint-Paul, 6, rue Cassette, Paris VIe, pp. 87, n.p.)

This inspiring little book tells very simply the story of the life and work of a nineteenth-century French Dominican. His special mission became clear to him in the course of his work among the women prisoners of the Maison Centrale of Cadillac: a mission of rehabilitation. These women, rejected by the world, were to be reclaimed to God; he set about founding the first Bethany, in which Dominican sisters would work and pray together with those who, on returning to liberty, should show a

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desire and disposition to seek God in the religious life and who, after various stages of probation, should come finally to complete equality with them. This work, glorious and, as many were not slow to point out, dangerous, has prospered; and has passed beyond the boundaries of the country of its birth. Père Lataste died young; but he left his work at his death, as he had left it during his life, to God's providence. There is question of his beatification.

G. V.

In his article, *Synthesis on Social Transformation* (BLACKFRIARS, 1937, p. 742), Bernard Kelly made no mistake in drawing attention to the value and importance of the original of A PHILOSOPHY OF WORK by Étienne Borne and François Henry. Further comment would be superfluous, and we need only to thank Messrs. Sheed & Ward and Mr. Francis Jackson for making it available in an English translation. It is priced at six shillings.

New Catholic Truth Society pamphlets include a series of meditations AT PRAYER collected from Father Bede Jarrett's *Meditations for Layfolk*; the Latin text and translation of THE EUCHARISTIC HYMNS OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS with introduction and notes by C. G. Mortimer. Mr. A. A. Parker presents an informative account of the relationship between Church and State in Spain from 1800 till to-day ("The Church was brought into every political upheaval and was left no choice as to which side she would favour; the civil war of 1936 has been no exception.") Somewhat belatedly the C.T.S., jointly with the C.S.G., issues a translation of the important Encyclical *Firmissimam Constantiam*.

Regarding the review of his *Know Your Faith* (BLACKFRIARS, February 1938, pp. 144-5), Dr. E. C. Messenger writes to us:

I can only describe the review as grossly unfair and inaccurate.

(1) It accuses me of "disregarding the question why changing beings can only be accounted for by one changeless being," and of "completely disregarding it." So far is this from being true, that I do give the reason. I start out (p. 23) by saying that "of itself a thing is what it is, and is not what it is not," and go on to say "if of themselves things are what they are, and are not what they are not, and if, on the other hand, all things in the universe are constantly changing, and becoming what they are not, then evidently the changing universe cannot explain itself . . ." etc. (p. 24.)

(2) Your reviewer says that I make "no distinction between the *status naturae purae* and the *status naturae lapsae*." On the contrary, I over and again explain the supernatural end of man (e.g., pp. 6, 7, etc.), and in particular, on p. 46, I say that God raised mankind to a supernatural state' and then, p. 47, explain that as a result of the fall the human race "was reduced to a natural state," which I immediately

explained as consisting in remaining "destined for a supernatural end, but incapable of attaining that end, because of the loss of grace." What more could I have said in a work of this kind? True, I have not used the technical jargon, but I did not consider this necessary in a popular book.

(3) The reviewer complains that I give no explanation of the "how" of the Hypostatic Union. But on the contrary, see the top of p. 49. True, I do not enter into details of theological views about personality, existence, etc. But again I did not consider this necessary in a work of this kind.

(4) He says that my book offers Catholics "no help" on the subject of Holy Orders. At least I have two pages on it, pp. 74—5, admittedly sketchy, but at any rate it is there.

Dr. Messenger asks us to print this letter as "reparation in justice." Our reviewer writes:

The criticisms made regarding *Know Your Faith* concerned not inaccuracy, but inadequacy.

(1) The traditional argument seeks to prove the existence of a transcendent cause from the fact that a thing which is not X cannot cause itself to become X; the author sets out this Conclusion-to-be-proved as being itself the whole proof.<sup>1</sup>

(2) The statement that we are "reduced to the natural state . . . because of the loss of grace," without reference to the damage done to nature, implies a state of pure, not fallen, nature, and presents grave difficulties concerning creation, providence, sin, etc.

(3) The statement on p. 49 is that "the one Divine Person, God the Son, continuing to possess the Divine Nature, took to Himself a complete human nature, and became man. Thus in Jesus Christ there are two natures, but only one Person." This, given without explanation, states what the Hypostatic Union is, but offers no help in understanding how it can be possible.

(4) The passage of thirty-nine lines on Holy Orders urges Catholics "to take an intelligent interest in the priestly office"; but confines itself to references, without elucidation, to spiritual fatherhood, authority, and the administration of the Sacraments, and makes no mention of such essentials as sacrifice, the Priesthood of Christ, and the participation in it of the laity.

All these points can be explained without technicalities; their omission involves an inadequate presentation of doctrine.

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<sup>1</sup> pp. 23—4. "Now it is a first principle that, of itself, a thing is what it is and is not what it is not. That sounds ridiculously obvious, but it contains within itself the implied affirmation of God's existence! For if of themselves things are what they are, and are not what they are not, and if, on the other hand, all things in the universe are constantly changing, and becoming what they are not, then evidently the changing universe cannot explain itself, and the fact of change can only be accounted for ultimately by positing a changeless Being, who is the cause of all changes, either directly or indirectly. This changeless Being, this First Cause, is God."

In this passage we are given the proof that change cannot account for itself. Then however there is a jump from change to the transcendent unchanging, which leaves out the very necessary consideration of act and potency (though not necessarily in those terms) and could equally well be used in support of any immanentist evolutionary theory.