

## REVIEWS

**PHILOSOPHIE DES NOMBRES.** By R. Le Masson. (Paris. Desclée De Brouwer. Pp. xii, 84; 10 fr.)

In this essay, belonging to the *Questions Disputées* series, M. Le Masson links the conceptions of modern mathematics to the Scholastic notion of transcendental multitude; transfinities, imaginary numbers and the rest, can be derived from that fundamental concept by successive dichotomies without any unjustified leap of extrapolation. The author claims to show how easily and congenially these modern conceptions take their place in a Thomist synthesis; and his use of the Act-Potency antithesis in solving questions debated by mathematicians would seem to support his claim, though it might lead the 'tough-minded' to suspect his conclusions.

That M. Maritain, who contributes a preface, should confess to recoiling from the author's view of certain mathematical entities as 'third degree' abstractions is, as that philosopher remarks, no more than the reaction M. Le Masson would wish to provoke from the true-blue Thomist. The essay takes for granted a closer acquaintance with mathematical questions than is the property of every Thomist, but this does not lessen its value as a contribution to the literature of Thomism; as well in provoking questions as in his own solution of them M. Le Masson has done us a service.

Q.J.

**BEGEGNUNGEN UND TRENNUNGEN.** Essays über Christentum und Germanentum. By Sigrid Undset. (München: Kösel und Pustet; RM. 4).

Readers of *The Burning Bush*, which appeared in English last year, will have recognised that Sigrid Undset is something more than one of the greatest of living novelists. The book revealed her in a new light as a profound religious thinker, gifted with an essentially objective and 'untemperamental' understanding of the implications of Catholic life and dogma, all too rare among Catholic litterateurs. This same quality, joined with that acute analytical psychological insight, known to all her readers, is revealed again in the three essays which comprise this volume. The first is a fascinating historical study of St. Olave, the pirate-chief who became the Apostle and Founder of Norway, whose life here serves as the basis for a study contrasting Christianity with the Nordic paganism which it supplanted. The second essay is a valuable comparative study of Catholic and Protestant conceptions of the phenomenon of conversion. It was Sigrid Undset's response to the outcry with which her conversion and that of Lars Eskeland was greeted by her countrymen; and it is typical of her that she should respond with so