

natural perfection as the near image of God. The more obvious reading is that the possession of reason is itself a gift (*charis*) added to man's natural animal being. The truth is surely that Athanasius is thinking of man as created with his mind in subjection to the Word of God; at the fall this subjection is destroyed and man is no longer truly rational.

The new translations are well done, though accuracy, not grace, is what is aimed at; the translation of Gregory of Nyssa, in particular, bears traces of a struggle with the difficult original. And I cannot believe that Gregory of Nyssa ever said that our spoken word (simply *logos* in the Greek) is one in nature with our mind; the whole argument in the *Catechetical Oration* depends on the manifold meanings of *logos*, which at this point (p. 272) surely means the idea, the mental word.

There are very few printer's errors, though the Semi-Arian Homoousians of page 341 were certainly Homoeousians. The whole volume is beautifully produced and printed, and is a real pleasure to use.

J.S.

ESPÉRANCE ET DÉSESPOIR. By A. M. Carré, O.P. (Les Editions du Cerf.)  
LE CHRÉTIEN ET L'ANGOISSE. By H. Urs von Balthasar. (Desclée de Brouwer.)

SAINTEté AUJOURD'HUI. By Pierre Blanchard. (Études Carmélitaines.)

In following the story of how the truths of faith have developed in the history of the Church it is possible to discern the occasions for this or that point of the faith being made more explicit in response to the challenge of heresy. Less often it can be traced to a prevalent interest in a subject where the Church's faith impinges.

If this is true, it is natural enough that in our own day when one of the fashionable trends in philosophical thought (conveniently if vaguely labelled Existentialism) raises its cry of anguish, Christians should turn their attention more particularly both to the legitimate role of anguish in Christian life and to the theological virtue of hope. Even without an external stimulus to a more profound examination of this theological virtue, the fact that hope has for so long played a Cinderella part in theology (cf. the six questions allotted to the treatise on hope in the *Summa Theologica*, sixteen on faith and twenty-four on charity) and for that matter in preaching, would call for some amends.

Of the books under review Fr Carré's *Espérance et désespoir* makes the most important contribution to the work of reparation. An aspect of the virtue of hope which he develops—one which rarely receives attention—is its social implication. While the concepts of the believing Body of Christ and of the loving members of the Body are familiar, we less often think of the hoping Body. Fr Carré, in preparing the four

lectures which provided the substance of the book, has in mind the intellectual atmosphere of despair of our life, and he distinguishes the areas where a Christian must hope and where he may despair. Perhaps the most pleasing feature of his treatment of the subject is that he has managed to incorporate all that is valuable in St Thomas' treatise on hope without presenting the all too familiar pattern of a summary of St Thomas garnished with quotations from Pascal. What he has to say is made available to all and not only to those familiar with scholasticism and its jargon, though the scholastic may want to complain of a freedom of expression; e.g. it would be possible to understand him to be speaking of hope, as a theological virtue, being grounded in the irascible appetite; a footnote might have indicated the distinctions to be made while leaving the unscholastic unmolested. It was perhaps a mistake to engage in the tiresome wrangle about the possibility of disinterested love. We are not God, we *are* interested in gaining eternal life, so let us admit it freely instead of saying that the reward of hope is no different from the rewarder.

It is not the scant treatment of hope that worries Fr Urs von Balthasar, but the failure of systematic theology to find a place for anguish in its scheme, and in *Le Chrétien et l'angoisse* he has aimed at working to a definition of anguish, starting from the biblical data, mostly to be found in the Sapiential books. It is the biblical theology part of this book which is so good, and even exciting. He sees mankind as beset by the darkness of anguish, a darkness at first neutral, but becoming positive as man turns away from God in sin, or towards God in obedience. The darkness of sin is behind man who has cut himself off from God's help, and man's fear is creative of this darkness in an indefinite progression. But as man faces God, leaving that darkness behind, there is still a darkness of anguish to be faced, a God-created anguish now, an anguish of trial whereby we share the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, and even those who do not experience a dark night of the soul must endure something analogous to it. It is the forbidden darkness of sin which is the foundation of Existentialist philosophy, says Fr von Balthasar, and this anguish is to be resisted, not consented to.

The title of a book by Pierre Blanchard in the *Études Carmélitaines* series—*Sainteté aujourd'hui*—could be misleading. It is not the latter-day saints who fill the foreground, but the literary figures of France during the last two or three decades who have failed to grasp a true understanding of all that is involved in holiness. But despite the failure of Gide, Simone Weil, Saint-Exupéry, etc., to arrive at the truth of the matter, the author of this book sees them preoccupied with a nostalgia for sanctity—the atheists among them protesting too much, while those who nearly became converts and those who failed to keep the

faith were haunted by fragmentary elements of holiness. By contrast Charles du Bos is presented as the man who consented to holiness. This book is highly informative about trends of thought in France, providing summaries and extensive quotations.

STANISLAUS PARKER, O.P.

LA THÉOLOGIE CATHOLIQUE AU MILIEU DU XXI<sup>E</sup> SIÈCLE. By Roger Aubert.

LE RÔLE DU LAÏCAT DANS L'ÉGLISE. By G. Philips. (Casterman; n.p.)

These two books are interesting additions to the excellent series of *Cahiers de l'Actualité religieuse* which already include the notable *Tolérance et communauté humaine*. The first and slighter of the two is based on three lectures given last year in Brussels, and in less than a hundred pages gives a succinct account of the tendencies apparent in Catholic theology over the last fifteen years, especially in the French-speaking countries. Quite rightly, M. Aubert sees this period as a turning point in the history of theology when Catholics are engaged in taking new bearings on the theologian's task and opening up new lines of investigation. The result is a great richness of original work, but at the same time a certain amount of confusion for those embarking on theological studies. The present book should prove an excellent aid for leading the latter into the heart of the theological debate and acquainting him with the four quarters of the contemporary theological world from which that debate is engaged.

Apart from covering most of the ground (one is surprised, however, that the name of Mersch does not occur in this book), M. Aubert is a well-balanced commentator. Nevertheless it is inevitable that a work of this kind should read occasionally like a publisher's catalogue, and that the reader should sometimes feel overwhelmed by so much commendation. A more definite statement of his own views would actually have added to the usefulness of this book. And while one must be grateful to the author for making us *au fait* with the latest developments, it must be admitted that the comparative absence of reference to St Thomas, whose position and authority in modern Catholic theology equals and surpasses that of St Augustine in the middle ages, could prove misleading.

The position of the laity in the Church is one of the themes discussed by M. Aubert, since both the revival of interest in the sources of theology and contemporary movements outside the Church have focussed the attention of the theologian upon it. M. Philips has written an excellent introduction to the whole question. Here again we have a fine example of how alive Belgian Catholicism is to the problems which face the