

this to God would be to lessen His omnipotence. In chapter 7, 'Grace and Free Will', Rogers attempts to show that Anselm's position on the relation of grace and freedom differs from that of Augustine. Even after the fall, the human agent retains 'the ability to keep rightness of will for its own sake'. Chapters 8 and 9 on 'Foreknowledge, Freedom, and Eternity' address both pre-Anselmian (Augustine and Boethius) and contemporary discussions of divine foreknowledge and human freedom, eternity and time. Anselm, it is claimed, holds a four-dimensionalist (i.e. tenseless) theory of time with God's eternity characterized as a kind of fifth dimension (p. 183). In the final chapter, 'The Freedom of God', Rogers attempts to reconcile the belief that God is obliged to do the best, with His freedom. She believes that Anselm's position not only entails that God has created the best *actualizable* (rather than possible) world, but that 'Anselm believes our world is the only world God could make'. She perhaps overstates the case in claiming 'strong textual evidence for this' (p. 193). To stress her point she italicizes a definite article in her translation of Anselm's Latin (p. 194), but Latin of course has no definite article.

Rogers recognises the potential problem in her assertion that Anselm was the first (Christian) philosopher 'to attempt a systematic libertarian analysis of freedom' (p. 1). Anselm was not party to recent discussions of human freedom and applying the soubriquet 'libertarian' to Anselm might seem to be 'pushing it' somewhat. But Rogers sets out to avoid the charge of anachronism by offering a 'close and careful analysis' of the textual evidence.

It is in deriving from Anselm's position on the *imago dei* the notion of a human and limited aseity as an explanatory justification for the belief in the freedom of human choices that Rogers creatively opens up Anselm's thought to wider discussion. Whether or not this view of human aseity is one Anselm held it makes a real contribution to our understanding of what it means to be made in the image of God. To put the matter in a less qualified manner than Rogers chooses to employ (compare her comments on p. 106, final paragraph): if one treats the idea that we are made in God's image as contentful and informative of philosophical, theological and anthropological thinking, then surely we are compelled to recognize that in creating us in His image, God has made us co-creators of ourselves. The freedom we possess in our choices, which choices determine who we are, is a reflection of the divine freedom, which is itself the source of our freedom.

One final point: at the beginning of *De Concordia*, Anselm sets out his position that there is no conflict between divine foreknowledge and human freedom, because the manner of the choice as a free act is foreseen by God. It seems to me that this text is the central statement of Anselm's view of the compatibility of divine foreknowledge and human freedom. Anselm's solution to the problem is driven by the logical entailment that whatever God foresees must be the case and that, if God has created a world in which He foresees free acts, there must be free acts. Whilst God's freedom is the source of human freedom, His foreknowledge is its guarantor.

IAN LOGAN

LE MYSTÈRE DE L'ÊTRE: L'ITINÉRAIRE THOMISTE DE GUÉRARD DES LAURIERS by Louis-Marie de Bagnières, *Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, Paris, 2007, pp. 454, €48*

This work, written by the founder of the Fraternity of St Vincent Ferrer and successfully defended as a doctoral thesis at the Sorbonne, is both an original work of metaphysics and an introduction to the thought of Fr Louis-Bertrand

Guérard des Lauriers (1898–1988). Fr Guérard des Lauriers is perhaps not well known to most English students of St Thomas, but was a major and independent-minded figure within the French ‘Thomistic revival’ of the 20th Century.

The author’s concern in this book is with the foundations of metaphysics, the science of ‘being *qua* being’. Hence the phrase *ratio entis* occurs throughout the book, for example (p. 14), ‘one’s entrance into metaphysics depends on the isolation [*le dégagement*] of the *ratio entis*’. Normally left untranslated in the text, this phrase might be rendered as ‘the nature of being’, or ‘the meaning of “being”’.

Clearly, one cannot strictly define being, since ‘this would imply that there was something anterior to being by which the *ratio entis* could be defined’ (*ibid.*). How then does the author approach his subject? He proposes a three-fold investigation, inspired by the classic repartition of the virtues of the speculative intellect into ‘science’, ‘understanding’ and ‘wisdom’.

The scientific or rational approach to being (chapter III) seeks to show how our experience of reality leads, as if from principles to conclusions, to an awareness of being as both ‘substantial’ and ‘accidental’, to a knowledge of the transcendental ‘properties’ of being, and to a knowledge of act (as opposed to potentiality). The analysis is both scientifically precise and concerned throughout to stay in touch with common human experience.

After this meticulous study of ‘the various ways in which being is said’, the intellectual or ‘noetic’ approach (chapter IV) seeks to grasp being in its unity. Here the author considers the different senses of the term ‘abstraction’. He also shows how Guérard des Laurier’s thought compares and contrasts with that of Heidegger and Maritain. The author insists that the mental act by which we give a content to the term ‘being’ must involve the first two ‘operations of the mind’, namely, simple apprehension and judgement. Maritain’s theory of an ‘intuition of being’ is partly rejected (e.g. p. 244); it would have been interesting to learn what the author would have said of Maritain’s development of his theory in the late work *Approches sans Entraves*.

