

BLACKFRIARS

M. Jolivet thinks, p. 137) but with a *real given*, irrational at first perhaps, but which we need not despair of rationalising. And however we may subsequently solve the problem of the senses' (not the intellect's) perception of the existent, the objective validity and value of our intellectual knowledge of realities whose content is unchanged by existence or non-existence will in no way be endangered or altered.

Q.J.

INDIVIDUUM UND GEMEINSCHAFT BEIM HL. THOMAS VON AQUIN.
By Edelbert Kurz, O.F.M. (Munich : Kbsel & Pustet, RM.
3.80.)

One of the reasons for the disunity among Catholic sociologists and social workers, especially in English-speaking countries which have become sadly isolated from the general trend of Catholic thought, is the widespread misunderstanding of the social philosophy of St. Thomas. All are naturally anxious to claim him as their patron. Distributism, in particular, has brought about the association of his name among the Catholic rank and file with an extreme and naïve individualism which in fact is very far removed from the subtlety and profundity of authentic Thomism.

But reputable scholars have also been among the propagators of the myth of 'Thomist individualism,' especially in the days before liberalism fell into disrepute. Among them was the Louvain historian, Professor Maurice de Wulf, who propounded as 'Thomist' the thesis that 'Society exists for the individual and not the individual for Society.' Whereupon the eminent authority on mediaeval philosophy, Geheimrat Clemens Baeumker, remarked: 'I don't believe it, and I should never have thought *that* of De Wulf.'

Baeumker set his pupil, Fr. Kurz, the task of looking into the matter. Here we have the results of his ten-year research. He has ransacked St. Thomas for anything which could throw any light on the subject and arranged the material in orderly fashion with comments which, if not always displaying very great insight, are generally to the point. Regarded purely as a catena of quotations his work is invaluable, indeed indispensable to anyone who would get to grips with St. Thomas's own thought on social philosophy.

And in spite of a crudeness of expression, a childish lavishness with exclamation marks, and an undisguised partisanship, all of which render him suspect of charlatanism, Fr. Kurz has some very wise things to say and throws light on many dark corners of St. Thomas's thought. But he has not that profound and synthetic view of its implications which we meet with, for example, in Mlle. Suzanne Michel's *La notion thomiste du bien*

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commun. In particular he has not seen, as have Maritain and the French 'personalists' (not to mention his compatriot, Professor v. Hildebrand) that the key to the whole problem is to be found in the Thomist idea of *personality*. Of course he stresses the Aristotelian-Thomist idea of man as a 'social animal,' but he has not seen that the fundamental fact that the human individual essentially transcends its own individuality makes the antithesis of Society to the Individual ultimately meaningless. One outcome of this initial short-sightedness is that he flounders badly when he has to reconcile the 'individualism' of Thomist metaphysic with the primacy of the *bonum commune* in Thomist ethic. A deeper understanding of metaphysical finality would have further helped him in establishing the 'reality' of the social organism.

As an adequate exposition of Thomist social philosophy the book cannot therefore be altogether recommended. As an antidote to some current misconceptions it will be found extremely useful. As an orderly collection of the *ipsissima verba* of St. Thomas it will be found invaluable.

Lest it be thought that the work is a mere sop to Hitler, we may remark that it was published before the Nazi revolution.

V.W.

DE SACRA LITURGIA UNIVERSIM. By C. Callewaert, J.C.D. (Beyaert, Bruges, 1933; 25 francs.)

This is intended as an introductory volume to the whole study of the liturgy. As such the book achieves perfection. In a comparatively small space the author discusses the definition and nature of liturgical cult, the whole history of the liturgy, the *Fontes* of the Roman liturgy, and finally the nature and method of liturgical science. An introduction demands such a complete conspectus. But the treatment is in no way sketchy. The author, who is a bishop and a canonist, brings all his deep knowledge and experience to bear on each point. Disputed questions are stated dispassionately, and the whole work is marked by a sound common sense. Every statement is backed by a wealth of references to liturgical works and writers from the first century to the present day, to the Code of Canon Law, and, perhaps most valuable of all, to examples from the Missal and the Breviary. Such treatment of the subject makes further study easy and attractive. But the book deserves a wide circulation not only for its great value as an introduction, but also because it will help the reader to understand the spirit of the liturgy.

Perhaps there appears towards the end, in dealing with the *Fontes* of the Roman Liturgy, a tendency for details and re-