

REVIEWS

LITURGY AND SOCIETY. *The Function of the Church in the Modern World.* By A. G. Hebert, of the Society of the Sacred Mission, Kelham. (Faber & Faber; 12/6.)

Fr. Hebert, an Anglican Religious, in this valuable and informative book, primarily addresses himself to members of his own communion, to put before them the organic view of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. In discussing both the teaching and its practical effects in liturgical prayer and worship, he gives generous acknowledgment that the inspiration to write came from his study of the Catholic Liturgical Movement on the Continent.

The opening chapters, which are largely drawn from Abbot Herwegen's *Kirche und Seele*, give a lucid presentation of the theology and ethos of the Liturgy in the early Church with their emphasis upon Mystery and Fellowship. Following this, Fr. Hebert traces the gradual divorce of the laity from active participation in the Holy Sacrifice and the concomitant growth of individualism in worship, which found its consummation in the sixteenth century.

Chapter iv, in which Fr. Hebert relates Christian Theology to his thesis, tends to confuse simplification with increase of definition, and calls for discussion. The Councils of the Church surely do more than guard "the simplicity of the Gospel of God." They seem rather to mark successive steps forward in the more exact delineation of Divine Truth under the periodic impact of human argument and disputation: each marks a crisis which involves the necessity of clear statement. Every statement must be propositional in character, Creeds and Conciliar Definitions alike, for man has no other means of expressing truth; and yet Fr. Hebert shows an undue apprehension of propositions as savouring too much of system to the loss of life. The same fear leads him to find in the growth of speculation and the passion for learning which marked the Middle Ages "a change with regard to dogma closely parallel with the liturgical change." His adherence to F. D. Maurice makes him regret a "closed theological system which is the feature of Catholicism and Calvinism," and to dislike a theology principally concerned with the truth of positions and doctrines to the exclusion of Divine Persons. This is hardly fair to Catholic Theology, for which Truth finds its term in God and not in dogmas about Him: dogmas are the means, not the end.

"Plausible" is hardly the word to qualify St. Thomas's solution of the problem of Faith and Reason. The Thomist synthesis did not happen because an accommodation was convenient; the solution of the problem was urgent, following the controversies aroused by the introduction of Aristotle and the Arab commentaries in universities and in monasteries trained in the patristic tradition.

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No Schoolman would assert that "Revelation was essentially a Revelation of doctrines, and faith an intellectual belief in these doctrines." For St. Thomas theology is concerned with God (Ia, q. 1, art. 7). Further, the act of the believer finds its term not in the proposition but in reality (IIa IIae, q. 1, art. 2 ad 2m). Quoting Ia, q. 1, art. 1, Fr. Hebert asserts that St. Thomas has done away with the distinction between dogma and human belief, and thus the way is laid open for the construction of an intellectual map of the universe: "man is guilty of a Titanism which brings its own nemesis." This is hardly in accord with man's universal desire to synthesize his knowledge in an orderly structure: there is too great a readiness to jettison Plato, Aristotle and all the rest of the philosophers. Granting the Incarnation and Divine Revelation, man must either synthesize its truths with those of Reason or he must leave a dichotomy between them. His nature urges him to escape the old snare of the two Truths and therefore the two Gods, which must come of the dichotomy, and to aim at co-ordinating these in a single system and unifying them by reduction to their common Source. Quotation is sufficient to reveal the misconception contained in the following statements: "The Bible, as the Book of Divine Revelation, must necessarily be taken as free from error in all its parts. This view of the Bible is as necessary to the Scholastic Scheme as to the modern Fundamentalism." "In view of the criticism which subsequent thinkers made upon the Thomist construction, it was inevitable that the system should require infallible ecclesiastical authority for its guarantee." Side by side with the following words, "In the New Testament the Revelation of God, the Word of God is Christ Himself, not a doctrine about Christ," we may quote St. Thomas's Introduction to III Pars: "*Salvator noster, Dominus Jesus viam veritatis nobis in seipso demonstravit, per quam ad beatitudinem immortalis vitae resurgendo pervenire possimus.*"

In a later chapter a reference to the doctrine of Transubstantiation as annihilating the substance of the bread calls for adjustment in view of St. Thomas's express denial of this (IIIa, q. lxxv, art. 3) when he declares that the conversion of the substance from the "terminus a quo" to the "terminus ad quem" is instantaneous.

Criticism seems to outweigh commendation of this book, but Fr. Hebert's manifest understanding and sympathy have hardly comprehended St. Thomas's contribution to Christendom. The bars within which Catholic Theology sometimes appears to be enclosed are not inherent in that Theology; they are of other men's making.

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