

REVIEWS

OLD PRINCIPLES AND THE NEW ORDER. By Father Vincent McNabb, O.P. (Sheed & Ward; New York; \$2.75.)

A few copies of this book published in New York reached London just before Father Vincent McNabb's death; and, unless Sheed and Ward intend to bring out an edition on this side of the Atlantic, it will probably not be easily obtainable by English readers. The book is a gathering together of various articles, sermons, fragments, letters, and a poem by way of Epilogue—all drawing attention to those moral principles which are at the root of economics and politics, though Father Vincent disclaims any intention of posing as politician or economist and takes his stand as 'a priest-teacher of the Church,' basing his theses on certain dogmatic and moral principles, certain undeniable facts, and putting forward certain practical proposals.

The war has set men digging for victory and practising voluntary poverty in the interests of patriotism, and perhaps these practical proposals may not seem so visionary and quixotic as they might have appeared to the pre-war world. Anyhow, it is encouraging to find this preaching of Father Vincent's social gospel being published in the United States with the *Imprimatur* of the Archbishop of New York.

B.D.

DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD? By Father Vincent McNabb, O.P. (Catholic Truth Society; 3d.)

This last of Father Vincent's C.T.S. pamphlets is a very clear and cogently-reasoned answer to the question posed. It is among the best things he has done, and shows Father Vincent at his brightest and in his happiest vein.

B.D.

THE WAY OF THE LAND. By Sir George Stapledon. (Faber; 12s. 6d.)

Sir George Stapledon has gathered together here a number of papers ranging over the last thirty years. The introductory group, entitled 'Point of View,' has little to show but the innocence of the typical scientist discoursing on general subjects. 'The training of the scientist needs to be somewhat widened and brought into closer touch with business ideals and methods before it would be quite sound to entrust all the affairs of mankind to the scientist, but undoubtedly herein lies the world's ultimate salvation.' 'Truth . . . is subject to constant revision under the ceaseless and pitiless bombardment of ever-increasing knowledge.'

Fortunately the main part of the book is of another order, dealing as it does with agriculture in general, of which Sir George knows a great deal, and in particular with grassland and ley-farming, on which he is our greatest living authority. His approach to the countryside is less traditional and humane than that of Mr. Massingham, but it is all the more interesting to see in how many respects he has come to join what may be called the Massingham party. Especially noteworthy is his defence of the small farm, which he describes as 'an absolute necessity to the stability of rural England.'

But Sir George's most characteristic contribution to these matters is his urgent and documented protest against the waste of agricultural land—in the first place through the encroachment of public and private building (since 1927, about 60,000 acres a year), in the second place through the assignment of more than half our land surface to permanent grass or to rough and hill grazings—a practice which though long customary runs really counter to the principles of good husbandry, since it implies a continual decrease in energy and fertility which might obviously be remedied by applying to grass the same rotational ploughing and the same concern for improved strains which are given to other crops. The details of the technique involved are Sir George's speciality, and the zeal with which he has preached and practised them has won him an honourable place in the records of British agriculture.

W.S.

SAINT THOMAS AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL. By Jacques Maritain. (Marquette University Press; n.p.)

M. Maritain in these 'Aquinas Lectures' to Marquette University disclaims any attempt to summarise all that St. Thomas had to say about the problem of evil. He confines himself to two points—'the meaning of the existence of evil in this world; and the cause of evil where free will is concerned.' As is perhaps inevitable in the thankless task of rendering the highest achievements of metaphysics intelligible to the moderns, the result will perhaps disappoint both those who are acquainted with the lapidary conciseness of the original and those who expect a restatement in the concrete terms of common sense and common parlance. The presentation of St. Thomas's thought regarding the 'privative' character of evil would possibly have been more convincing had M. Maritain availed himself of the simple English word *badness* (as the equivalent of *malum formale*), whose absence in Latin and other less happier tongues has been the cause of so much misunderstanding. And is not M. Maritain doing less than justice to the profundity of St. Thomas's thought when, on p. 18 (at least by implication), he credits evil itself with finality? Evil *as such* is for St. Thomas utterly purposeless; the purpose is to be attributed solely to the (actual or potential) *bonum conjunctum*.

The second half of the lecture is devoted wholly to St. Thomas's