

THOMAS D'AQUIN: SOMME THÉOLOGIQUE. Tomes 1 and 2. Paris, Cerf, 1984. pp. 966 and 827. Price not given.

There cannot be any real knowledge of the theological (and philosophical) thought of the Middle Ages without study of the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas. But there are obviously people who would like to acquire such knowledge but who are unable to cope easily with medieval Latin, or with the Latin language at all. In this country there is the fine multi-volume translation, with the original Latin text, edited by the Dominican Fathers and furnished with valuable introductions, notes and appendices. In France the needs of would-be students of medieval theology are being met by the publication of a four-volume French translation (without the Latin text), the translation being accompanied not only by explanatory footnotes but also by introductions both to the *Summa Theologiae* in general and to each of the main treatises. To secure consistency there is only one translator, Father A.-M. Roguet, and one overall coordinator, Father A. Raulin. The introductions, however, are by a variety of authors. The two volumes which appeared in 1984 cover between them the first part and the first part of the second part (*Prima Secundae*) of St. Thomas's work. The other two volumes, scheduled to appear in 1985, will cover the second part of the second part and the third part. For reasons explained in the text the so-called 'Supplement' is omitted.

At the beginning of the first volume Father M. -J. Nicolas provides an account of the life and work of St. Thomas, an extended treatment of his characteristic theses, valuable 'vocabulary' (explanations of technical terms employed by St. Thomas), and other introductory material. Short accounts of writers mentioned by St. Thomas in his *Summa* are supplied by Edith Neyrand. The authors of the introductions and notes have in mind explanation, elucidation, rather than argument on behalf of this or that theological or philosophical position.

The volumes are handsomely produced, a credit to the publishers. The text of the translation is printed in two columns on each page and is easy to read. As for the footnotes, the print is inevitably small, and as the lines go across the whole page, it is not so easy for the eye to follow. At the same time, the convenience of having the footnotes on the relevant pages, rather than grouped together at the ends of volumes, far outweighs any disadvantage.

This French edition of the *Summa Theologiae* is undoubtedly a valuable instrument for students of medieval thought in general and of St. Thomas's thought in particular. It is a labour of love, and one wishes it lasting success.

FREDERICK C. COPLESTON, SJ

JESUS: WHO HE IS—AND HOW WE KNOW HIM by E.L. Mascall. Darton, Longman and Todd, 1986, pp. 56. £1.95.

This is a very brief book dealing with a vast and complex problem. The sense of its brevity is enhanced by the fact that so much of it is a reiteration in small compass of things that have already come from Dr Mascall's pen in the course of the last thirty years. Thus Chapter 2 (in praise of Professor Moule) covers the same ground in much the same form as *Whatever Happened to the Human Mind?* pp. 55ff. Chapter 3 attacks the methodology of New Testament scholars (cf. *Theology and the Gospel of Christ* Ch. 1), Braithwaite (cf. *Words and Images* Ch. 3), van Buren (cf. *The Secularisation of Christianity* Ch. 2) and Lampe (cf. *Whatever Happened to the Human Mind?* pp. 97 ff.). The same quotations and the same arguments are brought together here *in nuce*.

For anyone who has read Dr Mascall's earlier works, nothing new is forthcoming. But the more significant question is: Is the point that Dr Mascall wants to make so important and so valid that we should welcome its repetition in this way? The basic conviction on which he wants to insist is that Christian faith is belief in the Jesus who

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lived 2,000 years ago and who now lives, in his risen and glorified human nature, and speaks in his body, the Church. This faith, he believes, is being denied by much modern theological scholarship. At the root of that denial is the arbitrary, anti-supernaturalist bias of most recent and contemporary New Testament scholars. (The 'docility' of Professor Moule towards the New Testament material, said to be shared by Dr Hengel and Canon Harvey, is seen as a shining exception). The conflicting conclusions to which the methods of critical New Testament scholarship lead ought to have persuaded even the scholars themselves of the errors of their ways.

Dr Mascall is undoubtedly right about the inconsistencies and mutual contradictions between the varied findings of New Testament scholarship, particularly about the life and teaching of Jesus. He is also, I believe, right in his view that Christian theologians have not been very successful in coming to terms with that phenomenon. This is a difficult and disturbing problem which he is right to keep on about. But what he offers as a solution appears to be a return to a pre-critical confessional reading of the New Testament. To give one example, is it a responsible way of meeting those who 'would explain away the resurrection as involving less than the literal raising of the physical body of Jesus' to cite Lk. 24:42–3, Jn. 20:27 and Acts 10:41 without any discussion either of their position within the developing tradition or of other New Testament texts (p. 47)?

No doubt some of the problems many Christians feel about the significance of Jesus for their faith—about 'who he is' and 'how we know him'—are self-inflicted. But not all. And unless someone has felt the reality element in those problems, in a way which Dr Mascall does not appear to have done, he is not going to have much of help to offer towards finding a way through them.

MAURICE WILES

GOD OF CHANCE, BY D.H. Bartholomew. London. SCM Press Ltd. 1984. pp. ix + 181, £5.95.

David Bartholomew is Professor of Statistical and Mathematical Science at the L.S.E., and his treatment from a Christian standpoint of the problems raised for talk of divine plans and purposes in the world by the existence of random processes in nature is much to be welcomed. It is generally accepted that many physical processes at the sub-atomic level are indeterministic; that is, they are such that they might turn out one way or another, and there is nothing in any prior state of affairs which determines the outcome in any way. Crucially, it appears that the gene mutations which are at the bottom of evolutionary development are of this sort. Many, notably Jacques Monod in *Chance and Necessity*, have concluded that randomness in evolutionary development rules out all talk of a divine plan for this earth and this species, because God could not have known how living species would have developed.

Monod, is, of course, wrong. Even though randomness at the sub-atomic level makes it impossible for precise predictions of future events to be made on the basis of physical law, randomness in itself does not preclude the possibility of God directing the physically random process either wholly or in part so as to ensure that his purposes for the world are fulfilled. What Bartholomew argues, however, is rather more interesting than postulating the mere possibility of a God pulling the strings behind physical randomness, a picture he is inclined to deny in any case. He shows that in a number of different types of case chance at one level of matter does not preclude predictability and purpose at another. Certain types of pattern, such as the even spread of paint over flat surfaces, are best achieved by random spraying. The behaviour of gas clouds is entirely predictable, though the movement of individual molecules is unpredictable. More controversially, he cites the biological arguments of Prigogine, Eigen and Winkler, that given the basic properties of matter in the world, the evolution of life was highly probable somewhere in the universe. I would have liked more detail on this than

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