An Introduction to the Philosophy of Nature. **Compiled by R. A. Kocourek. St. Paul: North Central Publishing Co., 1948. Pp. iv + 176. $2.50.**

Almost seventy-five years have passed since Leo XIII wrote: "To the end that suppositious doctrine be not imbibed instead of the true, or the adulterate instead of the genuine, take care that the wisdom of Thomas be drunk from his own fountains." Yet most of the philosophical fountains of St. Thomas still remain sealed to the majority of those who might want to drink from them—sealed in Latin. All branches of philosophy have suffered from this; but none mere deeply, perhaps, than the philosophy of nature, where the dark shadow of Christian von Wolff still lingers on. Professor Kocourek has taken a definite step toward solving this problem by translating St. Thomas' *opusculum De Principiis Naturae* (which may be considered a companion piece to the *De Ente et Essentia*) and the commentary on the first two books of the *Physics*, in which the doctrine contained in the *opusculum* in a form that is highly condensed and crystallized is given fuller elaboration and more ample development.

The translation is not at all points as perfectly faithful and accurate as one would like to find it. But the defects are trivial in comparison with the abundant light which the texts throw upon the fundamental problems of the philosophy of nature and the philosophy of science. Is it true that Aristotle and St. Thomas "must be admired for their gigantic efforts rather than for their actual achievements, when it is a question of the philosophy of nature," as one popular scholastic cosmology textbook tells its readers? Is hylomorphism a naive doctrine which modern science has rendered archaic, or at best just one possible hypothetical explanation of natural phenomena, as several scholastic textbooks seem ready to admit? What is the philosophy of nature, anyway; how is it related to metaphysics; and how should its various branches be ordered? What is psychology and what relation does it have to cosmology on the one hand and to biology on the other? What would Aquinas have to say about the modern problem of philosophy and science? Does Thomism have anything to contribute to the philosophy of physico-mathematical science? What must be thought of the common custom of ignoring the problem of chance in the philosophy of nature? The basic answers to all these questions and to many more besides are found in the texts which Professor Kocourek has translated.

At the beginning of the volume two very sketchy chapters attempt to

prepare the student for some of the problems involved in the texts. The first chapter points out the Thomistic distinction between science and dialectic—a distinction of capital importance, if for no other reason than that the two notions are usually confused in the modern acceptance of the term *science*. The second tries to make the student conscious of the existence of the most fundamental problem in the study of nature—the problem of motion. At the end of the volume Professor Kocourek adds two passages from Aristotle and one from St. Albert the Great which stress the excellence and importance of the philosophy of nature. These are followed by a brief outline of the physical works of Aristotle and a more lengthy outline of St. Thomas' commentary on the first book of the *Physics*. For no apparent good reason an outline of the second book is not included.

It is difficult to keep from wishing that Kocourek had gone just a little further and included a few of the subsequent lessons of St. Thomas on the problems of motion, time, place, etc. At the very least one would like to have in a course in the philosophy of nature some of the basic Thomistic texts on the nature of motion; for, as Aquinas himself has said, "unless you understand motion, you cannot understand nature: *Ignorato motu, ignoratur natura.*" But in putting within the reach of all the writings of St. Thomas on the principles of nature and the principles of natural science Kocourek has already done a good deal.

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Authority and the Individual. **By Bertrand Russell, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1949. Pp. 79. $2.00.**

This work is a compilation of the six Reith Lectures given by Russell over the British Broadcasting Corporation in 1947. Except for the first two lectures, which deal with the evolution of primitive communities and the development of governmental authority, the book is predominantly social philosophy, with the emphasis on social reform rather than on theory. The approach is empirical. The proposals offered by this eminent British philosopher are for the most part in accord with Christian social ethics, even though they are not based upon any theological belief, as Russell is very careful to point out. (p. 70)

Throughout the lectures the author is primarily concerned, as the