

PHASES OF THOUGHT AND CRITICISM

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Phases of Thought and Criticism by Azarias

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AZARIAS

**PHASES OF
THOUGHT
AND CRITICISM**

PHASES OF THOUGHT AND CRITICISM

BY

BROTHER AZARIAS

OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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PREFACE.

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A LARGE portion of the present volume has already appeared in print, some of it in pamphlets and some in the pages of the "American Catholic Quarterly Review." Part was read before young men pursuing their studies; part, before the Concord School of Philosophy, and part, before the International Congress of Education held in New Orleans in 1885. The original matter has been revised, partly rewritten, and coördinated with the view of making apparent the unity of design and continuity of thought running through the whole book.

The chapter treating of Newman might have been developed to greater length, now that its subject has passed away and a variety of opinions has been pronounced upon him; but as the pen-picture here given, outlined about fourteen years ago, found recognition and approval at the hand of that eminent Thinker himself, the author deemed it best not to disturb its original dimensions, and contented himself with the filling in of a few additional strokes.

The latter part of the volume is occupied with the interpretation of three of the world's masterpieces. They are analyzed and their underlying meaning is explained from the point of view of thought and criticism expressed in the first seven chapters. In the philosophical principle wrought into the mysticism of the book "De Imitatione Christi," in the spiritual sense giving unity to the "Divina Commedia," and in the mystical elements, partly Christian, partly neo-Platonic, entering into the structure of "In Memoriam," it is sought to determine the soul giving life and being to each of these works as an organic whole. Each expresses a distinct phase of thought, and is the outcome of a distinct social and intellectual force. Each embodies a vivifying ideal. The criticism that busies itself solely with the literary form is superficial. For food it gives husks.

DE LA SALLE INSTITUTE, NEW YORK, May 4, 1892.

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PHASES OF THOUGHT AND CRITICISM

CHAPTER I.

FOURFOLD ACTIVITY OF THE SOUL.

1. THE human soul is the informing principle of the human body; it is one and simple—a monad without quantity or extension—as all spiritual substances are one, simple and unextended; incomplete in itself, inasmuch as it must needs be united to the body in order that it may fully exercise many of its functions; immaterial, and therefore void of inertness; active in its operations from the first moment of its existence. According to the mode of the soul's action do we speak of it as having this faculty or that corresponding to the function which it performs. Some faculties are intrinsic to the soul itself, as reason; others, as the imagination, are dependent upon the union of soul and body.

2. Although the essence of the soul is not the immediate principle of its operations, and although its faculties are distinct from its essence, being in themselves certain properties thereof, it is still the same soul, one and undivided, that thinks and