

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THOMAS AQUINAS: INTRODUCTORY READINGS, edited by Christopher Martin. *Routledge*, London and New York, 1988. Pp. 201. No price given.

Christopher Martin is right to say that 'St Thomas ... needs to be read in bulk but understood in detail' (p. 1). It often happens that those who come to him for the first time are lost simply because they have no general grasp of his intellectual world (his 'system', if you like); and they need this before they can get on with the business of tackling particular passages in his writings. There is therefore a need for a book which introduces Aquinas's basic ideas and then allows the reader to see them at work in representative passages.

This book seems to me to fulfil that need. Dr. Martin concentrates only on what would normally be judged to be exclusively philosophical material, so he has not given us a comprehensive tool by which one can get into St Thomas as a whole. But he has given us a good selection of philosophical texts plus clear and judicious prefaces to them. And the result is certainly more useful than the comparable Thomas Gilby edition of Aquinas's philosophical writings (London, 1951). Gilby's selection is generous, but it is fragmentary and it lacks the necessary expository content which Martin ably supplies. An additional virtue of Martin's text is that its extracts are mainly from works which are not easily available in English. At a time when many prospective readers of Aquinas have little or no Latin, this is something for which teachers, at least, can be grateful. And all readers of Martin's text will benefit from the fact that it is produced in the light of an awareness of contemporary philosophical problems. If philosophers are now to be persuaded that Aquinas is worth reading, they will need to be shown that Aquinas has things to say about issues which currently concern them. Martin's introductions and selections show that this is indeed the case. This may be because, as Martin himself acknowledges, he is much influenced by P.T. Geach, who has done more than most to write about Aquinas with an informed eye on philosophy as it is currently practised (in Britain and the States, anyway).

The book covers five areas: (a) Logic, (b) Metaphysics (existence, potentiality and actuality, form and individual, substance, change, matter and form, individuation, essence, natures, necessity), (c) God, (d) Truth, Knowledge and the Mind, and (e) Ethics. As well as Martin's introductions to these topics, there is also a Latin-English Glossary, an English-Latin Glossary, and some notes on reading. The translations seem quite acceptable to me, but I think it a pity that Martin does not include the text of the Five Ways, albeit that this is already much anthologized. I also regret that he has not included something by Aquinas on divine simplicity (an essential part of his philosophy of God and a live issue in contemporary philosophy of religion) and something on specific divine attributes (from which readers of Aquinas will learn much about his views on topics ranging beyond the interest of theology alone). But a selection, after all, is a selection, and one has to draw the line somewhere. More to be regretted, perhaps, is the fact that, while Martin's thematic introductions are printed in a standard size type for modern books, the extracts from Aquinas come in an annoyingly small print, which, I suspect, will irritate readers. The notes on reading are also too skimpy in the light of the many recent and valuable works on Aquinas that have appeared. Mention could well have been made of the studies by David Burrell, John Wippel, Ralph McInerney, Joseph Owens, Mark Jordan and Michael Dodds. Beginners should also surely be told about the work of Gilson, Pieper, Lonergan and Van Steenberghe. It might also have been noted that James Weisheipl's *Friar Thomas d'Aquino* (Oxford and New York, 1974) is now available with substantial corrections and additions (Washington, 1983), that Kripke (referred to by Martin on several occasions) is chiefly relevant to readers of Aquinas because of his book *The Nature of Necessity* (Oxford, 1980), and that what Martin alludes to only as Kenny's 'book on the five ways' (p. 100) is *The Five Ways* (London, 1969).

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