

REVIEWS

The author gives us so many good things, both the fruit of his own thought and quotations from his Wrestlers. In the prefatory essay, we are given a paragraph, on page 27, that is the keynote of the whole book: "The Church cannot be identified, without qualification, with the Christian world." It was in facing this apparent contradiction that Bloy, especially, had his greatest difficulty. Yet even with him there was a realization of the true implication of Catholic Action, long years before Pope Pius had set the laity of the world on fire for that apostolate. "With his intensely vital Catholic sentiment, it was impossible for Bloy to doubt that the universal priesthood of Christians left a place in the Church beside the official priesthood for the layman who preaches religious truth and ministers to souls. It is a view which has been officially sanctioned by the summons to Catholic Action. Every man in the Catholic camp, Bloy replied to his opponents, has his mission. Why should I alone have none?" Then we have a glimpse of Bloy in Catholic Action. Catholic thought owes Maritain to Bloy, under grace. To his home travel soul-troubled pilgrims half across Europe, and find with him the health they have been looking for. Wagner arouses in another a hunger for the Absolute, but it is Bloy who leads him to God. Nor need we wonder at this, for Bloy matched his sympathy with a profundity that astonishes. One at least of his aphorisms deserves to be pondered on: "Prayer is the work of free men, as work is the prayer of slaves."

A last word in general. . . . Is the attraction of these frequently published essays on literary men, whether examining their works or gauging their souls, an indication of modern sloth and superficiality? A critical essay is valuable either as a corrective to one's own less wise judgments of an author read and studied, or as an incentive to become acquainted with a writer. It must be apparent even to the superficial observer that this is becoming less and less the case. A large body of readers is growing up who have no abashment in discussing the opinions and characters of authors of whose works they have read not even a page. The name of Péguy has been bandied about by many whose eyes have never read a sentence of the *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*. In moderation, as keeping up with the reading capacity of its clients, a publishing firm does well to satisfy the ever present demand for the critical essay, but there is reason to believe that this type of publication is too prevalent at the moment.

ARTHUR FRESSANGES.

MEDIAEVAL STUDIES

The Roman Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas was founded by Pope Leo XIII in 1880 with the aim of fostering, expounding, defending and promoting the philosophical teaching of St. Thomas according to the prescriptions and rules laid down in the famous

BLACKFRIARS

Encyclical *Aeterni Patris*. The Academicians, forty in number, are elected from among the most distinguished ecclesiastics and laymen in the philosophical field from all over the world. The proceedings and transactions of the Academy had been for some time published in a special Journal, but in order to provide a wider circulation it has been decided to publish a yearly issue in book form. The volume before us¹ contains the proceedings for the year 1934.

In the first part we have ten papers dealing with the most debated problems of philosophy. Professor A. Masnovo of the University of Milan investigates the turning-point in the philosophical movement of the thirteenth century and shows the commanding importance played by Aquinas and how the *innovations* introduced by him—*doctrina illa novella*, as Archbishop Peckham in a strong letter to the Bishop of Lincoln called it—were destined to build up the most perfect and solid synthesis in philosophy. Of great historical value is Professor M. Grabmann's admirable study on the much discussed metaphysical question of essence and existence. During the *Hebdomada Thomistica* held in Rome in 1923, Dr. Grabmann proved from thirteenth century unpublished documents that St. Thomas was considered among his contemporaries as the chief exponent of the *real* distinction between essence and existence. Especially decisive was the evidence of Siger of Brabant, as contained in the *Quaestiones* discovered by Grabmann himself in MS. 9559 of the Staatsbibliothek of Munich. Père M. Chossat, S.J., took exception to this evidence and wrote a lengthy essay, which was published posthumously in 1932. Grabmann returns here to the problem, and after carefully re-examining the data and answering the difficulties raised, he confirms his position and adds subsequently discovered evidence from scholars and Averrhoists of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century. Another controversial paper is that of the well-known philosopher J. Gredt, O.S.B., of S. Anselmo, Rome. All those who are acquainted with Aristotelian and Thomistic philosophy are aware of the vital part played by the theory of potentiality and actuality in the system. However, it does not receive the approval of some Suarezians, and quite recently had been bitterly attacked, particularly by the Jesuit L. Fuetscher of Innsbruck. Professor Gredt took upon himself the vindication of this fundamental doctrine. With vigour he confutes the opponents' arguments, pointing out with great perspicacity the weakness of the Suarezian position on the one hand, and the solidity of the Thomistic standpoint, if well understood, on the other.

