

INITIATION A LA PHILOSOPHIE DE SAINT THOMAS D'AQUIN. By H.-D. Gardeil, O.P. Tome I: Logique. Tome IV: Métaphysique. (Paris: Editions du Cerf; 570 fr. and 555 fr.)

In this work, to be completed in four volumes, P. Gardeil gives a traditional account of St Thomas's philosophy, with some important differences. For he writes in a living language, and in a normal literary style: the modern reader has no longer to struggle with the barbarous Latin and the complex syllogistic treatment that make the average manual all but unintelligible to him. There is no longer the impression that every philosophical problem has been settled once and for all, and that it is only a matter of picking on the right distinctions to explain its solution and refute the errors of Plato and Kant. P. Gardeil disguises none of the difficulties, and even at second hand we still catch from time to time in these pages the excitement of original philosophical thinking. Moreover there is a general introduction which sets St Thomas's work in its thirteenth-century context, and a selection of his actual texts, together with a good translation, fills one-third of each volume. These texts have mostly been selected, with good reason, from the Aristotelian commentaries, so as to be free from theological considerations. But there is no index.

This is a book then that has long been needed: it can confidently be recommended to those lay-people who ask for guidance before they feel able to tackle the *Summa* itself; and in seminaries it will form an excellent basis for more detailed oral instruction. For all this we can be so grateful to P. Gardeil that criticism is almost disarmed. Yet it must be pointed out that the implication that he has given us an account of St Thomas's own thought is not strictly correct. What in fact we have is the traditional interpretation of that thought by later scholastics (especially John of St Thomas) illustrated and sometimes modified by reference to the text of St Thomas. In the *Metaphysics* volume, where this is done more openly, the results are happy; there is, for example, an interesting discussion of epistemology, based on Gilson's work. In *Logic*, which suffered so disastrous a decadence before its revival in the present century, St Thomas might find it more difficult to recognise the development of his thought as authentic. Although there are now good accounts of Aristotle's logic (e.g. in I. M. Bochenski's *Ancient Formal Logic*, reference to which might have avoided some surprising statements), St Thomas's own logic has not yet been explored: indeed the absence of a commentary on the *Prior Analytics*, which leaves half the first volume unsupported by text, would make this a difficult task. It is not for a moment being suggested that P. Gardeil should have undertaken this work; but it is misleading of him to have given the impression of having undertaken it, explicitly in his Preface and tacitly throughout: for such a procedure might possibly lead to *irrisio infidelium* outside the Thomist school. L.B.