

REVIEWS

WAYS AND CROSSWAYS. By Paul Claudel. Translated by Fr. John O'Connor. Crown 8vo. Pp. 260. 7/6. (Sheed & Ward, London).

This volume is very happily dedicated 'To G. K. Chesterton in token of admiration.' Differing largely, as no doubt they should, in subject matter as well as in style, these essays exhibit nevertheless in a marked degree that same rare wisdom of metaphysical insight (that is to say, of sublime common sense) with which we are familiar in the writings of Mr. Chesterton.

Ways and Crossways indeed they are, but all of them leading the wayfarer who reads to Him Who called Himself the Way, the Truth and the Life. Judged materially such a variety of matter as is here collected together might seem to preclude any semblance of unity. But whether M. Claudel be writing a *Discourse to the Catholic Actors of New York*, a treatise on *The Physics of the Eucharist*, an *Essay on Art*, a mystical exposition *On the Presence of God*, sundry *Propositions on Justice*, or *Two Letters on St. Joseph* (these are some of the twenty titles), there is a common quality—uncommon, however, in its perfection—of perspicacity sharpened immeasurably by spiritual understanding, which imposes a unity of form far more real than a mere unity of matter.

While we do not concur with the publishers' opinion that 'there is nothing technical or recondite about them,' we do maintain nevertheless that what is technical and recondite has been made intelligible to the lay mind by the simple clarity of the author's mind, and perhaps not less by the happy choice of a translator. It is fortunate indeed that this difficult task was entrusted to such a master of English prose and of translation as Fr. John O'Connor. That it was in fact a difficult task is perhaps suggested definitely in, for instance, the fourth of *Five Unsuccessful Letters* which deals with the Incarnation, and especially in the curious rendering, necessary no doubt, of *Exod.* xxx, 13 in the second footnote. But even this is almost an attempt to find fault with the perfect.

H.J.C.

DE LA PHILOSOPHIE CHRÉTIENNE. Par Jacques Maritain. (Questions Disputées, Vol. IX.) (Desclée De Brouwer et Cie, Paris; 166 pp.; 10 frs.)

A valuable discussion of the notion of a 'Christian philosophy'; valuable not least because it is still sometimes thought