

REVIEWS

Dawson in the present book has still withheld from us his pertinent opinion on some points of interest for the whole question. At the same time, I ought to say that this is not due to limitations of outlook or a lack of comprehension of the Continental situation. The book, once more judged from the Continental point of view, seems to me so important that I should welcome its being translated and made more fully accessible to Continental people.

The importance of a book of this kind is not told from the amount of strict agreement it can command but rather from the measure of fruitful thinking it provokes and from the vital contacts it is capable of establishing in the readers' minds with reality. Mr. Dawson's book is, then, of the very greatest importance, because it meets these requirements to quite an exceptional degree. It would of course be a great mistake to look for any facile "Christian" solution of the problem of the State. As Mr. Dawson says, "The one merit of a relatively Christian age or culture—and it is no small one—is that it recognizes its spiritual indigence and stands open to God and the spiritual world; while the age or culture that is thoroughly non-Christian is closed to God and prides itself on its own progress to perfection." This is why the house Marxism is devising "is a prison because it has no windows." And there lies the danger of the Totalitarian State, i.e., that it will tolerate and even welcome Religion, but only to such an extent as the State can make use of for its own ends taken as absolute. The Liberal conception of the State had taken Religion, or rather Christianity, as an irrelevancy. To the New State Religion is vital and relevant to the highest degree, because it needs and desires for itself the spiritual foundations which Religion, or some kind of religion, will alone provide.

The problem which Catholics and Christians generally have to face with regard to the New State would be a comparatively easy one if the Christian Religion were all in a compartment of its own separated from the business of life. Mr. Dawson has a strong sense of the falseness of such an attitude, which, alas, has been too common on the part of Christians in modern times. He shows the lesson we may learn from the New State, and will have to learn for ourselves if we are to meet its challenge. The book is an admirable appeal to Christians to be more worthy of the name they are called upon to honour before the world.

OSKAR BAUHOFFER.

FREEDOM IN THE MODERN WORLD. By Jacques Maritain. Translated by Richard O'Sullivan. (Sheed & Ward; 6/-.)

Mr. O'Sullivan is to be congratulated both on having translated *this* book and on having done it without any trace of that

archaistic manner which is so common a characteristic of English contributions to the *philosophia perennis*. A review has already appeared in these pages (January, 1935) of M. George Viance's *Préface à une Réforme de l'Etat* which owed an acknowledged debt to M. Maritain's *Du Régime Politique et de la Liberté*, of which the book now before us is a translation.

So many topics are touched on that we must select for comment some which seem to admit most readily of discussion. On page 42 we read: "According to this philosophy civil society is essentially ordered not to the freedom of choice of each citizen but to a common good of the temporal order which provides the true earthly life of man and which is not only material but moral also in its scope." By this time it is clear that one cannot put the notion of a common good in the forefront of one's political philosophy without expecting to be asked to give a clear account of it. In the review of M. Viance's book already mentioned, indecision and vagueness about this was one of the points of criticism. The matter is more satisfactorily dealt with here, though the passages are scattered. M. Maritain brings out the formal and dynamic nature of the common good already existing in the State, and which is, indeed, a constitutive principle of the State. Besides being formal and so a principle both of being and of operation, it may however also be said to be fluid. It is because the temporal common good is not the final term of the development of society but is essentially subordinate to it and in a measure productive of the ultimate good of persons, united in a society higher than the civil one; because in every moment of its increasing actualization it passes and refers beyond itself, there is inevitably some difficulty in giving a concise and constant account of it. The difficulty is inherent in a political philosophy which recognizes that time is a preparation for eternity. When this is understood we can see better the significance of a sentence such as this: "Political society . . . is essentially directed, even through the temporal end that gives the state its character, to the establishment of social conditions which will secure for the mass of men such a standard of material, intellectual, and moral life as will conduce to the well-being of the whole community; so that every citizen may find in it a positive help in the progressive achievement of his freedom of autonomy." Here we find a whole series of overlapping conditions each of which at successive stages of political and social development might be spoken of as the common good and all of which refer and lead more or less directly to the good of the person and the Church, the ultimate society, which is here described in terms of freedom, the freedom of autonomy.

On the practical side M. Maritain at once gains one's confi-

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dence by his recognition of the special conditions and needs of the present time, so different from those of the Middle Ages. Catholic critics of our social and political life, recognizing that the principles of reform remain the same, are especially apt to overlook the nature of the material of their art, but M. Maritain is far from doing this. He does not forget the loss of the unity of faith and the difficulties that oppose its restoration; the contrast, which the Reformers and all sorts of modern Manichees have made to appear a contradiction between Nature and Grace, the Temporal and the Spiritual; the feeling of despair which is apt to attack Christians when they discover that politics is a dirty game and begin to suspect that success can only be bought at the cost of soiling oneself. For these last he has both counsel and a message of hope, based on a clear insight into the supremacy of spiritual means over temporal ones, of the humble things of this world over the great, and into the importance of getting behind labels and words to being and action. He shows us the possibility of a new technique of revolution and social reconstruction, on the lines of Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha (Truth-force, Love-force or Soul-force). It will be a thousand pities if M. Maritain should here cry only in the wilderness he anticipates. There are now so many men of good will who cannot see the wood for the trees that one hopes it may not be so. The reader should remember that although the actual outline of the personalist, communal, authoritative constitution is but admittedly tentative, the principles there exemplified and the method by which they may be brought into acceptance and operation are of far wider application.

H. C. THOMAS.

FASCISM—MAKE OR BREAK? By R. Braun. Translated by Michael Davidson. (Martin Laurence; 2/6.)

A disappointing book, even when allowances are made for the difficulties of translation. How disappointing it is may be seen when it is compared with such a masterpiece of analysis as Lenin's *Imperialism* or even with Dutt's by no means negligible study of Fascism which is advertized on the wrapper and which was so studiously boycotted by the general run of political and literary weeklies.

That the effective power behind Hitler is that of German Finance—Capital—heavily buttressed, incidently, by the Bank of England—has been obvious from the beginning, and was to be expected by any Catholic who had studied *Quadragesimo Anno*, particularly that classic analysis of the modern economic regime which is contained in §§ 100-109 in the English translation published by the Catholic Social Guild in 1934.

Certain important points emerge from a study of the Nazi