

Book Reviews

the Neo-Platonic concept of spirit ; and ultimate victory, through the revelation of the love that unfolds into blessedness, in the true Word, the Wisdom of God, the living Christ. A dignified theme, an organic unity, an orderly progress of action, Aristotle's three essentials of an epic are here.

There is much in the accustomed Karl Adam vein on Christianity, with a somewhat detailed presentation of the Augustinian concept of the Body of Christ, the concept of all Christendom as 'one Christ, loving Himself.' Evidently the formative idea behind the book. There is the inevitable contrast with Aquinas, rather after the accepted fashion. And much that is very readable on the problem of true love, with enlightening passages on the nature of the re-birth of the Christian. But the work is not flawless. There are, for example, some lapses into current psychological jargon, in particular an occasional descent into the subconscious unhappy in the case of one so manifestly the immediate product of the living spirit of a personal God. Augustine's God, whom he knew and loved intimately, is something more than a vague abstract 'force'—as the author himself is careful to point out in the sequel. There is likewise an attempt, laudable enough, to present Augustine in present-day dress, his claim to modernity resting on the fact that over and over again he makes psychological observation the preliminary and basis of his metaphysic. The world is always modern. Modernity is a state of consciousness basically correlative with life according to the body, the state of a mind still clinging to its original concept of action and progress as movement in a straight line ; a precarious state, loose at both ends, an unstable present perilously balanced between undefined expectation and a floating memory (Confes. xi, 28). Souls rise, or rather are raised, above it, a soul, like Augustine's, that lives by the spirit. Though, obviously, the fundamental distinction between the development of the individual and the progress of the race as a whole justifies the author's point as at least apologetically useful. The book is certainly worth having. The best thing about it, perhaps, is its truly Augustinian quality, the power to inspire.

R.M.

THE PROBLEM OF MACHINERY. By C.T.B.D. (London. The Distributist League ; 2 Little Essex Street, W.C.2. Pp. 23 ; 6d.)

The author is technically equipped to examine machinery, but has commonsense enough not to be caught up in the works. His

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discussion is quiet and objective, his conclusions clear. Large scale units of production seem expedient for the generation of electric power (although there is national insecurity in putting all the eggs in one basket), and for the coal and metal industries. Large scale and mass production boom in good times but suffer in bad, for they lack the flexibility of the small factory (one in which less than five hundred workers are employed), and cannot adapt themselves to changed conditions without heavy loss. Mass production depends on huge sales, demands advertisement, destroys craftsmanship, degrades the worker, tends to monopoly with its consequent stop to progress and lowering of quality. These evils are not so present in production distributed over many small workshops. An important and very promising suggestion is the application of modern scientific technique to small scale production. Altogether a very sane pamphlet. The writer is neither one of our blind adorers of the Machine, nor yet one of our latter day Luddites.

N.W.T.G.

THE COMMONWEAL. A Weekly Review of Literature, the Arts, and Public Affairs. (The Calvert Publishing Corporation, Grand Central Terminal, New York. Foreign annual subscription, 6 dollars; single copies, 10 cents.)

Although *The Commonweal's* prestige and influence have steadily grown for the last eight years, it is suffering from the financial crisis. Happily its directors have just taken the decision to continue despite the difficulties. We have our own troubles nearer home, but we venture to ask the support of BLACKFRIARS' readers for this admirable weekly. The world has shrunk, and many of the problems facing American Catholics are ours as well. So much Catholic action in the modern industrialised world must necessarily amount to no more than last-sacrament work; it must take this world as it finds it and try to save what it can for the next. But the sound spirit of Thomist worldliness will attempt more. Now an English Catholic's chief impression of *The Commonweal* is that it is really building up a Catholic civilisation in the States, not recording merely, or criticizing, or escaping from the present, but forming. We can understand the American priest who writes: 'I hate to vision the Church without *The Commonweal*.'

T.G.O.P.