

BLACKFRIARS

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SUPPLEMENT: THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT.

EDITORIAL

IN this issue BLACKFRIARS has the unique privilege of publishing the address given to the London Aquinas Society on October 19th, 1943, by His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury. A contribution, however slight, from His Grace would have necessarily conferred a great honour upon the review, but the importance of the subject matter of the address renders it, as well as an honour, also an historic event. It places Catholic theologians and philosophers under a serious obligation to consider the points raised in order to bring thomism into closer touch with modern problems and to fashion it into an instrument which will bring understanding between Catholics and others. His Grace has sown the seed and it is now the special duty of modern thomists to cultivate it and bring it to fruition.

Lest such a critical opportunity should be missed by the often over-cautious thomist theologians and philosophers, Fr. Victor White, who opened the discussion at the Caxton Hall, has drawn out and shown the relevance of His Grace's points. To those who do not read his comments it might seem a breach of etiquette to meet the Archbishop's great kindness in writing the article for BLACKFRIARS

with criticism from a Dominican theologian. A perusal of the contents will show that the Archbishop's request for such *Reflections* has been answered in the fruitful spirit of discussion as opposed to the blighting influence of controversy. There has, of course, been no thought of the latter in the preparation of this number.

The respect and gratitude of BLACKFRIARS is therefore extended to His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the succeeding article by Fr. White is the first concrete expression of that gratitude. It is hoped that such concrete expression will continue fruitfully for the years to come.

Gratitude is also due to the President and Secretary of the Aquinas Society whose generosity and co-operation have made this important contribution to thomism possible, and also to Mr. Richard O'Sullivan, K.C., a former President, for introducing the London Aquinas Society and thus placing the discussion in its proper setting.

THE EDITOR.

THE AQUINAS SOCIETY OF LONDON

THE Aquinas Society of London came into existence naturally and, so to say, *insensiblement* among a little group of students who had been attending the pioneer lectures on the *Summa Theologica* that were given some twenty years ago by Father Vincent McNabb, O.P., at St. Peter's Hut, Westminster, under the auspices of the University Extension Board.

Soon after the last war Father Vincent had conceived the idea of making the doctrine of Aquinas available to ordinary lay men and women. It was an immense and individual act of charity on the part of a poor friar who endeavoured in this way to share his intellectual riches and the special inheritance of his Order with lay folk for whom no other means of Catholic intellectual formation existed at the time. The success of these lectures on the *Summa* led in a short while to an expansion of the work, and in a few years three series of lectures on Theology and Ethics, and the