

to the early sources, a rejection of the notion of separation from the continental mainstream, a restoration of Christian context, else Columba may continue to 'rattle in his reliquary', wherever that is.

So the collection completes a circle as Meek's lament meets the concern of Clancy to see through the smoke (incense or special effects) to the 'real' saint. Cults ancient and modern share financial profit as products. However, to hold these outer brackets against the expository genius Adomnán, concerned to show his patron as a truly Christocentric wise man of the Word, practising the fear of God, shunning material wealth, leads us to ask a question. How was it that Adomnán came to be the one who promoted this cultic activity, leading to the exploitation of the human dead, when so much of what he says about Columba celebrates his remarkable, Christlike life.

Some minor errors might be noted: bibliographical details for Alexander Mylne, *Vita Episcopatum Dunkeldensium* (footnote, p. 29) are missing, p.157; 'instead of II.lxxvii, and with II.lxxvii,' should read, '...and with II.lxxviii', p.263; the misplaced marker to footnote 21 should come at the end of the previous sentence.

JAMES BRUCE

**DISPUTED QUESTIONS ON VIRTUE by Thomas Aquinas, translation and preface by R. McInerny, St Augustine's Press, South Bend, Indiana, 1999. Pp. xix + 140, £16. 00 pbk.**

This new translation by Ralph McInerny of St Thomas's *Disputed Questions* on the virtues in general and the cardinal virtues is to be welcomed as a contribution to the present revival of the 'ethics of virtue'. These two single questions, composed during Aquinas's stay in Paris 1269-72, form a prolegomenon to his moral theology as a whole. As in the questions *De Veritate* with truth, St Thomas first asks what is virtue, then where do we find it. From the start he makes clear that he is going to work with two traditions: those of Aristotle and Augustine. Another favourite source is St Gregory the Great, *Morals on Job*.

St Thomas locates the virtues in the sensitive appetite (temperance and fortitude), will (justice and charity) and intellect (prudence) as their subjects. Articles 4-6 form the core of the question on the virtues in general. Of particular interest for its discussion of the emotions is art. 4, in which Aquinas follows Aristotle in maintaining that the irrational sensitive appetite too can share in reason. Here we see that Aquinas's Aristotelian ethics are founded on human nature, as the distinction of the virtues corresponds with various powers of the soul. Indeed it is difficult to give an account of his ethics without the soul, for he frequently talks about the powers of the soul, rarely of powers of the body. As the word 'virtue' implies, virtues are perfections: they perfect the powers of the soul under the command of the will.

359

St Thomas's next step is to ask how we obtain the virtues. Are they inborn, acquired, or given by grace? By rejecting the first possibility, that we have them by nature, he safeguards the active role of the individual in acquiring virtues 'by study and exercise' (art. 8). They are only in us by nature as an aptitude for goodness. Acquired virtue, however, does not suffice, for we are not only made to be citizens of an earthly city but also of the heavenly city, for which we need virtue infused by grace. The relation between reason and will in virtuous action is clarified in art. 12. The replies *ad* 3-6 of this article are a *tour de force*, summarising Aquinas's view of the connection of the virtues. Art. 2 of the second question, on the cardinal virtues, raises a topic of current debate: the unity of the virtues. St Thomas takes the line that one cannot have some perfect virtues without having them all. On the human level, we cannot have prudence without the moral virtues, for prudence deliberates about means to the end. But the choice of end is affected by what sort of person one is, for 'as a man is, so does the end seem to him'. And for our final end, when we are given charity the other virtues are infused with it.

McInerny's translation, in clear, plain English, fitting St Thomas's Latin style, reads evenly throughout. Rendering Aquinas in contemporary idiom, he yet remains close to the original. By keeping to one word for the same term he allows us to follow St Thomas's exact thought with confidence. McInerny also provides a useful preface, written with all his fluency and verve, that sets these questions in their historical and philosophical background. One or two points could have been made clearer. The difference between Aristotle and Aquinas on creation was surely more than one between an eternally created world and one created in time (p. x), for Aristotle had no concept of creation in the proper sense of made from nothing. It would have helped to make more explicit why prudence is counted as a moral virtue although it is an intellectual one. But these are small points. There are a few misprints: notably, a 'not' p. 20 *sed contra* 2, which is not in the Latin; and 'not are no' p. 85 obj. 17. McInerny's deft solution of the question whether humans have one or two ends (p. xvii) is a happy one.

The last article in this book (cardinal virtues art. 4) is appropriately about whether the cardinal virtues remain in heaven when we no longer need them. St Thomas says that they do, just as the fortitude that stands bravely in battle remains when rejoicing in victory. The cardinal virtues are for steering our ship through this life, but the end of steering is to come safely into the port of eternal life (4 *ad* 2). If St Augustine said 'I am my *voluntates* (choices)', perhaps St Thomas would have said 'I am my virtues'. The virtues are indeed the treasure in heaven that cannot be taken from us.

FRANCIS J. SELMAN