

criterion: does it or does it not promote growth in the Christ-Life towards Christ? The criterion is not established *a priori* but emerges in the actual living out of the human condition in and towards the eschaton. In each of these discussions is found the conviction that the great dichotomy of human existence is not to be evaded nor the conflict resolved in collapsing either term. The ensuing tension which each of us carries in his very being must be held and allowed to hold. Only this way can the 'whole person' be realized, which is the fulfilment in Christ we all hanker for.

Thus Marriage and Religious Virginity are not unrelated states of being but two ways of Christian living, mutual and interdependent. Both the life of the celibate and the married is a response to the call of Christ. The nearer each approaches Christ the less is the difference between them. During the striving for fulfilment in Christ they are signs to each other: Marriage of the forming of Christians, Religious Virginity of the transforming. From within marriage 'babes in Christ' grow out from a base of security and love: Religious Virginity shows what to grow out to. From within the celibate life mature 'sons of the Father' put

themselves at risk in obedience to the call of the Spirit of Love: Marriage provides the home base from which the impetus comes: 'It is something to go out from in following Christ.'

The dominant motif throughout the book is the need to hold and be held in the dialectic, not in the ideological but in the personal-relational sense. Here, between the promise and its fulfilment, lies the Cross. But this is not to be understood as paralysis; a static, fossilized impotence. It is in the suspension, in the surrender to the agony that the glorious freedom of Christ is experienced. But never completely; which is precisely the torment.

The suggestion in the Chapter 'What is Tradition?' that the difficulty experienced in discussing inter-denominational Eucharistic practice is a problem in semantics and that terms borrowed from Existential-Psychology may help in its resolving, is indicative of purpose and sense of direction. Even the contrasting of the lives of Elizabeth of Hungary and Lady Chatterley in discussing 'The Nature of Womanhood' is a kind of liberation. Mrs Haughton looks out and up and forward, and thank God for it. We can use her valuable sight.

JO SHEERAN

VERBUM: WORD AND IDEA IN AQUINAS, by Bernard J. Lonergan, S.J. Darton, Longman and Todd, 1968. Pp. xv + 300. 70s.

... the original genius, precisely because he is original, finds all current usage inept for his purposes and succeeds remarkably if there is any possibility of grasping his meaning from his words; the possibility of exact expression of a philosophic position only arises long after the philosopher's death when his influence has moulded the culture which is the background and vehicle of such expression' (pp. 23-4). The inevitable incomprehension of Aquinas' contemporaries resulted in the condemnation, three years after his death, of a number of propositions attributed to him. Today his name is held in high honour, but there is little evidence that this change in attitude is due to an increase in comprehension.

Fr Lonergan's painstaking examination of the texts relevant to an understanding of Aquinas's concept of 'verbum' first appeared twenty years ago in *Theological Studies* (he has added an introduction for this edition). His conclusions challenged fundamental pre-suppositions, not only of the majority of neo-Thomists, but also of those other philosophers who quote liberally from Aquinas without having come to grips with the way in which

Aquinas worked. The inaccessibility of this study is partly due to the fact that it is a sustained and highly technical piece of historical research into a world whose language is simply no longer ours, with very few concessions made to contemporary terminology or methods of discussion. At the end of the book, Fr Lonergan defends his method of procedure: 'One can aim at understanding Aquinas; one can aim at a transposition of his position to meet the issues of our own day; but to aim at both simultaneously results inevitably, I believe, in substituting for the real Aquinas some abstract ideal of theoretical coherence that might, indeed, be named the Platonic idea of Aquinas, were it not for the fact that a Platonic idea is one, while such ideals of logical coherence are dquietingly numerous' (p. 220).

