

REVIEWS

ignorance or prejudice. Then there are his useful brief introductions and notes to each individual psalm. Stout and burgher-like rather is the publication of the noble Bonn syndicate: *DAS BUCH DER PSALMEN*, übersetzt und erklärt von Dr. Heinrich Herkenne (Peter Hanstein Verlagsbuchhandlung, Bonn; RM. 14.50). Yet with all its learning and dogged textual analysis and criticism it is genially written. Undoubtedly the book to cling to now if one were reduced to a single volume of Catholic commentary on the Psalms. For foreigners it is irksome that a good part of the introduction should be devoted to difficulties that any Catholic unspoiled by Nazi propaganda can solve satisfactorily for himself. However, there are more than 400 pages of pure commentary. The serious weakness of the book is that it takes hardly any account *explicitly* of the conclusions of other scholars.

The lectures that form the booklet called *THE CASE FOR MIRACLE*, by Clement F. Rogers, M.A. (S.P.C.K.; 2/-) were declaimed eight times under the trees in Hyde Park. They are appropriately lucid, manly and honest. First for the *a priori* possibility of miracles, then for the historic credibility of the Resurrection and the Virgin Birth, a case is made out that many a loungeer must have heard for the first time and accepted gladly. If there were any of the better informed who drifted up in time to catch, let us say, this remark: "Perhaps as good a definition [of a miracle] as we can get is 'an event in physical nature which makes unmistakably plain the presence and direct action of God working for a moral end,'" and so stalked off in disgust—then they were very unlucky. It is wise to master the science of biblical archaeology as the separate subject that it is. The ground is then cleared for exegetical manoeuvres. A very alive and expert introduction to the subject is to be found in a recent publication belonging to the *Bibliothèque Catholique des Sciences Religieuses* series of manuals: *PRECIS D'ARCHAEOLOGIE BIBLIQUE*, by A. G. Barrois, O.P. (Bloud et Gay). The purpose of this study is very neatly defined by a reviewer in the *Revue Biblique* as being to "recréer, à l'aide du monument étudié en lui-même et mis en relations avec les institutions auxquelles il se réfère, le milieu où vécurent les Anciens." RICHARD KEHOE, O.P.

MEDIAEVAL STUDIES

The fourteenth century thinkers are still very little known. Their formalism, their multiplication of distinctions and sub-distinctions which involve and obscure their thought, the bitter controversies which give the impression that they indulge in criticism rather for argument's sake than because they have something worth saying, and even their abstruse and decadent

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language, are some of the hindrances to a closer acquaintance with them.

These difficulties, however, did not deter Professor Paul Vignaux. He assures us that once the attempt has been made, and an increasing familiarity with the texts has been gained, some light begins to glimmer and the real meaning of doctrines hidden under abstruse formulae is seized, and what at first glance seemed a barren class-exercise or a kind of dialectical jest, now takes shape and life, and, under a form often repulsive to our modern taste, one discovers coherent and deep thought.

Prof. Vignaux's attention has been drawn to the vital problems of justification and predestination, and his researches confined to four of the most renowned among the fourteenth century theologians: John Duns Scotus, Peter Aureoli, William of Ockham and Gregory of Rimini. Both the problems and theologians who treated of them proved to be of outstanding consequence in the light of subsequent controversies and from the part played in the intellectual formation of Martin Luther.

To discover how these problems are connected and work together as a whole, and to grasp something of the great spiritual interests that were at stake among fourteenth century thinkers, is the object of the book under review.¹ The starting point is the opinion proposed by the Master of the Sentences, Peter the Lombard, Book I, Distinction XVII, identifying charity with the Holy Ghost, a view unanimously rejected by theologians, but which gave them the opportunity of inquiring into the proper notion of justification. Prof. Vignaux analyzes with penetrating acumen the nature of justification considered in itself as expounded by Scotus, Aureoli, Ockham and Ariminensis. He points out the capital importance of the distinction of the *potentia Dei absoluta* and *potentia Dei ordinata*, introduced in the question at issue by Duns Scotus and which commanded subsequently all discussions. He then passes to the connected problem of predestination. By justification man receives charity, a *habitus infusus*, enabling him to merit eternal life. God confers grace disposing the soul for everlasting glory. But St. Paul says: *Cuius vult miseretur Deus, et quem vult indurat*. How must we understand these fearful words of the Apostle? Why are some predestined and others not? Does God's choice depend only on His own will, or does it presuppose man's acts? *Utrum aliquod sit meritum obdurationis et misericordiae?* Here we touch that tremendous and profound mystery of predestination.

¹ P. VIGNAUX: *Justification et Prédestination au XIVe Siècle: Duns Scot, Pierre D'Auriole, Guillaume d'Occam, Grégoire de Rimini.* (Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes-Études, Sciences Religieuses, XLVIIIe volume.) (Leroux, Paris; pp. 193.)

