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as arising from the action of a series of *déclencheurs-exciteurs*, excitation as it were releasing a catch whereby free play is given to our "cerebro-mental organisation," which thus reacts to suitable stimuli in a way determined only by its own nature. Sensations and emotions in their turn set free the working of further machinery, and so on, the theory of *déclenchement* being the key to every aspect of our conscious and unconscious life. The fortunate possessor of such a cerebro-mental organisation, however rudimentary, would in the Struggle for Existence out-strip those of his rivals who lacked it; and its exercise (released by its environment) would bring about its development to its present stage of perfection.

It is hard to see how this can claim to be a "philosophical essay." The arguments which the author finds decisive are nearly always statements of matters of fact, and his nice analysis of such matters of fact could be valuable for many purposes. But not for his purpose. Take, for instance, his rejection of Hamelin's idealism on the ground that hearing (an "idea") is not to be explained in terms of a gramophone, disc, needle, etc., if these also are conceived as "ideas." There are, too, some very remarkable gaps in the first part—which is presumably the most "philosophical," since the standpoint of the second and third parts is frankly psychological and biological. Of idealists "properly so called" Hamelin alone is considered (on the ground that he alone has expressed himself clearly), while no mention is made of any theory that could fairly be called platonist, aristotelian or thomist. Can M. Cresson imagine they may all be lumped in with "*le réalisme vulgaire*," and therefore refuted by the very first stirrings of criticism, almost at the pre-philosophical level?

QUENTIN JOHNSTON, O.P.

ACTA SECUNDI CONGRESSUS THOMISTICI INTERNATIONALIS invitante Academia R. S. Thomae Aquinatis, Romae, a die 23 ad 28 novembris 1936 celebrati. (Acta Pontificiae Academiae Romanae S. Thomas Aquinatis. Nova Series, vol. III.) (Marietti, Turin; Lib. It. 25.—.)

The Report of this second Congress begins with a letter from Cardinal Pacelli, a speech of welcome by Cardinal Laurenti, and the inaugural address of P. Charles Boyer, S.J., the secretary of the Congress. The body of the Report follows, divided into three parts, dealing respectively with problems of epistemology and criteriology, the relation between philosophy and the sciences, and the relation between philosophy and religion. Each section consists of the papers read on these subjects by the Rapporteurs,

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notes of the discussions which followed, and *communicationes* from other members of the Congress. Many well-known names are here: Noel, Olgiati, Maritain, Garrigou-Lagrange, De Vries, Jolivet, to mention only a few. The papers are in various languages: Latin, Italian, French, German, English. Invidious to single out some rather than others for comment; impossible to comment upon all. It may be said that the actual account of discussions is, inevitably no doubt, disappointing (the first day of the Congress provides example, where the point at issue touched upon the Rome-Louvain debate as to the place of the argument from causality in the epistemological question), since it goes no further than statement of objection and rapporteur's answer. But on the other hand, from the presentment of many competent treatments of a single theme there emerges a conspectus of contemporary opinion which is both illuminating in itself and at the same time provides a basis of further thought and discussion. And though the tone of papers and discussion is of course academic, the issues discussed are radical: the place of the *Cogito* in thomist epistemology; the relation of hylomorphism to modern physics; the fundamental principle of neo-positivism; the thomist and the modern scientific notions of the constitution of bodies; a thomist philosophy of religion; the legitimacy of speaking of a "Christian philosophy." A book for the specialist, the technician; to him, a valuable document not only for the evidence it gives of the actuality of thomist thought throughout the world, but also for the positive lead it offers in many questions of contemporary importance.

GERALD VANN, O.P.

SOCIAL STUDIES

SOCIAL MESSAGE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. By H. Schumacher, D.D. (Coldwell; 8s. 6d.)

"The sole purpose of this volume has been to offer, in organic form, a detailed description of the spiritual social forces of the New Testament," says the author in concluding his task. All the same it was no mean undertaking. Had it succeeded it would have been a shower of manna for the true Israelites who are plodding at the cause of social reformation. If it must be said to have failed, that is because it does *not* present in *organic* form the "spiritual social forces of the New Testament"; it presents them in the form of a dead logical combination. It tears the texts away from their living contexts, not perceiving that the texts themselves have expired in the operation.

It is impossible to get easy returns from the Scriptures. To get the living water there has to be a reaching down every time