

BLACKFRIARS

mic treatment. In particular, the account of Neo-Platonism is remarkably well done. M. Jolivet puts St. Augustine's conversion in the early days of his stay at Milan, attributing to him then *fides informata*, which was prevented from becoming *fides formata* by two difficulties; an intellectual difficulty—materialism; and the difficulty of his carnal passions. His materialism was removed by Neo-Platonism, and he was delivered from the dominance of carnality after the *tolle lege* incident in the garden.

Two minor criticisms might be made. Surely Plotinus's conception of evil as a privation of due being in some way necessarily inherent in the order of the universe is more than an 'aesthetic' solution of the problem—though admittedly inadequate. Secondly, we think that M. Jolivet takes the *Contra Academicos* too seriously—and consequently Augustine's crisis of scepticism also. Doubtless Augustine thought the arguments of the Neo-Academicians were a trap for the unwary—and the dialogue is meant to enlighten his disciples. But there is no trace in it of any difficulties personal to him. Finally, we offer a criticism of greater import. Augustine was primarily a Christian theologian. As a Christian thinker (this book is in a series 'Les Maîtres de la Pensée Religieuse') it is by his presentation of Christian doctrine that he should be known. And therefore we are inclined to think that there is a radical mistake in producing a book which treats of his entire life and yet gives three-quarters of its space to philosophical issues which concerned his pre-Christian period. There are, indeed, chapters on 'Le problème du mal,' 'La psychologie de la foi,' 'La spiritualité Augustinienne'—all of which are good. But they are not enough. It is a matter of orientation. Within its limits, however, and for its own special problems, the book certainly deserves to be read.

A.M.

ALBERTO MAGNO. *Atti della Settimana Albertina*. (Rome: F. Pustet; pp. 282; lire 10.)

It was a happy thought on the part of P. M. Cordovani, O.P., to publish the papers read and discussed during a 'study week' on St. Albert the Great, held in Rome, organized by the Dominican University of the Angelico and the Institute of Historical Research of Santa Sabina.

The various and most important aspects of St. Albert's life and intellectual achievements are here reviewed by competent specialists, in their departments. Mgr. Ruffini, the Secretary of the Congregation of Seminaries and Universities, opened the debates by giving an outline of the manifold activity of Albert

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in Philosophy, Theology and the Natural Sciences. Professor Masnovo of Milan dealt with the part taken by Albert in the Averroist controversy. Although he was away at Cologne, Albert dominated, with Thomas Aquinas, the famous debates held in Paris before the condemnation of 1270 by his treatise *De Unitate intellectus*. The next four papers are in Latin. The vital question on the influence exercised by Albert in the introduction of Aristotelianism is examined by such an eminent historian of Philosophy as Professor B. Geyer of Bonn, who throws new light on the subject. The problem of the authenticity of some of Albert's writings is discussed by Fr. Pelster, S.J., of the Gregorian University, according to the MSS. evidence. An interesting point was raised about the famous *Philosophia Pauperum*, attributed by Grabmann to the Dominican Albert of Orlamünde. According to the witness of MSS. discovered by Pelster, this work was written by St. Albert at the end of his life at the request of some 'most beloved brethren.' Professor M. Grabmann with his usual competence examines the teaching of the *Doctor Universalis* on speculative Theology with special reference to St. Thomas. A. Vaccari, S.J., of the Biblical Institute, contributes a good paper on the Saint as an interpreter of the Bible, in which he brings out the contribution Albert made to the development of biblical exegesis. Dom O. Lottin's *Le rôle de la raison dans l'Éthique d'Albert le Grand* is a masterly piece of work. The Belgian Capuchin F. Callaey gives a short account of the Saint's life; and Dr. H. C. Scheeben, of Cologne, an outline in Latin on Albert's disciples. Some of his points are perhaps debatable. Two minor papers are contributed by Professor S. Dezani, of the University of Turin, on the research work of Albert in the Natural Sciences, and by Professor L. de Simone, of the University of Naples, on his influence on Italian culture.

D.M.C.

SAINT ALBERT LE GRAND. By Albert Garreau. (Paris : Desclée de Brouwer ; 20 francs.)

This is a pleasantly written, popular life of St. Albert, showing considerable research and wide reading. Hardly any known facts connected with his life have been omitted, while the legends have been wisely allotted a separate chapter. The author adopts, without criticism, the chronology of Père Mandonnet, putting Albert's birth about 1206, despite the weight of argument in favour of 1193. Albert is cited as saying that the angular velocities of the stars are inversely proportional to their radii. This is such an amazing statement to find in Albert that we should have been grateful for the reference. St. Albert's great-