

ciples (his not being at once recognized on three of the stated occasions, his passing through closed doors and vanishing, etc.) that M. Guittou has his most interesting and, seemingly, perhaps audacious things to say. These I shall not attempt to summarize here, for fear of misrepresenting an admittedly tentative but profoundly suggestive approach to the mystery of the glorified Body.

Touching St Paul's vision on the road to Damascus, M. Guittou seems to contradict on page 191 what he had said on page 183. This is the chief flaw I notice in his argument. Elsewhere too statements are left unsupported by sufficient evidence; but this may be due to abridgment. There are some misprints, and one bad one (p. 66).

KENELM FOSTER, O.P.

HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY IN THE MIDDLE AGES. By Etienne Gilson. (Sheed and Ward; 42s.)

THE PHILOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY. By Fernand Van Steenberghe. (Nelson; 15s.)

M. Gilson's latest book is in part a translation of *La Philosophie au Moyen Age* (1944), but this scarcely lessens its value, since the new material that it contains is both abundant and of high quality. Those who already know the 1944 volume may be interested in a brief comparison. Omitted from the new work, or abridged, are three sections of chapter II of the former work, and one section of chapter III; all concerned with the cultural background of medieval thought. At the end of the book the omission of sections on the 'retour des lettres' in Italy and France leaves a wider gap than before between scholasticism and the Renaissance, despite a new and brilliant section on Nicholas of Cusa. Part of the old chapter on St Thomas is reproduced, but with important additions. Siger of Brabant gets a fuller treatment than before, especially touching his positive metaphysical positions. Here the new book seems to benefit by coming after *L'Etre et l'Essence* (1948), rather as the section on St Thomas presupposes much of the work that went into the later editions of *Le Thomisme* (5th ed., 1948). In general the new work has less than the old about the cultural setting of medieval ideas, but seems correspondingly more close-knit and clear as a series of analyses of those ideas.

But the most obviously useful addition is a great block of Notes (250 pages in double column) at the end of the volume, comprising, besides extensive bibliographies, many further analytical summaries and second thoughts set out with the lucid and searching thoroughness for which M. Gilson is justly famous. The notes on Siger of Brabant and the question of the 'double truth' seem particularly interesting.

History is concerned with past time and metaphysics with principles

outside time; but M. Gilson is a master in both disciplines; that is his distinction and his greatness. For good measure he is also a literary artist. As a rule he writes extremely well, even when, as here, he writes in English and shows on every page a serene disregard for our use of the auxiliary verb in the past tense: where we would write 'he thought' Gilson always writes 'he has thought'. Yet the only effect of this flaw and a few others is to add a French accent to the beautifully limpid and urbane exposition.

What general themes emerge from this survey of a thousand years of speculation? I suggest two in particular, both already known to M. Gilson's readers: the metaphysical originality of St Thomas, and the fertilization of philosophy by the Christian religion. The former theme, implied all along, tends to come to the surface at each of the stages *en route* in a growing elucidation of that mysterious object of the metaphysician's regard, being *qua* being. From Augustine and Boethius onwards this effort at elucidation gradually divides out into a 'metaphysics of being', focussed on the notion of existence—as soon as, in the mind of St Thomas, the deepest meaning of the word 'being' becomes 'the act pointed out by the verb "to be"'; and being, in consequence, receives 'the fulness of its existential meaning'; though here M. Gilson curtly distinguishes St Thomas's position from some modern existentialism (p. 368). The many non-Thomist metaphysical doctrines themselves tend, on the whole, in one of two directions: either towards including existence in the definition of substance (the strictly Aristotelian current, through Averroes to Siger) or towards a transcending of being (regarded as a limiting concept) by the identification of God with *aliquid altius ente*, with a pure act of intellection (Eckhart). Gilson's arguments are finely drawn out, but even so rough a summary as this may suggest how the Thomist achievement can be firmly 'placed' in the network of its historical relations, not only without the least disparagement but with an immensely enhanced appreciation of its greatness.

