

time when Catholic scholarship is in a state of rapid development. Future editions, of which there will surely be many, will no doubt incorporate the tested findings of subsequent scholarship.

In a work so large and from so many authors as this, there is bound to be great variety of treatment and each reader will have his own favourite parts and his own point of view. One thing is certain: the committee responsible for the *Commentary* and their learned contributors have put in the hands of the clergy and the educated laity an instrument of scripture study that cannot fail to be of great assistance in understanding the word of God. But a one-volume commentary at four guineas a copy is beyond the reach of many, and, given the enormous amount of introductory material that must be included in such a book, as well as the size of the Bible itself, we may be allowed to suspect that the days of this sort of commentary are over. Our scripture scholars have shown their mettle, and we hope that one result of this venture will be further commentaries on the individual books of the Bible. They might start with the Gospels.

J. D. CRICHTON

## REVIEWS

**BETWEEN COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY: A Philosophy and Theology of the State.** By Thomas Gilby. (Longmans, Green; 25s.)  
**SOCIETY AND SANITY.** By F. J. Sheed. (Sheed and Ward; 10s. 6d.)

Man is made in the image and likeness of God, to know him and love him and serve him in this world and to be happy with him for ever in the next. While the only perfect image of the Father is the Son, yet it is true that man can truthfully address God as Father by virtue of a certain likeness of the creature to the Creator. From the likeness of the image, through the likeness of grace right up to the likeness of glory we can trace the spiritual progress of the human person. So man as such is drawn up outside and above the material world of which he forms a part: though created he is not finally subordinated to the good of the created order, but to divine goodness itself into which he enters in the Beatific Vision. There is the sublime prospect of the development of the personal life of man to its perfection in the direction of contemplation in the order of knowledge and love. But there is another side to human life. Apart from the exceptional case of a call to the eremetical life of solitude, human life is 'political life', the life of men living in community, in society, in the State, a life which inevitably leads to a certain surrender of the personal life. The fact that this surrender is only a temporary one in order that the full personal life may be won again in the light of the *lumen gloriae* does not make it any less desolating to the human spirit. The tension between the human person, made for God, and the

individual, immersed in the mass of created matter, must remain harsh, unrelieved and heartbreaking, unless we can see community, society and the State as instruments leading to beatitude instead of obstacles placed in the way.

The two books under review are an important contribution to our understanding of the nature and purpose of human society. Father Gilby's book is of prime importance as being the first major work of scholarship in the English language dealing with the social and political teaching of St Thomas in all its breadth and fullness. Hitherto we have had to be content with pamphlets and articles on particular points, and for a fuller treatment have had to depend on foreign works often difficult to obtain in this country. Just as it is impossible to separate the human person from the society in which he lives, so it is equally impossible to separate the social teaching of St Thomas from the whole body of his theology, which is simply a study of all things in relation to God. It follows that an adequate analysis of his political and social teaching can only spring from an exhaustive knowledge of all his works. This book could only be written by one steeped in the thomist tradition of theology.

Father Gilby divides his book into five parts. The first part, entitled 'The Setting', gives us the historical background which is so important to a proper understanding of the thought of St Thomas. This comprehensive survey of the various influences which helped to mould medieval thought may perhaps be regarded by some as doing less than justice to the Jurists. We are reminded that sociology and politics deal with the contingent: solutions based on principles eternally valid must at the same time be related to their historical context.

The three central parts of the book give a detailed analysis of the ideas of community, society and State. Pure community is 'the human mass and its racial, tribal, and family outgrowths'. Society is 'the spiritual association, the exemplar of all human relationships and the end to which they fumble'. The State is the political community, 'the *polis* of Aristotle, the larger *civitas* or *regnum* of St Thomas'. The pure community and society are first seen as opposed to each other, and then as reconciled and drawn together through the institutions of the political community which is the State. Fundamental questions are discussed here, such as the distinctions between person and individual and the idea of the Common Good.

In his 'Conclusion' Father Gilby takes us rather surprisingly to the last few Questions of the treatise on Law in the *Prima-Secundae*, where St Thomas deals with the Old Testament Law and its relation to the New Law of the Gospel. At first reading this would seem to be one of the least rewarding parts of the Summa: it seems to be merely a detailed, legalistic catalogue of precepts and ceremonial. Father Gilby, however, shows us how a deeper reading reveals that here is contained some

of the most important teaching of St Thomas on the subject of man and society.

It is extremely difficult to give any adequate idea of the riches provided for us by Father Gilby. One might say that he has attempted too much, that the canvas is too wide and the sweep of the brush too bold: that sometimes he breaks off a discussion and a line of thought with merely an allusion to the probable solution. One can envisage many a scholarly thesis arising from these allusions as a starting point. Yet that is no valid criticism if one regards the author's intention as being to provide a fundamental background for the detailed study of particular points. This book gives us a basic source, indispensable for the student of Christian sociological teaching, for which we should be duly grateful.

Mr Sheed's book, while coming into the same general category of sociology, is vastly different in its purpose and execution. It is a companion work to the same author's *Theology and Sanity* and possesses much the same characteristic clear, practical application of Christian principles to human conduct. The section on Marriage and the Family is particularly good a showing a clear appreciation of the joys and difficulties of marriage, and underlining the absolute necessity of Christian principles if marriage is to be successful and happy. This is a practical book which will be invaluable to all as being sound doctrine and good apologetic.

DROSTAN MACLAREN, O.P.

IN THE LAND OF MAO TSE-TUNG. By Father Carlo Suigo. (Allen and Unwin; 18s.)

Even some Christians, trusting to the traditions of that ancient culture, have hoped that China's capacity to transform or modify whatever crosses her frontiers will have led to the evolution there of a form of Communism altogether unique, the product of a peculiar genius for synthesis. The usual lack of information makes the true state of affairs difficult to envisage, but a little fact is worth a great deal of theory. We do know for instance that the Cistercians have added several martyrs to their venerable history under the new régime, and we have reason to believe that their names will not stand alone.

Father Suigo's book is particularly welcome as giving the personal account of one who has lived to tell the tale. Without any special literary skill, his story holds one's attention by its author's obvious integrity. What one will remember perhaps more vividly than the atrocities he saw with his own eyes, is the clever way in which he conveys the atmosphere of tension and uncertainty which the Communist machine creates and sustains like a hidden and malign providence. It is hard to decide whose fate is the more terrible, those to whom everything happens,