

Philosophy of Our Uncertainties. By GUSTAV E. MUELLER. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1936. Pp. xii + 336.

The thesis which G. E. Mueller presents, more dogmatically than either rationally or empirically, is the contradictory or dialectical nature of reality. To understand that reality and to embrace and affirm its inherent contradictions and antinomies we have to scrutinize its metaphysical structure. And it is refreshing and consoling to hear a voice exclaiming in our philosophical wilderness: ". . . the heart of philosophy has always been and essentially has to be metaphysics. . . . Genuine and vital philosophy lives only through interest in the ultimate and universal nature of reality as a whole." (p. 4) The author then proceeds in his examination of what he calls the "six worlds" of the metaphysical universe: the world of practical common sense, the inferred world of sciences, the subjective private world, the world of common objective values, the world of irreal (?) artistic symbols, and the world of God. He impressively demonstrates the fallacies of all one-sided philosophical tenets in these different fields, and concludes that "ultimately we do not hit upon a single principle but upon a dialectical, unsolvable, contradictory unity of opposites." (p. 16) He designates his own point of view as dialectical or critical idealism. Dialectics, then, with our author becomes an end rather than a means: "Dialectic is the origin, the method or logic, and the aim as well as the ultimate ground of philosophy." (p. 17) In spite of his earlier refutation of subjectivism Mueller demands that philosophy be existential, personal and "subjective." Kierkegaard's and Heidegger's "existential" subjectivism is of kindred blood.

There are excellent observations on the philosophical assumptions, presumptions, and presuppositions of science and psychology, in the chapter on "Life and the Sciences." In the same chapter, however, we meet with an analysis of the soul-body relation which reestablishes Cartesian dualism in its most rigid form.

The dialectical premise is, of course, most consequential in the field of ethics. The meaning or the good of life consists "in unconditionally accepting and in practically enacting what we are." But what are we? Answer: "We are this dialectical uncertainty; we are this open question." (p. 125) Dialectical pluralism in metaphysics is then reflected in a pluralistic theory of morals which logically would lend itself to a Manichaeian affirmation of evil as a positive entity and reality.

In the discussion of politics no distinction is made between the state-

absolutism of the totalitarian state and the political philosophy of Scholasticism and Catholicism. The term "traditionalism" which supposedly covers both philosophies of the state, actually refers to a common property of merely accidental and superficial significance.

Dialectical idealism reveals its limitations most strikingly in the field of educational theory and practice. The teacher is required "to accept this reality of conflicting principles, of concrete contradictions, of limited values" (p. 155), because "man is not in possession of principles of real education, is not in a position of certainty, to dispose over his own and his fellow's destiny." (p. 154) The amazing conclusion that is derived from this presumed state of affairs is not, as one might expect, skepticism or escape into an "élan vital", but rather the assertion that "understanding this absolute and dialectical nature of real education opens the possibility to *reconsider religion in education.*" (p. 156) And this within a frame of reference which expressly excludes free will! The riddle of such happy inconsistency is solved in the two final chapters which deal with theology and ontology. It becomes clear now that our author's dialectical dogmatics was suggested to him by his Protestant inheritance in general and by the "dialectical theology" of Karl Barth in particular. The concept of the *analogia entis* which would close the gap and resolve the antinomies, is either not seen and known by G. E. Mueller or, if he has seen it, he may have rejected it like Karl Barth as part of a *theologia naturalis* and therefore an invention of the Anti-Christ. Mueller realizes that "unity of being in the difference of experience is the philosophical problem as such" (p. 230), but he does not realize that being cannot be predicated univocally in the world of experience nor does he recognize that *Bonum diffusivum Sui* which is represented in the hierarchic gradations of being. Making due allowance for these necessary qualifications, G. E. Mueller has succeeded in writing a most stimulating volume which will be read with profit by the student and lover of the *philosophia perennis*.

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Fontes vitae S. Catharinae senensis historici cura et studio M. HYACINTHI LAURENT, O.P. et Francisci Valli. I.—Documenti. Florence: G. C. Sansoni (R. Università di Siena-Cattedra Catechistica), 1936. Paper. Pp. 69.

This slender volume containing twenty-four diplomatic documents is carefully edited by Père Laurent with preface, analyses, and notes in Italian. The documents have reference to Saint Catherine herself, her