I do not myself believe that a reading of the *Verbum* articles is necessary for an understanding of Lonergan's own later work (although it certainly helps). There are indeed passages, which seem to be 'workpoints' for *Insight*, where the reasoning is so compressed as to be virtually unintelligible except against the background of that book (cf. the closing

passage of the discussion of the critical problem, p. 88). But I would maintain that, since the publication of these articles, it is irresponsible to affirm that 'such and such was Aquinas's position' on matters of cognitional theory or trinitarian psychology, without taking them into account. As Lonergan himself says, his own inductively reached conclusions can only be overthrown, so far as their validity as Thomist exegesis is concerned, by an equally exhaustive inductive process (cf. pp. 180-1). So far as the philosophical problems are concerned, readers of *Insight* or *Collection* will already be familiar with many of these conclusions: 'Evidently the Aristotelian and Thomist programme is not a matter of considering ocular vision and then conceiving an analogous spiritual vision that is attributed to a spiritual faculty named intellect' (p. 76). While psychology and metaphysics are kept carefully distinct, there is the familiar insistence that certain philosophical confusions are due to the activity of 'interpreters unaware of the relevant psychological facts' (p. xiv).

But, however interesting and important the philosophical discussion that occupies the greater part of the book, it is a theological problem, 'the *imago Dei*, which is the central issue both in Aquinas' thought on *verbum* and, as well, in our inquiry' (p. 183). I am (perhaps unfashionably) convinced that a principal factor making for sterility in contemporary

God-talk is the fact that the 'God' for whom 'models' are sought (is he 'up there', 'in here', or the 'ground of being'?) is rather infrequently the Trinity of Christian confession. And one of the reasons for this is perhaps that the popular 'models' of the Trinity, while frequently claiming to use the 'psychological analogy', are often little more than a simplified version of the uncomprehending twaddle that is talked by the experts. '. . . in prevalent theological opinion there is as good an analogy to the procession of the Word in human imagination as in human intellect, while the analogy to the procession of the Holy Spirit is wrapped in deepest obscurity' (p. 183). Many people who have found that the doctrine of the Trinity, as presented to them, simply does not connect with *anything*, may be stimulated by this essay to capture something of the simplicity, profundity and brilliance of Aquinas's conception of the *imago Dei* (cf. p. xiv). (But, here again, a less painful route to the same goal would be Fr Lonergan's own *Divinarum Personarum Conceptio Analogica*.) The psychological analogy, as sketched by Augustine, and simplified and clarified by Aquinas, is only one of many possible models to help our thinking about the God of Christian revelation. A glance at contemporary theological writing, however, does not suggest that it has yet been improved upon.

NICHOLAS LASH

THE CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF ATONEMENT, by F. W. Dillistone. *James Nisbet*, London, 1968. 436 pp. 42s.

This book is a practical demonstration of the value to theology when the range of theological sensibility is deliberately widened to become receptive to the parallel but distinct discipline of literary criticism. When a sensibility so widened is applied to a well-worn theme—the atonement—we are at once rewarded with a new method and starting points. Although the word 'atonement' is now not much used, its related term 'alienation' has become a cliché; but if we re-interpret the traditional doctrine in terms of establishing a new wholeness or self-reconciliation are we merely exploiting it? Only if we see the atonement as a mere doctrine instead of what it is—an event which demands interpretation. Already set within the framework of a theory, it was inevitably destined to have profound social consequences; and it has always to be understood within what Dr Dillistone calls 'ranges of comparison'. There

can be no one definitive interpretation, only a series of collisions between an absolute claim and our dilemmas and explanations. These, if we are lucky, will 'fall, gall themselves and gash gold-vermilion' with the brief light of a successful interpretation.

Dr Dillistone's method is to approach this compound of fact and interpretation by means of a developing series of analogues and parables, beginning with the pre-Christian analogue of universal regeneration through a central cosmic sacrifice. But so systematic and wide-ranging an account of our estrangement and reconciliation depends upon its origins in a pre-scientific world-view; and there are other conceptions of atonement which may also depend upon such foundations of cosmic self-confidence—the juridical or penal parable of the decisive judgment, and the parable of the unique redemption wrought by the single and