

In the second part, Sanseverino turns to the possibility of tyrannicide. His aim is to present a correct and nuanced account of Aquinas, both from texts explicitly on the subject and by deduction from his general principles. Sanseverino, in true Thomist spirit, concludes by stating and refuting three views seemingly showing that Aquinas allowed tyrannicide. On the other hand, he allowed that it may be permissible to depose a tyrannical elected ruler, but not a hereditary one. In essence, 'independent princes' receive their power from God and are judged solely by him.

From the Middle Ages onwards, the writings of Aquinas have been used to support a disparate variety of political and constitutional positions. The polemic in which Sanseverino was engaged is itself proof of this. For his part, Di Mieri does not venture to assess in detail if in his tract Sanseverino proved to be a faithful interpreter of St Thomas. Gilby, who wrote extensively on Aquinas's political and social theories, maintained that St Thomas never defended tyrannicide in so many words. If anything, according to Gilby, Aquinas's later writings seem to harden in favour of existing authority, and against sedition and rebellion.

Di Mieri's intention is to repropose from Sanseverino's tract those aspects of political doctrine that are perennially valid. Basic among these, is the rejection of contractual theories and the favouring of the naturalness of socio-political life in the light of a Christian anthropology. This is the lesson of what Di Mieri calls 'Christian realism'. It recognises the principle of authority and at the same time endeavours to find the principles that will prevent its degeneration into tyranny, without falling into the opposite extreme of anarchy.

It is likely that aspects of Aquinas's theological and philosophical thought will continue to feature in political debates; perhaps over the nature of the evolving European Union. Whatever doubts one may have about the existence or value of a *philosophia perennis*, Sanseverino's tract is further evidence that there definitely is something perennial about the resurgence of Thomist thinking in substantially different later contexts.

ROBERT OMBRES OP

ATHEISM AND THEISM by J. J. C. Smart and J. J. Haldane *Blackwell, Oxford, 1996, pp 224 £45.00 hardback, £12.99 paperback*

This is one of the 'Great Debates in Philosophy' series in which two writers argue for opposing views of a certain issue: the views here are materialist atheism and Thomist Catholicism. It would have been good to report a stronger atheist contribution since good presentations of this are rare. However, as I suspect many atheists would agree, John Haldane does a first class job, and his careful introduction of Thomism to issues in analytic philosophy should win theism some new friends, if not converts.

In philosophical debate about God it is not theists who have the up-

hill struggle: it is their arguments which set the debate, leaving the atheist with the defensive task of criticism. Jack Smart begins with modern physics, biology, astrophysics (throughout Smart is pushing science and philosophers of science—as one would expect), which is interesting, though there are clear metaphysical lines on this within Thomism. He then settles to brief responses to theist arguments. Despite the high-tech science, some of his points appear naive, even dated: if God designed a complex world, how can He be simple? Who designed the Designer? Why not design human life and consciousness more quickly and easily? etc.

With arguments from moral and religious experience, biblical criticism, miracles etc. the atheist (naturally enough) is in foreign terrain. Nevertheless, Smart recaps some familiar responses, including a good treatment of the argument from the world's contingency. His section on evil is disappointing (natural evil is treated as an insurmountable problem; moral evil could have been avoided since God could have made us free and yet with infallible dispositions to make the right choice!), and he does not treat any but the most thoroughly analytic of philosophical views on religion. In contrast, Haldane is comfortable in his own Catholic tradition, with the wider analytic tradition, and with philosophy of science.

Haldane argues not only for theism, but presents whole areas of Christian thinking sharpened by the techniques and resources of analytic philosophy. He first affirms philosophical commitment to realism and credal commitment to Catholicism, holding the latter is rationally defensible and subject to traditions of theological reflection. He charges Smart with scientific reductionism, needless distrust of purposes, and no explanation of the development of living from lifeless entities, reproductive from non-reproductive life, and minded from mindless animals. This line is not wholly new, but it is presented in new ways; it is definitely worth reading. This section also includes argument against seeing our reasons for action as causes of our action, and a theory of general concept acquisition appealing to a Wittgensteinian/Thomist amalgamation of natural potentialities with communitarian formation. All in all, it amounts to an excellent and somewhat unexpected case for what both disputants refer to as 'Old Teleology'.

Of the good things that follow I can only hint. On the impossibility of an evolutionary explanation of non-practical concepts Haldane writes: 'there would be something fitting in creating a universe which had within it the power of its own understanding, which is what in one sense empirical knowledge involves' (p. 129). A marvellous cartoon and analogy kick off discussion of the 'Second Way' (p. 130), the other Ways are then carefully articulated and defended from common and simple-minded criticisms. Then there is a fine section on just what (and what not) proofs of God are meant to establish (another useful analogy: domestic plumbing this time). His account of evil is not new (basically, St Thomas, McCabe), but none the worse for that; on freedom he is more

controversial, attacking soft determinism and favouring a view found in Germain Grisez and others.

The debate ends with two 'Replies' and a joint 'Afterword'. Here Smart does not really address Haldane's careful distinguishing of different 'levels' within reality, and within human action. He is firm in his reductionist ontology and defends materialist orthodoxy on consciousness and intentionality. His remarks on evil are sadly familiar: pain is a positive evil, God could have made a 'nicer' but still natural world, he could have made us free by causing us to always choose well. Believers have little to fear here. Haldane's Reply demonstrates biblical as well as philosophical scholarship, advancing a thoroughly orthodox line not only against philosophical sceptics but also against some current theologians. The conclusion is heartening: through intelligent beings the world comes to be again, it becomes aware of itself and the stage of its return to God; this 'religiously informed journey', and not pastoral or social work, vital though that is, is the primary reality of practical life for the Christian; because we also need to involve will, imagination and passions in this journey, there is divinely guaranteed Scripture and Church.

One problem with 'analytical Thomism' is that the structures of analysis within which the mediaeval concepts and arguments are placed tend not to acknowledge the historical nature of the arguments (why they argue for what they do, and why they argue in the ways they do). Lack of sensitivity to contexts dogs analytic philosophy of religion when it aims at expressing the (timeless and transcultural) content of theistic arguments. By making his philosophical case within a clear commitment to a specific tradition and its orthodoxies, and appealing to theology, Scripture scholarship, and ancient and mediaeval beliefs, Haldane has made it more difficult for this criticism to bite. Analytic Thomism is not just analytic philosophy 'done to' Aquinas. This book may not be a great debate, but it is a great vindication of Thomism.

HAYDEN RAMSAY

BENEDICTINES IN OXFORD edited by Henry Wansbrough OSB and Anthony Marett Crosby OSB, *Darton Longman & Todd*, London, 1997, 327 pages, £14.95 pb.

Mrs Doherty arrived at 103 Woodstock Road, Oxford, in October 1897, as housekeeper, and was immediately followed by two monks and two postulants from Ampleforth, thus inaugurating the modern presence of Benedictines in Oxford the centenary of which this very interesting collection of essays celebrates. In 1904 the community moved to Beaumont Street, a site now occupied by the Playhouse, and in 1922 to the present St Benet's in St Giles'. The greater part of the book relates the earlier history: Benedicta Ward SLG on St Frideswide (an Anglo-Saxon saint, if she existed; her 'relics' brought miracle cures from the 12th to the 16th centuries); Henry Mayr-Harting on the better