

## REVIEWS

- THE TRINITY AND UNICITY OF THE INTELLECT. By St Thomas Aquinas. Translated by Sister Rose Emmanuella Brennan, S.H.N. (B. Herder, London, W.C; 22s. 6d.)
- COMPENDIUM OF THEOLOGY. By St Thomas Aquinas. Translated by Cyril Vollert, S.J. (B. Herder, London, W.C; 30s.)
- PARADOXES OF THE INFINITE. By Bernard Bolzano. Translated by Dr F. Prihonsky, with introduction by Donald Steele, S.J. (Routledge & Kegan Paul; 21s.)
- THE PHILOSOPHY OF MATHEMATICS. By Edward A. Maziarz. (Philosophical Library, New York; \$4.)
- SCIENCE: ITS METHOD AND ITS PHILOSOPHY. By G. Burniston Brown. (Allen and Unwin; 15s.)
- THE DICTIONARY OF PHILOSOPHY. Edited by Dagobert Runes. (Philosophical Library, New York; \$6.)

It is excellent to find that there is sufficient need for translations of St Thomas for the issue of the first two of these volumes. The first is probably the one that will meet with most general interest in these days, as it contains the fullest exposition of St. Thomas's thought on the inter-relations of the sciences and on scientific method. The translator was unfortunate in working just too soon to make use of the critical edition of the autograph text of the fifth and sixth questions of the *In Boethium de Trinitate* by Fr Paul Wyser, O.P. in 1948. These questions are the most widely studied portions of the treatise and it is regrettable that the translation cannot be safely quoted for this part. In the introduction to the translation of the *De Unitate Intellectus* there is no mention or discussion of the date.

The second volume is prefaced by an excellent short introduction on St Thomas's approach to theology, and the translation of this delightful work, perhaps the most genial which St Thomas ever wrote, reads smoothly and well.

Dr Bolzano's book is one of the newly appearing series 'Rare Masterpieces of Philosophy and Science', edited by Dr W. Stark, which promises excellently to augment the supply of first-class but out-of-the-way philosophical and scientific texts. Students of the medieval Averroist dispute about the eternity of the world will realise that mathematical infinity is not irrelevant to Thomistic thought and metaphysics, and St Thomas's commentary on Boethius *de Trinitate*, a translation of which we have just noticed, shows the high place which he gave to mathematics in the hierarchy of the sciences. Those who are interested in this side of St Thomas's thought should read the article

*La Filosofia della Matematica in San Tommaso* by P. Giuseppe Alvarez, C.M.F., in *Rivista di Filosofia neo-Scolastica* (Milan) 1950, which contains copious references and takes accounts of modern theories. P. Alvarez notes St Thomas's rejection of holomerism (*S. Th.* III q. 10, a. 3 ad 3) which plays a principal part in modern theories of infinity. Fr Steele stresses the imperfection of Bolzano's grasp of this concept (which can be traced back to Greek antiquity), and in this respect gives a prudent estimate of his position as a precursor of Cantor and Peano. Non-specialists will find the introduction over-allusive in matters of mathematical history, but the account of Bolzano's life and views on logic and methods are generally valuable. The inclusion of a section on his metaphysics would have been in place as throwing more light on the concluding sections of the *Paradoxien*. The emphasis laid in more than one place on Bolzano's treatment of the variable is certainly proper, as growth in awareness about the nature of variables has undoubtedly been a major influence in the development of scientific method.

Dr Maziarz's historical and speculative essay on the philosophy of mathematics is an excellent introduction to its subject from a standpoint of aristotelico-thomist metaphysics and epistemology. The central portion on mathematics as an abstractive science is particularly well presented. The style does not make for very easy reading, owing to a certain scholastic angularity, but the general student of philosophy should none the less be able to gain a good deal from a book which we may hope will stimulate further work in the subject on a similar basis. The copious notes are not the least interesting part, giving references to, and quotations from, both ancient and modern literature, but they would have been more conveniently placed at the foot of the page rather than at the end of each chapter.

Dr Burniston Brown's philosophic standpoint appears to be some version of nineteenth century rationalism, for which an argument can be a 'painful' reminder of Aquinas' *Summa*, a work in which many problems seem 'ridiculous' and are solved from premisses 'hardly worth memorising'. A good deal of emphasis is laid on the dangers of merely verbal argument, and of the process of hypostatizing abstractions. This has often been found a useful means of banishing discussions of abstractions of which one does not approve. 'Much worse examples are: Values, the Good, the True, the Beautiful, etc., all nouns which language allows us to build up from verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, but they do not represent anything found in Nature.' Presumably Nature, with or without the capital, is considered an innocuous abstraction. The epistemological standpoint is not made clear by the statement that the events of consciousness are all that we can ever know, but seems to be of a Kantian type. That 'the Christian religion

and the philosophy of Plato both tended to decrease men's interest in the observation of Nature' is hardly borne out by the history of scientific discovery. An apparent inconsistency in the first two chapters needs further explanation. We are told that even the higher apes have little or no power to invent symbols, but later that associations constitutive of a symbol-situation are automatically formed by all higher animals. 'Propria' everywhere appears as 'propia', and unlike perspicacity, perspicuity is not a faculty (p. 55). In saying that it is a serious drawback that Aristotle's accounts of the process of arriving at correct definitions should be so obscure and should require so vague and unreliable a faculty as perspicacity, the author is not being quite just to his subject, in view of later developments. The more congenial Whewell is quoted as saying that sagacity, which cannot be taught and commonly succeeds by guessing, is necessary for the framing of appropriate hypotheses, and the operation of such a faculty is generally recognised to be of great importance in the process of discovery.

*The Dictionary of Philosophy* is noteworthy for the attention paid to terms of Oriental philosophies, and to matters connected with modern logic and the philosophy of mathematics. The competency of the articles on the former we are not in a position to estimate; those on the latter are mostly from the master-hand of Professor Alonzo Church, and could hardly be bettered in the space. Scholastic matters are not neglected, and among the names of those who contribute on them we note those of A. C. Pegis and V. J. Bourke. The cross-references are plentiful and helpful. We note that *s.v.* Nestorians, stress on duality of persons should replace that on duality of natures.

IVO THOMAS, O.P.

THE GREEKS AND THEIR GODS. By W. K. C. Guthrie. (Methuen; 21s.)

This new book, by the author of *Orpheus and Greek Religion* and that very useful little work *The Greek Philosophers*, has to an even higher degree the qualities of clarity, good sense, and sympathetic understanding of the subject which distinguished his other works. Mr Guthrie has set out to describe the Greek religion of the classical period only (excluding Hellenistic religion), with a view to illuminating the religious content and background of the masterpieces of Greek literature: for Greek literature, like all other great literatures until very recent times, cannot be understood unless we understand the religion of the writers and of the society in which they lived. And he chooses as his central theme what must always be one of the central themes in any serious study of any religion, and is of particular interest and importance in ancient Greece, 'the relations between man and God (or gods, or divinity) as they appeared to the Greeks of the classical period' (p. xiii).