

misgivings he writes (p. 213) in the context of Christology: 'If we take what Thomas says in the context of the causal relationship between God and the world which he defines in his scheme of act and potency, we shall see that so far from being mere subtleties void of any genuine religious sense, his statements are rather a clear and logical consequence of a truly profound and suggestive concept: salvation as the perfection and elevation of what is human.'

The only regrets this reviewer has about this book is that it does not deal with some recent issues in Thomism, for the author's opinions would be well worth having. There is no discussion of the question whether or not there is a philosophy of religion in Thomas. It seems clear that Persson would have reserves

about introducing this modern debate into an historical study of Aquinas. In his treatment of Grace he does not refer to the work of Karl Rahner on quasi-formal causality, even though on page 186 there is cited CG III, 151. He could have benefited considerably from the detailed discussion of *scriptura sola* in the Middle Ages by Y. Congar in his two volumes on Tradition published between 1960-1963. Some of the remarks he makes about the role of authority in the Catholic Church and the meaning of this in the interpretation of Scripture are now a little dated. But in general he does not stray beyond his historical enquiry. His work will remain extremely helpful for a scholarly appreciation of the theology of St Thomas. This is excellent ecumenism.

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**POUR UNE POETIQUE DE LA FOI, ESSAI SUR LE MYSTÈRE SYMBOLIQUE**, by J.-P. Manigne, O.P. *Les éditions du Cerf*, Paris, 1969. 192 pp. (no price stated).

What this difficult and methodology-cluttered book attempts is what many sensitive people are looking for: but this is not the way to go about it. Part I asks what poems say, and answers: they make reality directly evident to us ('ontophany') by creating a context where this is possible, by containing in themselves something transcending the actual moment of their utterance, and by challenging us, looking us in the face.

Part II asks what poems really are, and by isolating certain Heideggerian themes and seeing how far they are useful to the book's purpose, answers: poetic expression is the matrix of any more precise discourse.

Part III, the most important, asks in what respect theology is a Poem (author's capital). For Manigne, theology as a medieval type *scientia* has gone, and as the mere spinning out of biblical metaphor is inadequate; and its continuance even as a language is in doubt. In the latter sense, he maintains, it can continue, as *la Poétique* (as against *noétique*) *de la Foi*. What is this? 'Making no attempt to consider theology as a structured system . . . we turn our attention to a Word already uttered, asking what are the constitutive laws which permit prolongation of its utterance. The set of these laws is what we call *la Poétique de la Foi* (110-11). *Analogia entis* (Aquinas) permits discursive theology but not exegesis, *analogia fidei* (Barth) the inverse, so that will not do for a unified *Poétique de la Foi*. What makes it work he calls *analogia symboli* (twice

misprinted): 'By *analogia symboli* we mean only this: the relation between reality and its linguistic expression in secular poetry is comparable, from the point of view of one studying to read signs, with the relation between God-revealing-himself and this revelation (Scripture and Sacraments) in biblical texts' (132). This presupposes a significant analogy between 'ontophany' and 'Theophany'. The latter is like the former in producing the context (of faith) in which Theophany is possible, by containing in itself something transcending the actual occasion in which it occurs, and by challenging us, looking us in the face. Sacrament is the paradigm: a total reality given in the limits of a sign. If a man cannot be touched by ontophany, he cannot be touched by Theophany either. (Cf. the bomolochos who is excluded from the Kingdom.)

In the Bible, chronicle-historical texts are secondary to the texts where the symbolic process is more clearly at work, yet without historical facticity (e.g. the birth of Jesus at a given time) symbol would be ineffective, an empty dream, just as without symbols, historical facticity would be meaningless. Symbolic events are effective only if they can interfere with the course of secular history. Since sacramental language is the paradigm for *la Poétique de la Foi*, eucharistic language is treated in some detail. Faith alone discerns Theophany under the appearances of ontophany. Like the latter, Theophany com-

municates complete meaning in a fleeting acquaintance. Manigne ends by insisting that *Poétique de la Foi* is not meant simply to eliminate the critical use of language in favour of its lyrical use, but to show how these are related, with lyrical use as prior.

Remarks. It is not clear whether *la Poétique* . . . really is a set of constitutive rules, as Manigne says, or a set of genetic processes described, as his words more often imply. Also, lyrical use may well be genetically prior without challenging the logical priority of critical use of language. *Analogia symboli* is not really explained, and seems to presuppose *analogia entis*, which was found wanting. *Nostalgie* is important and is not explained. Also, his notion of interpretation as 'bringing to disclosure the *sens vécu* which poetic expressions embody' without spelling out the sense disclosed in propositions seems a project vowed to failure from the outset, and it may

be significant that Manigne gives no serious example of his 'interpretation' at work on a secular poem. Concrete examples are the greatest single lack.

The final meditation on the Transfiguration—like the section on eucharistic language—looks like the kind of thing the author could most usefully have written had he not become infatuated with 'methodology', too much of which has been left in place, like scaffolding left obscuring a building. There are good things in this book, as should already be clear, but they demand a disproportionate effort to get at. There are disappointing traces of fundamentalism, too. Yet should Manigne follow up his suggestion at page 156, and do for other sacraments what he did for the eucharist—and should he do it in an unashamedly lyrical manner—this reviewer would very much like to see the result.

LAWRENCE MOONAN

#### NEXT MONTH IN NEW BLACKFRIARS

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