

throw up useful insights for understanding both a particular type of Marxism and Karl Barth's ethics. Scripture as a living body is necessarily bound up with present concerns and we read it but order that we come to contemporary issues with an understanding of the reality of God's action in this world.

Volf is well versed not only in the Scriptures, the theological and philosophical tradition (as one would hope from Yale's Henry B. Wright Professor of Systematic Theology) but also contemporary writing in the fields of economics, sociology and psychology to name just a few. Consequently, his detailed footnotes send the reader to new and fascinating places to explore. In addition, the variety of Scriptural sources employed across a wealth of contemporary topics, including economics, inter-religious relations and political society is evidence of the relevance of the Bible today that Volf argues for.

Resurgence in the theological reading of Scripture is underway in contemporary theology and it is to be hoped that this short collection, which touches many topics that affect modern life, will encourage more work in every area of theology to read Scripture as a the site of God's revelation to current issues today. Beyond academic theology, hopefully this collection of powerful essays will be testament enough to the contemporary relevance of scriptural thinking that the Word of God will be opened up to new hearers.

A.D.R. HAYES

AQUINAS'S NOTION OF PURE NATURE AND THE CHRISTIAN INTEGRALISM OF HENRI DE LUBAC. NOT EVERYTHING IS GRACE, by Bernard Mulcahy, O. P., Peter Lang, New York, 2011, pp. ix + 246, £ 46.40 hbk

This book, which appears in the series 'American University Studies', is a contribution to the current revival of the Cajetanian thesis that nature cannot have an ontological orientation ('innate appetite') for grace – over against the famous (and highly influential) contrary reading of the texts of St Thomas by the late Cardinal Henri de Lubac.

The author proceeds in the following way. First of all, he introduces the concept of pure nature in words taken from Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange – 'nature with its intrinsic constituent principles and such as follow from them or are due to them', and explains his use of the word 'integralism', which is not to be confused with 'integrism' – though it is not utterly distinct from it either. 'Integralism' denotes a unitary view of the nature-grace relationship put forward by those who wish to see a 'culturally unified [Christian] society'. In the succeeding chapter it is shown how pervasive in biblical and patristic sources is the vocabulary of 'nature' and 'world' over against 'grace' and 'Church'. We are then introduced to the principal protagonists: de Lubac himself who is treated with respect yet whose thesis is judged plainly wrong; John Milbank whose 'Radical Orthodoxy' shows in what straits integralism can land us; and St Thomas, in whose work nature, like the month of June in the Rodgers and Hammerstein song, is 'bustin' out all over', but most characteristically in reflections on mortality, the infused virtues (and gifts), Limbo, the exercise of kingship, the natural law, and the sciences in their autonomy vis-à-vis *sacra doctrina*.

In an intermezzo, Father Mulcahy dons the historian's cap and seeks to offer us an alternative genealogy for the emergence of an anti-Christian secularism in the life of the eldest daughter of the Church: an alternative, that is, to any version of the emergence of a post-Christian France (or Europe) which would incriminate *natura pura* somewhere along the way.

Despite the excellence of much of the exposition, I have several difficulties with this book. The first is that a great deal of its material, both in its pre-history

of pure nature and its exegesis of Aquinas, is simply not *ad rem*. De Lubac had no objections to the philosophical use of the term 'nature' or to the common-sense use of the word by plain persons. Nor did he dispute the existence of natural structures within the graced totality of the Christian person or the Christian city. In *A Brief Catechesis on Nature and Grace* he described it in fact as 'sophistry' to espy naturalism in 'every explanation of man in which the word "nature" appears'. (Certainly, however, the theology of Limbo in Thomas is problematic for de Lubac, 'an embarrassing case', as he called it.)

This brings me to my second difficulty. The diligence with which St Thomas's thought is expounded is not paralleled in the treatment of de Lubac's ideas. This may be because the dual focus on de Lubac and Milbank left the author with insufficient space. It may be because the spectre of Milbank as the 'heir' (but how legitimately?) of de Lubac drew prematurely ahead the author's intellectual gaze. Or it may be that, assured of the truth of the interpretation of Thomas in the commentatorial tradition of the Renaissance and later, he simply lacked the sympathy needed for the task. Whatever the cause, one could hardly credit from his account that in *Surnaturel* – the book which started this whole controversy off – de Lubac could write of the supernatural that 'its achievement lies farther beyond the powers of our human nature than a miracle surpasses the powers of the physical agents found in material nature'. In the light of this citation alone it is apparent that Mulcahy's anti-Lubacian argument from Thomas's teaching on the infused virtues and the gifts (if our intellectual nature had an innate appetite for the supernatural we should need neither aid) hits the nail – in words of Herbert McCabe – firmly on the side.

It seems indicative that, to judge by the bibliography, and a (no doubt fallible) scanning of the notes, Mulcahy has not made use of the principal examination of Thomas's texts by a Lubacian: Jorge Laporta's 1966 work *La Destinée de la nature humaine selon saint Thomas d'Aquin*. For those who read French I would strongly recommend the carefully argued review of this work by Marie-Michel Labourdette, O. P., in the *Revue Thomiste* of that year. We are not naturally in potency to the vision of God (as more than First Cause of the world). And yet it is nevertheless true that our capacity is such that only that vision can abundantly fill it (Labourdette's verb here is *comblér*). Labourdette – well-known for his defence of Thomism against its detractors in the crisis which climaxed in the promulgation of *Humani generis* – links this second claim to the biblical and patristic doctrine of the imagehood of God in man. It was by coming to St Thomas from Scripture and the Fathers rather than via the later commentators that de Lubac was able to make his breakthrough – even if he underestimated (often, not always) the heuristic value of the *concept* of pure nature for underlining the heterogeneity of nature and grace.

My third difficulty is less an objection and more a sense of unease. In his *Natura Pura* Professor Steven Long is at pains to argue that the commentatorial doctrine is not a 'stalking-horse for secularism'. Father Mulcahy seems to have no such anxieties about the recognition of an 'autonomous secular sphere'. In point of fact, Long can only show that even a theonomous account of the intrinsic constituent principles of human nature can produce a city built on natural religion. With Mulcahy, whose wide-lens picture of our nature does not emphasize theonomy, we are even further from Christendom. Actually, Christendom is only feasible as civic religion if, as Chesterton wrote in *The Everlasting Man*, (human) nature is 'always looking for the supernatural'. As Père Jean-Pierre Torrell has pointed out, *fallen* human nature (which is also nature without grace) may be expected to harbour, if not exhibit, the relic of its once graced condition, in subterranean longing for intimacy with God.

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