

## BLACKFRIARS

ably whimsical Deity who alternates extremities of mercy with extremities of justice; or whose justice, as the saying is, is "tempered" by mercy and whose mercy is restricted by His justice. God is *all-merciful* and *all-just*; and all-just *because* all-merciful.

This vast theme cannot be developed in a review; but it is, we suggest, the key to a full understanding of St. Thomas's thought on the Atonement and on the whole economy of salvation. A certain failure to penetrate all its depths does not detract from the real value of M. Hardy's book. Nor does what he confesses to be "*le caractère abrupt du style*," which is well off-set by the intrinsic beauty of the truths of which it is the vehicle. But the book which, discarding mediæval technical terminology, will expound St. Thomas's thought on the Atonement in warm and living language has yet to be written, as has also the book which will show to what extent St. Thomas is less the successor of Anselm than the rehabilitator of Anselm's opponent, Peter Abelard. M. Hardy has laid solid foundations for both these books.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

HAUPTFRAGEN DER METAPHYSIK. By Daniel Feuling, O.S.B.  
(Anton Pustet, Salzburg-Leipzig; RM. 9.80.)

The subtitle defines its purpose: it is an "Introduction to the Philosophic Life." It is intended to provide the reader with the beginnings of that theoretical contemplation which the author considers essential to fulness of life.

For this reason, perhaps, he has aimed at a simplicity of expression which comes near to being overdone; both because he loses clarity by trying to be so clear, and because it gives him a false appearance of naivety.

Philosophy for Dom Feuling is essentially metaphysic, concerned with all the being and relations of the concrete real, and striving always to discover and to answer the ultimate questions that can be asked in its regard. Of such questions he could of course present only a selection, but the selections and arrangement afford us a fairly detailed outline of a complete philosophy. The thirty-seven chapters are further divided into 361 numbered sections, with titles so well chosen that the table of contents leaves but little for the index to do.

The first part of the book is an outline of a "hypothetical" metaphysic built upon the assumption that our everyday beliefs are not entirely wrong. The purpose of this is to provide subject-matter for and to direct attention to the problems to be discussed in the second, epistemological part.

His epistemology is a metaphysic of the concrete real we call the act of knowing, an attempt to develop and present in detail

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that reflex knowledge of which St. Thomas speaks in the *De Veritate* (I, 9). It is the best attempt the reviewer has seen, and will probably be found by most readers the most interesting part of the book. The author maintains that only his own "total objectivism" escapes the charge of onesideness; phenomenism, dogmatism and agnosticism, are alike based on partial aspects of the concrete act of knowing. He concludes that the realities we know are really identical with the objects present in our consciousness, balancing this statement with others that deny its apparent idealism.

The third part is concerned with the causality involved in determined being. Here he affirms the reality of an external world and the existence of God; here also he lays the foundations of a general metaphysic transcending consciousness and no longer merely hypothetical. The fourth and fifth parts are special metaphysic, a philosophy of nature and a metaphysical anthropology, both very sketchily done.

The sketchiness of the whole makes it difficult to criticize fairly. A *résumé* of Dom Feuling's philosophy can hardly be more than an introduction to his philosophy. It would be better described thus than as an introduction to philosophy in general, though it might serve the latter purpose much better than the books usually given to ecclesiastical students. Never does he appeal to authority, even tacitly; he follows Aristotle and St. Thomas, but this does not prevent him disagreeing with them or trying to improve on them, nor does he hesitate to dissent from views commonly held by scholastics.

His apparent zeal for the adequate presentation of problems made his failure to present them disappointing. Questions are clearly expressed, but there is little or no attempt to show why there could be any doubt as to the right way of answering them.

The epistemology seems hardly applicable without his theory of causality; and that so exhibits his world as *totus teres et rotundus* that it is difficult to see why he regards a transcendent First Cause as a necessity. This is perhaps due to his mistrust of abstractions and his modelling himself on a deplatonized Aristotle and an Aquinas ashamed of the supercelestial place demanded by the analogical realities implicit in his metaphysic. *Esse participatum* seems to mean little to Dom Feuling.

All his remarks on metaphysical analogy and the essence-existence distinction should be found interesting and perhaps illuminating, but the parts are not the important thing. The whole exhibits a vision which it would be impertinent to criticize, and a serene completeness which could only come from mature reflection after wide reading.

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