The theme of Christianity's influence on scholasticism is big with controversy, not so much perhaps regarding the fact and extent of the influence as its significance. To put the question bluntly, why and how did philosophy emerge at all in a world intellectually dominated by the Church? M. Gilson has for long been associated with a stress on the beneficent and fertilizing effect of Christianity on medieval thought, and if the present work adds anything to what he has said before it is the suggestion (for he does not argue it out at length) that the point of contact through which the faith fertilized reason is to be sought within theology itself; and that this inclusion of philosophy within theology was no mere passing historical circum-

stance, due to the *ratio studendi* imposed by the Church or the Universities, but belongs to the nature of theology itself. Writing as a historian, it is true, M. Gilson limits himself, in the present work, to pointing out that such was the medieval conception of the scope of theology. Not only, he insists, was the best medieval philosophy, from Augustine on to the fourteenth century, contributed by theologians, so that 'even when they wrote purely philosophical treatises, the deepest expression of their philosophical thought is found in their theological works', but Gilson goes on to hint at a contrast with modern theology which, if one were to follow it up, would lead away from the sphere of history to more abstract considerations:

'Not one of them (the medieval theologians) ever imagined that there was no place for purely rational speculation in theology; in fact their theologies are full of it. . . . The fact that most modern theologians restrict the qualification of "theological" to conclusions among whose premises one at least is held as true by faith only, gives a paradoxical aspect to the history of doctrines which saw no difficulty in maintaining a position on strictly rational grounds and yet in considering it theological.' (p. 543.)

This passage occurs near the end of the book, but the same point was earlier made in the course of an only too brief statement of St Thomas's conception of *sacra doctrina*. And this, at long last, is where Canon Van Steenberghe's most interesting and pugnacious little book comes in. It is a series of pithy lectures given by this distinguished medievalist in the Queen's University, Belfast, in 1953; and it ends on a note of strong disagreement with M. Gilson on the issue of Christian philosophy. Agreeing in general with Gilson on the importance of the Christian influence on scholasticism (though the agreement, I suspect, does not go very deep), Van Steenberghe then remarks that Gilson 'seems to go still further, since he attributes the value of these scholastic philosophies, not only to the influence of Christian *revelation*, but to the influence of scholastic *theologies*'. And Van Steenberghe strongly disagrees. And the ground of his disagreement seems to be not historical only—'that Gilson's idea of a Christian philosophy is *completely foreign* to the thinkers of the Middle Ages'—but also speculative, in the sense that whereas Gilson's idea of theology can include philosophy (while 'leaving intact, within theology, the formal distinction between natural knowledge and supernatural knowledge'—Gilson, p. 367), Van Steenberghe's idea of theology excludes philosophy except as an instrument exterior to itself. The Canon does not, it is true, here explain very clearly his distinction of the two disciplines; so that the difference from Gilson may possibly be one of emphasis rather than idea. It is summed up in his statement that St Thomas

'was a great theologian because he was a great philosopher, and not *vice versa*'. Great theology then would not *as such* include great (i.e. deeply true) philosophy; and if one thought that in the Middle Ages it did, one would be logically bound (unless the inclusion were seen as a historical circumstance merely) to give up 'the very ideal of a Thomist revival' today; presumably because one would have implied that the intrinsic cogency of Thomist philosophy was essentially not evident to any but Catholics. The direct object of this attack was a paper read by M. Gilson at a Congress in Rome in 1950.<sup>1</sup>

It has seemed worth while to state this difference between the two philosopher-historians, without venturing on a personal opinion. The question at issue is nothing less than the true nature of Christian theology. But whether Gilson be right or wrong as a theologian simply, it is at least very arguable that he is right as an interpreter of St Thomas; and it is certain that his attachment to the idea that Christian philosophy is a tremendous historical fact has been wonderfully fruitful: it has inspired the incomparable series of masterpieces that we owe to him. For this professor is a master-craftsman: and, in the great French tradition, a lucid enthusiast.

KENELM FOSTER, O.P.

PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS. Its Development Between the Two World Wars. By J. O. Urmson. (Oxford: Clarendon Press. London: Cumberlege; 18s.)

This brilliantly lucid account of the philosophical movements Logical Atomism and Logical Positivism in the period indicated deserves a great welcome even beyond the central philosophical public. Those many who are apt to enquire about the connection of logical positivism with logic, or with metaphysics, about the logico-philosophical work of the earlier Russell, or about the standpoint of various forms of analytical philosophy, will find their questions answered here, coherently and informatively, without propaganda. A brief and well-chosen bibliography puts the reader on the track of the most influential articles and larger works. For the techniques of analysis he will have to go to some of those, but this book will show him what it was, in essentials, all about. Contemporary developments are described just sufficiently to link the past with the present. The price seems high, even today, but the value is extremely good.

IVO THOMAS, O.P.

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted as 'Historical Research and the Future of Scholasticism' in *The Modern Schoolman*, xxix (1951), pp. 1-10.