

The approach characteristic of all the books so far discussed is in the broad sense philosophical; it involves seeing contemporary science in perspective. The historian of science has a rather different approach, often confused with it. He stands back from science in a different way; by re-creating what he finds fossilized in the past, he can often throw new light on our contemporary problems. As an academic subject history of science is comparatively new. Two recent publications deal with a field known up to now only to specialists, that of medieval science. Marshall Clagett's *Science of Mechanics in the Middle Ages* (O.U.P.; 50s.) at last provides essential texts, and allows us to see how much of what is still attributed to Galileo was in fact anticipated in medieval thought. A shorter but still authoritative introduction to the subject is provided by Fr Weisheipl's *Development of Physical Theory in the Middle Ages* (Sheed and Ward; 4s.), the latest in the series of short studies for general readers sponsored by the Philosophy of Science Group of the Newman Association.

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### FRENCH OPINION

THE French are perhaps better at articulating their political ideas than at implementing them: the Cartesian *idées claires* have left a heavy legacy. Certainly there could hardly be a clearer summary of the major dilemma of our times than the special number of *Esprit* (March) devoted to Co-existence and Peace. Arranged with logical precision, some seventeen articles discuss the problem as a matter of recent history, analyse what has been argued and consider what hope there is of moving forward 'from co-existing to co-operating'.

Léo Hamon optimistically suggests that 'Rather than dreaming and speaking of an illusory simplification of the world, our efforts should be devoted to a pacific but inevitable convergence of national and social differences'. But Jean Conilh, in an article which is plentifully sprinkled with such headings as 'Categorical refusal' and 'Universal solidarity', nonetheless sees that 'Global politics has as its necessary corollary a taking root on the part of men and nations in that natural and traditional setting in which spiritual values have their origin and are fed. . . . The politics of the human race, far from destroying national families, should on the contrary compel them to be revealed at last in their true form: the continuity of a tradition, transmitted from age to age, whose personality is indispensable to life, beauty and the harmony of the whole.'

*La Table Ronde* (March) provides a whole number devoted to a similar topic, namely an enquiry into the new nationalisms. Denis de Rougemont points out that modern nationalism is largely an assertion of independence, proclaimed as a protest against western colonialism. The European phenomenon is more complex, and he provides an anthology of texts to justify his description of it as an ideology and not the play of economic forces. He finds national egoism to be an essential element in the French Revolution:

it was Robespierre who declared that 'It is to the interest of the nations to protect the French nation because the liberty and happiness of the world must spring from France'. Jean Cazeneuve finds the roots of nationalism in pre-history. 'From the beginnings of human society it is probable that groups have turned back on themselves, and have become enclosed in a religious system that, more or less explicitly, made them the centre of the world and traced about them a sacred circle'. Isolationism and expansionism both alike have their roots in the remotest places of human history.

There have been frequent French attempts to explain the mystery of the English: Colonel Bramble and Major Thompson are perhaps not very sophisticated creations, and Jean Bailhache's recent inspection of the English in *Esprit* is decidedly free from fun. It is indeed pretty penetrating, and its categories are sharp: 'Yahoos' (the lower working class), 'Dodos' (the Tory old guard, Major Thompson in fact), 'Castors' (the builders, the true John Bulls), 'Marmots' (the great majority, apathetic, who 'go to work like sleepwalkers'). M. Bailhache finds that the principal interest of the British is taken up with evading reality, and he provides plenty of evidence in his catalogue of our interests (though he does not seem to realize that the *News of the World* is very concerned about its declining circulation).

Ten years have passed since the death of Emmanuel Mounier, whose 'personalism' gave such vivid expression to the hopes of French Catholics of liberal mind. His impact was prophetic rather than practical, and he more than any other Catholic writer awakened his generation to a questioning of the 'established disorder'. *Informations* (March 15) has a valuable assessment of Mounier's philosophy and of his achievement in establishing *Esprit* in 1932. So much of the Catholic revival in France reflects his spirit (such phrases as *engagement* and *affrontement*, almost boring now in their repeated and uncritical implications, were originally his) that it is valuable to recall his essential strength; 'personalism has been reduced to a slogan by every party, but he still inspires any authentic protests against every form of oppression'.

French Protestantism has the strength of a small and conscious minority: it is eminently respectable. But of recent years there has been a spectacular growth in France of various sects which for the most part have no sort of root in French tradition. In *L'Offensive des Sectes* (Editions du Cerf, 12 NF), Père H. Ch. Chéry, O.P., provides a detailed guide to this multitude of religious bodies. Five hundred pages of exact documentation describe the beliefs, practices and present strength of such bodies as Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Pentecostals and Moral Rearmament. There are, too, more exotic sects such as that named after *Soew Gaillard*, a widow who died in Lyons in 1958 and who specialized in faith healing, and the various 'Free Catholic' schisms, none of much numerical significance. The value of Père Chéry's admirable book lies in its objectivity (the forms of worship of each body, for instance, are carefully described) and in the moral he draws. He takes such characteristic features of the sects as their insistence on the primacy of the Bible, the share of the people in worship and in evangeliza-

tion, the sense of a living community, and makes of them the basis of an examination of conscience for Catholics.

Among the activities of the French Dominicans the publishing of gramophone records is the latest—and not the least lively. Under the title 'Editions de Jericho' (and we all know what happened to the walls when the trumpet sounded) a series of interesting long-playing records includes the presentation of the Rosary through scripture readings and music, an introduction to the Old Testament prophets through the same means and a charming Christmas record, with carols in every language and musical tradition, arranged by the Little Sisters of Jesus.

## REVIEWS

THE PASTORAL SERMONS OF RONALD A. KNOX. Edited by Philip Caraman, s.j. (Burns and Oates; 42s.)

Among the many memories of Mgr Knox which I treasure two stand out very clearly and are perhaps not altogether irrelevant to a consideration of the collection of his sermons now published with the title of the *Pastoral Sermons of Ronald A. Knox*. He came to stay with me at Cambridge immediately after preaching at a mixed marriage which had kept the society columnists busy and taxed the capacity even of the Brompton Oratory. I had remarked that I had not known that he was a friend of the bridegroom. 'I don't know him terribly well', he replied, 'but I think that I often get asked to perform at mixed marriages because bishops won't do them and I provide a bit of purple in the sanctuary.' To anyone who had not experienced Mgr Knox's humility it would seem incredible that he should be unaware that he was amongst the very few preachers in this country who would lend distinction to any occasion.

My other memory is an earlier one. A small dinner was being given to one of my predecessors on his retirement. The occasion was informal and intimate, the hosts were seven close friends, the meeting-place a private room in a London club. Mgr Knox was the obvious person to give us an opportunity of drinking the health of the guest with—not a speech—but a couple of sentences. But when the suggestion was made to him he would not hear of it. 'I have nothing prepared', he said, 'and I can never speak without preparation.' Again, to anyone accustomed to thinking that the object of painfully writing out sermons is eventually to acquire such fluency as enables the preacher to dispense with a manuscript, it may come as a surprise to learn that during a life-time of speaking Mgr Knox never spoke without a manuscript—a manuscript which indicated the very inflexions of the voice.

Father Caraman tells us, in his introduction, that 'the unpublished sermons were as carefully polished as any Mgr Knox himself arranged for publication. . . . There was no editing to be done to the text. All the sermons were printed exactly as they were written.' The very asides which gave such