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brilliant picture (reminiscent of James Joyce) of baffled enquiry progressing through the apparently hopeless muddle of a "day in Town", we come to this, "There is no more incongruity between the rushing, tearing, wallowing, bestial universe and the Cross of Calvary than there is between lovers and the bed they lie on."

Later, in an examination of the problem of evil the Cross is missing. I wonder why?

The book is a vindication of substance beneath appearance, of being beneath change, of eternal values in the flux of process and undestroyed by it. Treatment of the four causes towards the end is a little angular and smells too obviously of Aristotle, but for the rest we have the rare experience of a Thomism vigorous and authentic, though it has lost all odour of the schools and emits rather that of the public bar—saving always that it is *Gill* through and through with all his puckishness and poetry.

BERNARD KELLY.

HUME'S THEORY OF THE UNDERSTANDING. By Ralph W. Church.
(Allen & Unwin; 7/6.)

This is a difficult book to read, possibly owing to sparse punctuation, and it is a difficult one to summarize. This difficulty is increased by what seems to be the too general sense given by the author to the terms "philosophy" (for philosophy is surely a rational affair) and "total Scepticism" (the inverted commas are mine). To assess the value of Mr. Church's effort to vindicate Hume's positive theory and to indicate how groundless is the charge of total Scepticism—I quote his own words—I do not think I can do better than recall what Hume, no mean critic, says of his philosophical attempt to deal with this problem. And I stress the term philosophical because Mr. Church sets out to destroy the notion that Hume's "philosophy is negative merely." In the appendix to his *Treatise of Human Nature* Hume gives the consequences that follow from his premisses:

If perceptions are distinct existences they form a *whole* only by being connected together. But no connexions among distinct existences are ever discoverable by human understanding. We can only "feel" [comma's mine] a connexion or determination of the thought to pass from one to another. It follows therefore that the thought alone "finds" personal identity when reflecting on the train of past perceptions that "compose" a mind, the ideas of them are "felt" to be connected together and "naturally" introduce each other. Most philosophers seem inclined to think that personal identity arises from consciousness and consciousness is nothing but a reflected thought or perception. The present philosophy has so far a promising aspect.

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But all my hopes vanish when I come to explain the principles that unite our successive perceptions in our thought or consciousness. In short there are two principles which I cannot render consistent. Nor is it in my power to renounce either of them, namely, that all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences and that the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences. Did our perceptions inhere in something simple and individual, or did the mind perceive some real connexion among them, there would be no difficulty.

Recall that for Hume ideas are copies of impressions sensible; that the rational is the isolation of ideas; that analysis of an idea gives us nothing else in the universe, no possible relationship, no synthesis, and further that there is no distinction between mind and its perceptions, so that nothing judges perceptions and we have no necessity in a reasonable sense, no objective universal. "Felt" connexion and "natural" introduction compose everything in place of the rationally existent order. Not the content of the idea but its felt vivacity or intensity, its felt expectancy; the gentle force which causes habit, which again is also imagination, belief which goes to the existent; all this, an affair of the sensitive side of nature, accompanying yet distinct from the idea of making up the understanding, is the positive "philosophy" which the author very carefully and elaborately judges to be free on Hume's own showing of "total scepticism." All this psychology of Hume is fully drawn upon and surveyed and a fair analysis is made of his main position regarding Causal Inference—Substance and Belief. I cannot deal directly with the chapters on these matters. I would only notice that the formidable difficulty on p. 158 that perceived bodies and minds, being both perceptions, cannot be distinguished, is not answered by enquiring if Hume's explanation of the belief in independent existence is different from his theory of the Self as a system of perceptions. The continuity urged in the one case as belief, and the other as felt, are both just experiences, a subjective "cluster." He can only say "they would appear to be definitely different in the empirical way in which the 'natural' relation differs from that of cause and effect" (p. 169). This latter is only "felt" natural relation. Experience, then, or nature, not reason, is Hume's norm. It reminds one of Newman's saying that an Englishman's philosophy is the art of taking facts for granted. The things, causes, selves, being clusters of impressions, images, with or without expectance in the Scotchman's case. No doubt Hume accepted Nature on these terms—as something given. But no foundation or *raison d'être* of a philosophical character is ever adduced for this nature. Finally it is of the "nature of the *understanding* that logic proper consists," concludes Mr. Church. Just so; and although this is not the Scepticism of the Academy,

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it is hardly worth while attempting to disprove its negative philosophic temper and, in this meaning, its "total Scepticism."

JOHN P. RABY.

SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY AND ACTION

GEMEINSCHAFT UND EINZELMENSCH. By Eberhard Welty, O.P.
(Anton Pustet, Salzburg—Leipzig; RM. 6.60, S. 11.55.)

It is often supposed that the principles of Thomistic philosophy are inadequate to cope with modern problems. As a consequence various attempts have been made to make Thomism more attractive to the modern mind; some Thomists went so far as to adopt the name of "Neo-Thomists" as if to indicate that they are especially anxious to avoid being out-of-date; others have endeavoured to clothe Scholastic thought with the technical language of modern philosophers and the results have not always been satisfactory. There remains a third remedy which, curiously enough, has been rather neglected, but has been applied by those who realized that a thorough understanding of fundamental thomistic principles is a necessary preliminary if they are to be applied to modern problems. Whenever this course has been followed Thomists have succeeded remarkably well both in translating philosophic thought into intelligible language and in providing satisfactory solutions. In his *Gemeinschaft und Einzelmensch* Fr. Welty gives us a proof of the success with which rigidly thomistic metaphysics can be applied to living problems, without having recourse to substitutes for a real understanding of fundamental principles.

Though well acquainted with modern social theories he makes no attempt to appear "modern"; he aims at giving us a profound analysis of the familiar metaphysical notions of "one, many, person, society, relation," and on them he constructs a social metaphysic which from its very nature has everlasting value since it is applicable to every society, small or large, ancient or modern.

The objection that these abstract principles do not bring us in contact with reality rests on a false notion of the process of abstraction. The fact that these principles are abstract does not deprive them of their reality; they are not an invention of the human mind or, as Eucken suggested, "ein Reich blutleeren Schatten und Schemen"; their source is reality itself. Thus instead of alienating thought from reality, the Thomist metaphysics is in touch with reality precisely because nothing can be understood unless and to the extent that it possesses reality: "Das Wahre ist das Sein: das Sein ist das Wahre."

Fr. Welty has adopted the division of social science suggested by Fr. Delos¹ and has restricted the domain of social philosophy

¹ Cf. article on *Social Science*, BLACKFRIARS, June, 1935, p. 285 sq.