The ‘sapiential’ approach to being (chapter V) builds on the two preceding chapters, arguing that our experience of the ways in which being is ‘instantiated’, put in the light of what we can grasp of the *ratio entis*, opens the horizons to new questions (p. 269). In particular, the *limitation* which being always presents in our experience, though not in its own *ratio*, leaves the mind unsatisfied. Naturally, then, this last chapter considers the existence of God, the knowledge of this truth being presented as the summit of metaphysics. The author is particularly attentive to the question of how we come to grasp the ‘self-evident’ principles to which St Thomas appeals in this respect, for example, that ‘whatever is moved is moved by another’ (pp. 282ff).

The first two chapters of this book are devoted to a study of the human mind and its varied approaches to reality. The author insists on the phrase, *mens capax entis* (p. 45), as the philosophical equivalent of the theological phrase, *mens capax Dei*. He argues that while the former phrase does not literally appear in the works of St Thomas, it is a faithful summary of his thought (chapter I). He also introduces a favourite theme of Guérard des Lauriers, that of a tripartite distinction of the *manner* of human knowing, independent of the area of knowledge (pp. 54ff). Whereas the Thomist tradition tends to concentrate on the distinction between understanding (in simple apprehension and judgement) and reasoning, Guérard argued that there is a third, irreducible component in the mind’s grasp of reality, what he calls *le sens de la question*, which we might translate as ‘having the knack of asking the interesting questions’. The author defends the thesis that this third component, (also called by Guérard ‘pneumatism’, from *pneuma*), consists in a knowledge of being by connaturality and manifests itself most clearly in what is called genius. The author defends this thesis with interesting citations

from scientists and artists; the current reviewer, however, is unsure that 'pneumatic knowledge' need be considered an operation of the mind really distinct from simple apprehension and judgement.

The theory of 'pneumatism' is explained at greater length in chapter II, where it is argued that it has 'beauty' for its proper object. 'The efficacious means of [scientific] discovery', the author writes, 'is a certain sensibility to intelligible beauty' (p. 106). This leads to an original investigation of the place of beauty among the other transcendentals, with the suggestion that it is best defined as 'the actual shining forth of the communicability of being', or *ens ut communicans*.

This dense and meditative book concludes with three important appendices which reveal the depth of the author's knowledge of the *corpus* of St Thomas. The first and third are statistical analyses of 'the vocabulary of being' in the writings of the angelic doctor. Among other things, they reveal the presence in Aquinas' work of phrases that might have been attributed to a later scholasticism such as *natura entitatis*. The second appendix, which occupies 97 pages, contains translation of all the passages in St Thomas's writings which contain the phrase *ratio entis*, or cognate expressions.

The author enjoys a wide command not only of the actual texts of St Thomas but also of the relevant contemporary literature, in English, French and Italian. A concern for scientific precision is dominant throughout, but the book is also marked by an awareness that a well-founded, realist metaphysics must prevail in a society for the sake of the moral and cultural good of its members. Finally, this book is written in a rhetorical style proper to the French philosophical tradition that the English reader may well find daunting, at times; but if he perseveres, he will have received a thorough induction into 'the mystery of being'.

THOMAS CREAN OP

CHESTERTON AND THE ROMANCE OF ORTHODOXY – THE MAKING OF GKC 1874–1908 by William Oddie, *Oxford University Press*, 2008, pp. 416, £25 hbk

William Oddie's *Chesterton and the Romance of Orthodoxy* is a new biography of G.K.Chesterton covering the first thirty-four years of his life (he died in 1936). Oddie chooses 1908 as his end date because it saw the appearance of two of GKC's major works, *Orthodoxy* and *The Man who Was Thursday*. For Oddie, the former in particular was also a key moment in Chesterton's intellectual and spiritual formation: 'The publication of *Orthodoxy* was the end of a journey. It was both the conclusion of a process of self-discovery and the key document . . . in which he assessed not only where he now stood but how it was that his journey had followed the course that it did.'

Indeed, the idea that Chesterton's 'intellectual discovery comes to a fairly clear *terminus ad quem* in 1908 with *Orthodoxy*' is the central theme of this book. This is a new and important claim in Chesterton studies; others might disagree. Chesterton himself stated that the major turning point in his life was the Marconi Scandal of 1913, which ended his faith in the Liberal Party and which nearly destroyed his brother Cecil. Another key date was of course his reception into the Catholic Church in 1922, which inspired a sonnet that is one of his greatest poems. Indeed, *Chesterton and the Romance of Orthodoxy* is more a monograph on its author's key subject rather than a traditional biography as is explained in the introduction: 'My study is inevitably organised and written in biographical form, but there are differences to be noted from the biographies which have so far appeared. A general biography must inevitably be a kind of catch-all, organising