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We wish we could outline Prof. Vignaux's analyses, so acute, so illuminating, and often so new and always just and sound. But if we want to sum up in one word the position of these theologians we may perhaps say that in Duns Scotus God's action is characterized by a liberality without injustice; in Peter Aureoli, justice not without gratuity; in William of Ockham, pure gratuity; and in Gregory of Rimini, pity and compassion. Scotus and Aureoli have in common the effort of the theologian who strives to understand and explain God's action; Ockham is convinced of the contrary, for him such attempt is vain: God's ways are incomprehensible and inexplicable; while according to Gregory of Rimini we must not pretend to utter save what Holy Scriptures and the Saints tell us.

The problem of the mediæval sources of Luther had been stated for the first time, with his well-known vigour, by H. Denifle, O.P., in his *Luther und Luthertum in der ersten Entwicklung*, an epoch-making work which aroused many heated controversies especially among Protestants. Prof. Vignaux abstains from dealing explicitly with this topic: "*on ne franchit pas, d'un bond, un siècle et demi d'histoire*" (p. 177); yet, one's impression is that the idea has always been in his mind throughout his book. However, in another work, which may well be considered as complementary to the first one, he discusses thoroughly the question of the sources of the Lutheran idea of justification and the influence exercised on it by Nominalist theologians.²

Luther lectured on the *Sentences* at Erfurt in 1509-1510; his marginal notes were preserved, and Prof. Vignaux presents us with an inspiring study of the question of justification. He deals with Luther's teaching as it emerges from his notes, and then he confronts it with that of Duns Scotus and of Nominalist theologians. Luther is extremely severe with Scotus and the Scotists. His opinion of the *frui Trinitate* is judged by Luther as: *error et heresi proxima sententia Scoti qui dicit, quod anima possit una persona frui sine alia*. And again: *Ubi nunc phantasma Scoti de termino formali generationis divinae ex fecibus philosophiae confectum?* Luther's detestation of philosophy, and particularly of Aristotelian philosophy, makes him deny that charity is a *habitus*: "*Quia commentum illud de habitibus opinionem habet ex verbis Aristotelis rancidi philosophi.*" That it comes through Aristotle is ample proof to Luther that it is open to suspicion. To sum up, in spite of himself, Luther is a Nominalist, and to the Nominalist interpretation of the *potentia Dei absoluta*

² *Luther Commentateur des Sentences*. Livre I, Distinction XVII. (Etudes de Philosophie Médiévale, XXI.) (J. Vrin, Paris; 1935; pp. 113-20 Frs.)

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he rallies himself. Ockham's influence on Luther is undeniable. Of no less importance is the discussion on Harnack's view concerning the opinion of Peter Lombard on charity. Harnack sees in the words: *Caritas, id est Spiritus Sanctus*, an *immediation* of the soul with God. Vignaux rightly discards this preposterous interpretation.

These two books are of great merit; moreover, they contain many original views, some of which of course are subject to discussion, but all suggestive of serious reflections; the analysis of doctrines is direct, concise, penetrating; we have no hesitation in recommending them to all serious students.

DANIEL A. CALLUS, O.P.

NOTICES

THE MEANING OF THE MASS. By Rev. John Kearney, C.S.S.P.
(Burns Oates; 5/-.)

Amid the reams of literature appearing about the Mass and all that concerns it a serious lacuna has remained unfilled. We are told about the many theories of the essence of the Holy Sacrifice, and we are shown what to do in its externals, in rubrics, chant or vestments, but we are very seldom taught the fundamental reality of the Mass with a view to moulding our piety and devotion around the true significance of our central act of worship. Fr. Kearney, in attempting to fill this gap, has deserved to be read as well as praised by every Catholic. His task was a difficult one, and we must therefore regret that he made matters harder by adopting an untraditional division between the Mass as a Memorial of the Cross and as a Sacrifice. The faithful would find greater unity in their attention at Mass by considering the Memorial as an essential part of the Sacrifice. Fr. Kearney has, however, adopted the French outlook on the essence of the Mass, and that at least offers scope for a profound piety and devotion. The book's most valuable chapter, with which no one can quarrel, deals with the share of the faithful in the Holy Sacrifice. The more people realize the duty and grandeur of uniting their personal acts of love, obedience, conformity and abandonment to the will of God with the sacrificial act of Our Lord, the more profound and real will be their participation in the Mass as fellow victims and priests with Him. This book should help much in the formation of that idea among the faithful.

C. P.

WITHIN THAT CITY. By Arnold Lunn. (Sheed & Ward, 7/6.)

"That the divine substance manifested itself under the accidents of flesh and blood" (p. 91) is unhappy phrasing, in any