

BOOK REVIEWS

GOD. Papers read at the 1930 Cambridge Summer School of Catholic Studies. Edited by the Rev. C. Lattey, S.J. (London : Sheed & Ward, 1931 ; pp. 253. Price, 7/6.)

The editor advises us to start with the last paper, Mr. Sheed's *The Modern Attitude to God*. Written with humour and spirit, it offers a clear diagnosis of the present state of popular theism. Fr. MacGillivray introduces the course by *The Study of God*, a useful account of the nature and divisions of theological science, based on the early chapters of the *Contra Gentes*. It is rather a pity that he adopts the common division of moral, ascetical, and mystical theology. It conveys the suggestion that moral theology deals with the merely good, ascetical theology with the better, and mystical theology with the holy and exceptional : the keeping of the commandments, the practice of virtue, and the special grace of sanctity. There is a legitimate distinction of emphasis, roughly corresponding to the three states of the spiritual life, but the above division represents a degradation of moral theology which St. Thomas would never have countenanced. The object of moral theology is human perfection. This covers everything from a set of tennis to the unitive way. And under the predominant influence of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, holiness is the normal, indeed necessary, culmination of the life of grace. Mysticism as a study in the extraordinary is a matter for the hagiographer, not the theologian.

The Proofs of the Existence of God are treated of by Fr. Hoper-Dixon in a short paper of severely, almost forbiddingly, scholastic form. The explanation suffers from undue compression, notably the answer given to the ontological argument ; and in the question of an infinite series of causes, the printer has further impeded the sense by a double unfortunate misprint of *casual* for *causal* (p. 43).

God One and Indivisible : the Divine Attributes, by Dr. Smith, is a solid piece of work. It is inexact to speak of a composition of nature and faculties (p. 56). Dom Williams does not meet the real issue between metaphysical pantheism and pluralism in *God Distinct from the Universe*, but he presents a sympathetic account of Catholic philosophy as the complement of a valuable element in Hegelianism. An interesting paper on *The Immanence of God* by Dr. Sheen suffers from a certain rawness—the facile classification, the dichotomy in place of the distinction, the uneasy epigram, the last word. It antagonizes to be told

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that pantheism is materialism grown sentimental, or monism turned romantic. It may be true of Shelley, but not of Spinoza or Hegel. Nor is the scholasticism always exact. Fr. Geddes gives a satisfactory exposition of *God, the Fulness of Being, Spirit and Personal*. The composition which demands creation is within the being not the essence of a creature (p. 121), and the author, while disclaiming any intention of entering into the controversy, tacitly assumes the existence of *scientia media* (p. 129).

Fr. Pope provides many useful references to St. Thomas on the question of *The Beatific Vision of God*. The paper is lengthened by the mingled consideration of two problems, how the human soul can know the spiritual reality, and how it can possess an immediate vision of Subsisting Being. There are some inaccuracies and over-statements, and the description of Thomist epistemology is crude. *God's Knowledge and Love; the Problem of Evil*, by Dom Kendal, is admirable; lucid, modest, complete, and written with Benedictine dignity.

For the student, Fr. Carpenter's paper on *The Historical Aspect of the Quinque Viae* is perhaps the most valuable of the series. With informed conviction, he presents the thesis that the famous five proofs of the *Summa* bear an immediate relation to Aristotle, and are substantially uninfluenced by neo-Platonism and Jewish and Arabian Aristotelianism. To some, the opposition between Plato and Aristotle may seem overstressed.

The general index would have been improved by the inclusion of references to subjects; we could have done without *Daily Express*, 231, *Helbeck of Bannisdale*, 233, *Tono-Bungay*, 228, etc. Also a glossary of terms would not have been out of place.

T.G.

NULLITY OF MARRIAGE. By F. J. Sheed, B.A., LL.B. (Sheed & Ward; pp. viii, 73; 2/6.)

This is a very readable little book containing within a few pages a great deal of expert and useful information on the subject of marriage. As is indicated by the title, it is mainly concerned with the Catholic Church's law of nullity, though much light is shed on the nature of marriage itself. Step by step the Canon Law and the English Law are compared, and illustrated by cases from the ecclesiastical and civil courts. The well-known Marconi and Marlborough cases are given the prominence they deserve and the latter is given in full in an appendix. Carefully verified statistics show that practically fifty per cent of cases that have come before the Rota within