

More seriously, some statements are quite debatable. Pollard's brief presentation of the relations between the papacy and France at the beginning of the century is almost caricatural (p.11). His interpretation (p.65) of Della Chiesa's attitude when elected by the conclave is rather naive (if faith was the reason for his acceptance of the papal tiara, what about the other popes?). His account of the reasons behind the creation of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Church fails to highlight the most crucial factor of all: the imminent collapse of the Ottoman and Austrian empires (p.195). His suggestion that it was the shortness of Benedict's reign that prevented him from achieving more spectacular results might not stand up to a comparison with other popes with similarly short reigns, like Sixtus V or John XXIII. Finally, was the stronger international position of the Holy See in 1922 due effectively to Benedict and Gasparri's diplomacy (whose peace plans had been contemptuously rejected by all the belligerent parties) or to the international situation itself and the need for moral leadership after the great slaughter of WWI and the emerging threat of Bolshevism?

The reader should watch out for a few other difficulties. *Non expedit* was handed down in 1874 and not in 1864 as written (p. 171, presumably a typographical error and not confusion with the *Syllabus*). There is also an evident lack of precision on the status of Alsace-Lorraine after the Great War (p.156). One surprising absence in the bibliography is that of Emile Poulat on *La Sapinière*.

This book gives the impression of having been too quickly written. It is sometimes too obviously partial when opposing the conservative Pius X or the cunning Pius XI to the good and pious Benedict XV. It can be recommended as an introductory book for students, even if not really adding anything new. For scholars of the papacy, Benedict XV remains as unknown as ever.

ALBERT LAVIGNE

PHILOSOPHER AT WORK by Yves Simon, edited by Anthony O. Simon, Rowland and Littlefield, Maryland, 1999. Pp. xiii + 219; \$22.95 pbk.

Yves Simon, who died in 1961, is a Thomist of the classic tradition. In this volume of essays, newly collected by his son, one discovers both his familiarity with St. Thomas and the great commentators such as Cajetan and John of St. Thomas, and also the originality with which he meditates upon their insights. The prose is demanding, but exact, with many illuminating turns of phrase. Although Simon's best-known work is in the field of political philosophy, these essays treat principally metaphysics and the philosophy of nature.

Two great themes run through this book: the hierarchy of knowledge and the *mystery* of knowing. With regard to the first, the author praises Jacques Maritain for having surmounted the Wolffian division of the sciences that had dogged the Thomist revival in the nineteenth century and for having recovered the correct understanding of the philosophy of nature—which for Wolff had been a branch of metaphysics—by locating it on the same rung of abstraction as the

other natural sciences. For Simon, if Kant was the first person to give an 'epistemological charter' to the sciences of phenomena, Maritain was the first to give them a justification which owes nothing to idealism. Elsewhere, he warns against the tendency to conflate mathematics and logic, arguing convincingly that mathematics has a truth of its own which may be reduced neither to conformity with nature nor to mere inner consistency.

Simon's reflections on the variety of forms of knowledge are supplemented by a discussion of culture. Culture, he observes, presupposes the moral and intellectual *habitus*, but adds to them a certain refinement, subtlety and charm—it is 'a bush of *habitus* in bloom'. Yet he warns against the perversion of seeking the latter element for its own sake, declaring that not the possession of culture but the knowledge of truth is the cure for the ills of the modern world.

With regard to the mystery of knowledge, a long and fascinating 'Essay on Sensation' makes one realise how little is understood of this first source of our thinking. The author makes clear the impossibility of supposing that sense-knowledge can be identified with any physical or chemical change, insisting on the particularly Thomist doctrine of the 'intentional presence' of objects *on the sense organs themselves*, and ponders the question of how such an effect can possibly be produced by material things. Simon draws attention to a pregnant remark in the *De Potentia* that it is 'by contact with and participation in the order of separate substances' that bodies can give rise to sensations. He also usefully disentangles the *philosophia perennis* from outdated science by noting that in the past 'sensible species' have been burdened with tasks belonging in reality to things—thus before the advent of molecular theory, they were used to explain the rapid diffusion of smells or the passage of sound through a wall. More refined methods of research have helped, he believes, to purify the notion of species and reduce the chance of envisaging them, even subconsciously, as things.

The final chapter, 'To Be and To Know', returns to the question of intentional presence. The author insists on the fundamental difference between two types of union, that which generates a new thing, a *tertium quid*, and that peculiar to knowledge, whereby the subject becomes the object while remaining itself. Following St. Thomas, Simon praises Averroes for seeing this latter as the most intimate of unions, for here the two that are joined are free from involvement in any third thing. On a final, challenging note, he concludes that there are, corresponding to these two unions, two ways to seek knowledge itself. One can either seek it for the sake of a *tertium quid*, covetously, 'as if it were a form designed to produce the universally admired compound, the learned man'; or one can seek it disinterestedly, in the same way that we are called to love God 'by friendship for the object'. Certainly all these essays, if one may say so, are encouragements to do the latter.

THOMAS CREAM OP