

Were it possible, in fact, to implement in full the programme of reform so warmly and ably advocated by Dr. Smith, we might indeed produce a social order more in conformity than the present one with the principles of abstract justice—'a land fit for Christians to live in'—but it would be a 'Christian society,' as he himself emphasizes in his closing chapter, only in proportion as it found its unifying principle in recognition of the Kingship of Christ. 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.'

H. M. CHEW.

CHILDREN IN SOVIET RUSSIA. By Deana Levin. (Faber, 1942; 6s.).

THIS review happens to have been held up for a year. But the notice of a book by a communist enthusiast, an educational expert, who gives us a picture of Soviet education in its methods and ideals: up-to-date methods, many of them admirable, all skilfully directed to bringing up children to an ideal, the communist ideal of a godless materialist, collective citizenship, may be opportune now when there is much spoken of religion and clergymen in the U.S.S.R. when their Allies are driving towards the Eternal City, and when important material reforms in education are being mooted in this country. Miss Levin, presumably not a Christian, writes from her own experiences as a teacher in Russia since 1933, and adds valuable appendices quoting syllabuses and text-books. It is of course difficult to assess how far her evidence applies to the whole of the U.S.S.R. and how far we can trust the account of material prosperity there. But the chief impression is that of education for an ideal. Everything contributes to this: the study of history, art, letters and science (rather darwinian); as well as methods of co-operation between children, teachers, police and parents in the work of education; friendship and co-operation between teachers and taught; use of schoolboy initiative, collective pastimes, etc., all those things are carefully planned to develop in the young the communist ideal of a terrestrial paradise, to the ruthless exclusion of any Christian myth of a celestial paradise. Educational technique and equipment are in general most advanced. There is in the methods much that we can observe with interest (such as children's co-operation), much that is abominable (such as the godlessness and collectivisation of youth), and much that we Christian educationists ought to know already (such as the vocation of the teacher as educator). 'Make unto you friends. . . .' The chief trouble in our educational reforms in England is the emphasis on reforming the means and methods of education, while ignoring the Christian end of it all. The work of the Christian educationist is to be a faithful dispenser of the mysteries of God, and thus to prepare Christian youth to be a follower of Christ in this world, with the ideal of eternal life before him. Our teachers must not be mere purveyors of knowledge, but educators to

an ideal, the Christian ideal of a life of service of God, leading to paradise with him hereafter. Christian education as often understood here, tends to become no more than a respectable accompaniment, and a sort of moral fortification contributing to the material excellence of the man. But the communists believe in education for an ideal: the most modern methods and technique are all openly directed to the godless paradise. We have our ideal: let it not become obscured. Let us not be blinded by the array of apparatus. We have traditional methods that do need reform, but let us bear in mind that the most modern methods miss the point if there is no ideal beyond the material world and citizenship of it. We have our ideal: let our methods be reformed and improved, but everything must contribute to our aim, which is the holy paradise of God.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

#### PHILOSOPHY.

FINITE AND INFINITE. By Austin Farrer. (Dacre Press; 20s.).

Mr. Farrer's study on the nature of Being has an especial significance for the future of Thomism in England. It would be quite misleading to describe the author as Thomist. The structure of his concise and compressed thinking is very characteristically his own. Both directly and by reaction he owes much to the Logical Positivists. But the debt to the *De Ente et Essentia* is patent enough and even possibly a debt to Père Penido, and it is perhaps the first time that a modern English philosopher, teaching in one of the greater universities, has discussed and utilized Thomism as a living system of metaphysics. The place of analogy in mental concepts and the recognition of a fundamental distinction between essence and existence help to form the main groundwork of his own thought. Even here much of his approach might have seemed strange to the great Thomist commentators, for it is so often an approach to problems with which they were in no way concerned. It is at least tenable that it is dialectically an advantage for the distinction between potency and act to be restated in terms of essence and existence in a period when modern philosophic terminology has been so thoroughly de-Aristotelianised. It is clear that a statement of analogy in terms of mental concepts can form the only bridge between Thomism and that Logical Positivist critique which has shown itself one of the most vital movements of our time. But any Thomist must part company with the author at the phrase 'an impoverished bye-form of the essence-existence argument is that which substitutes the distinction possible-actual.'

This is not only to be regretted by Thomists. An assertion of the fundamental unity between the two distinctions might have given a further principle of co-ordination to Mr. Farrer's own thought.