

to express "new" things', is one of the most valuable sections of the book. It can no longer be held that Christian Latin 'began' in North Africa; in any case, 'this special idiom . . . is oecumenical, for the differences between Africa and Rome are insignificant. This same idiom, which was later to appear in Spain and Gaul . . . was gradually hammered out as the story of the Gospel and the fundamentals of the Christian faith began to be communicated by bilingual speakers to monoglot Latin converts.' Referring to the 'obligatory constituents' of this special Christian idiom, Professor Palmer notes that 'Augustine's conversion entailed a linguistic conversion'. He has much else to say about St Augustine and Tertullian. On the latter he remarks: 'The "father of Christian Latin", in Schrijnen's sense, he may not have been. Shall we say rather that he took a promising child, fostered it, and endowed it with riches which made it master of a new mental and spiritual world?'

The second part of the volume (pp. 209-341)—a comparative-historical grammar of Latin—consists of sections on phonology, morphology and syntax. There is a short bibliography and a useful appendix of archaic Latin texts taken from epigraphic and literary sources. Two indices are provided—a subject index and an index of Latin words.

I. LL. FOSTER

CREATIVE INTUITION IN ART AND POETRY. By Jacques Maritain.

Based on the Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, National Gallery of Arts, Washington. (Harvill Press; 42s.)

In their broad outlines the ideas summed up in M. Maritain's 'poetic intuition' are not new. 'Enthusiasm', 'mimesis', 'imagination', 'the objective correlative', are all terms which can be seen to point towards, and to be contained within, his philosophy of poetry. Yet there was commonly an aura of imprecision about them, a suggestion of the supernatural or of mania, as if the poet were perhaps only a medium for non-natural revelations. M. Maritain has not dispelled the mystery, but he has captured it within his illuminating definitions, and shown that poetry is a proper, and indeed the supreme natural, activity of the human spirit. So clearly does he demonstrate this in his philosophical and psychological enquiry, which reviews the achievements of both Eastern and Western art, that his claim that 'poetry is the *heaven* of the working reason' becomes almost self-evident. However I would suggest that, since here there is no question of the supernatural, it might have been more accurate to refer to poetry as the *Eden* of human reason.

The definition of poetry as 'that intercommunication between the inner being of things and the inner being of the human Self which is a kind of divination' (p. 3), suggests an activity proper to man in the state of innocence and integrity, to Adam 'naming' the creatures of God, or to children. For it implies a transcendence of the self-centred ego; and the power of communing with Things as sacraments of being, which speak at once the mysteries of the universe and of the human soul. Integrity is its first characteristic:

'reason's intuitive grasping, *intuitus rationis*, is the primary act and function of that one and single power which is called intellect or reason. . . . (In poetry) we enter the nocturnal empire of a primeval activity of the intellect which, far beyond concepts and logic, exercises itself in vital connection with imagination and emotion.' (pp. 75-6.) Innocence is the correlative characteristic, for the realm of poetic knowledge is absolutely remote from that of moral choice, and there Things, transformed into image and symbol, obey only the laws of their own being, as they do in the mind of God: '*Si che vostr' arte a Dio quasi é nipote*'.

This account of poetry throws light upon a great many of the perennial problems of art, on the nature of inspiration, the proper importance of technique, the 'use' of poetry, the relation of art to morality, the irrelevance of 'standards of taste'. One point of topical importance is that it suggests that poetry, far from being an esoteric occupation, is ideally an activity for everyman. Here we encounter the strange and humbling fact that modern art and poetry, to which M. Maritain pays tribute for their unique achievements in discovering and penetrating and setting free the mystery of poetic knowledge, flourished in a society which is dehumanized and profoundly hostile to things of the spirit. Its position therefore is ambiguous, for their anguished and chaos-dominated works are a symptom of the present urgency of the perpetual crisis of the human spirit, and at the same time they are symbols of the resources of the spirit, insisting upon a way of return to spiritual vitality. This does not mean that poetry is a religion, nor even a substitute for religion. Yet without poetry even religion may be less efficacious, for the natural well-being of the spirit may be a pre-requisite for supernatural activity.

Because *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* is a supremely wise book, and the summation of M. Maritain's extensive and penetrating investigations into the nature of art and poetry, a reviewer cannot hope even to indicate the range and depth of its wisdom. Of course the doyen of neo-thomist philosophy has no need of recommendation or praise, yet this work cannot be taken for granted, for it is the seal and crown which raises his thought to the state of enduring and seminal

wisdom. Possibly this illumination of the obscure realms of poetic intuition will prove to be his most truly original contribution to the perennial philosophy.

The cost of the book is justified by the fine production and liberal illustration, as well as by the intrinsic value. It is unfortunate, however, that the plates are not in colour, since a paraphrase is a poor substitute for the poetry, and this work deserves nothing less than the best.

DAVID MOODY

A NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY FOR ENGLISH READERS. By R. A. Knox. Vol. II, The Acts of the Apostles, St Paul's Letters to the Churches. (Burns Oates & Washbourne.)

When I looked over the remarks I had jotted down as I was reading this book, I observed that for Acts and Romans they were mostly adverse, while for I Corinthians onwards they were nearly all favourable. The reason is less a change in the quality of Mgr Knox's commentary—though perhaps his notes on Romans *are* the least successful part of the book—than in my own notion of what sort of commentary it was meant to be. I began reading it with the idea that it was a work of exegesis, which should expound the fullest and deepest meaning of the sacred text. I was of course disappointed. Why, the longest of the introductions to each book in turn is a bare two pages, and everyone knows that the heart of an exegete's work is his introductions. So I blamed my disappointment on the author, and picked on those points in his commentary which gave me a peg to hang it on. But by the end of Acts I couldn't withhold a grudging admiration for his treatment of their chronology, that most tedious and bewildering of subjects, and for his convincing thesis of St Paul's unrecorded travels in Macedonia between Beroea and Athens (Acts 17, 14). By the time I reached I Corinthians, I was in full palinode.

For the truth is that Mgr Knox undertakes much more humble a task in this book than exegesis properly so called. He does not make it his business *ex professo* to expound the profundities of the text, but to explain its obscurities. He is providing the educated, but in these matters unlearned, English reader of his N.T. translation with the translator's footnotes, which contain material on the text, and the language, and the historical setting, that will help him to assimilate the full meaning of the New Testament for himself.

To this ground-clearing work the author brings great ingenuity, a just imagination, and above all a very nice sense of the Greek language, especially the Greek of St Paul. Note for example his suggestion of what the precise meaning of 'faith' is, in the 'measure of faith' and the