¹ *Acta Pont. Academiae Romanae S. Thomae Aq. et Religionis Catholicae. Anno 1934. Nova Series, Vol. I. Taurini—Romae (Marietti), 1935, pp. 214. Lit. 10.*

REVIEWS

Of less controversial aspect, though by no means of less intrinsic value, are the other essays. C. Boyer, S.J., of the Gregorian University, proposes with much acuteness a new interpretation of a difficult passage in the opusculum *De Unitate Intellectus*, which provoked an interesting debate among the Academicians. J. Maritain, of the Catholic Institute at Paris, with his usual competence and clearness, discusses the proper place due to natural philosophy and experimental physics in the order of sciences. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., of the Angelicum, Rome, states plainly the philosophical problem of the specification of acts by formal objects with all its implications in theology. Two good papers are from A. Mills, O.S.M., on the value of sensitive knowledge and on the nature and origin of the *species sensibilis*. Very penetrating is the study and the acute analysis of the logical structure of the judgment by B. Xiberta, O.C. It is not here possible to discuss these essays in detail, but from what we have said some idea can be formed of the work of the Academy; it shows moreover that its work is not merely *academic*, but responds fully to the aim for which it was instituted, that is, to defend, stimulate and promote philosophical learning according to the teaching of Aquinas.

In the other section are commemorated deceased members of the Academy, among which are touching tributes to the first Secretary, Mgr. S. Talamo, by M. Cordovani, O.P., and to Père de la Taille, S.J., by B. Xiberta, O.C. The whole book is an ample proof of the vitality and fruitfulness of the Academy.

The Institute of Mediæval Studies of Toronto has undertaken, among other activities, a series of translations into English of mediæval texts in the collection of *St. Michael's College Philosophical Texts*. This is the third in the series and presents us with the translation of St. Thomas' *De Regimine Principum*.² The translator, Dr. G. B. Phelan, warns us that "in rendering St. Thomas' Latin into English, care has been taken to avoid altering the text. The accuracy of language in which St. Thomas expresses his thought is well known to all who read the Angelic Doctor's writings. To preserve that accuracy by construing his words as literally as possible while preserving English grammatical construction and idiom has been the constant aim of the translator" (page 21). On the whole, indeed, Dr. Phelan has succeeded in giving us a readable and accurate translation, with the exception perhaps of one or two somewhat clumsy passages (see, for instance, p. 125). A good introduction is prefixed to the translation, in which are discussed the title, authenticity, date, contents and text of the

² Saint Thomas Aquinas, *On the Governance of Rulers (De Regimine Principum)*. Translated from the Latin by G. B. PHELAN, Ph.D. (St. Michael's College Philosophical Texts. Toronto, Canada, 1935; pp. 143-75 cents.)

BLACKFRIARS

De Regimine Principum. Not the complete opusculum has been translated, but only Book I and the first four chapters of Book II, which are the parts written undoubtedly by Aquinas. The completion of the work added by his disciple, Ptolomy of Lucca, has been left untouched. The index is very helpful.

DANIEL CALLUS, O.P.

NOTICES

THE WILL TO FREEDOM. By Ross Hoffman. (Sheed & Ward; 3/6.)

Democracy with its freedom of speech and freedom of enterprize based upon the natural law has, within recent years, been challenged by a philosophy which subordinates the individual and his interests to the collective will of the state. In those countries where Communism and Fascism have gained ascendancy, it has been at the cost of human life, human suffering, and human liberty. Absolute power has been claimed for the state in every sphere of life, even over spiritual things. All cultural and economic activity, all intellectual expression, all the social nature of man has been subjected to the regulation of government. And one need not be a profound student in the art of politics to know that this philosophy seeks not to be limited by national frontiers, but aims at a world-wide acceptance. That is why Dr. Hoffman thinks the deepest political question of our day is "not whether we can save the liberal state from the new totalitarianism, but whether it is any longer possible to have a political order that respects freedom and the main traditions of the Christian west." It is that question that he sets out to answer in this little book. Written in a very readable style, he shows that Communism and Fascism cannot solve the social crisis of our age. He reasons from sound principles, and if one could find any fault with this book it would be that it is too brief.

C. H. M.

THE TESTAMENT OF MAN. An Anthology of the Spirit. By Arthur Stanley. (Gollancz; 7/6.)

In a collection so wide, ranging from a cuneiform inscription to a contemporary quotation from *The Observer*, the distinctively Christian note, though present, is not accented. The editor writes: "The divinity of man sometimes breaks out in unexpected places, and the gifts of fellowship, chivalry and self-sacrifice are not confined to any time or any class. Hence the reader will meet not only the saint, the prophet and the philosopher, but also the explorer, the rebel and the ordinary man." Instructed by such a book as Dr. Karrer's *Religions of Mankind*, the Catholic reader will recognize in most of these pieces the evidence of *the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*; his theological insistence on supernatural grace as the only salutary gift does not deny the fact of nobility outside the canonical