

their populations are otherwise occupied in the state economy. Given this fact, recruiting an 'army' of non-violent volunteers to match these professionals is surely an impossible dream. Most Christians have never really tried it, not just because they have not been inspired to do so, but because they have other equally Christian ways of spending their time.

But if Sider cannot convince us of the practicability of his non-violent strategy against the armies of modern state-governments, Biggar fails to address the hugely important question of how to deal with terrorism or of the break-up of the state itself. Just war theory insists on the need for state authority for going to war, but does not, indeed cannot, query the very existence of the state itself, as in the case of Ukraine. Neither does it address the justice or otherwise of the violence of IS or Boko Haram or other modern terrorist movements, let alone how to meet it. Whether Sider's case for non-violence can address these fundamental questions any better than Biggar is a matter for serious debate. To me the answer is not clear. What is clear, however, is that humanity's Hobbesian existence within a pattern of competing sovereign states on the surface of our planet, without any over-arching authority, is under threat from climate change, the internet, the prevalence of global markets for goods and services, etc. etc. I doubt whether either non-violence or just war can cope with these huge new dangers. Perhaps the European Union is pointing the right way.

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**UNDERSTANDING ŚAÑKARA: ESSAYS BY RICHARD DE SMET** edited by Ivo Coelho, *Motilal Barasidass Publishers, Delhi, 2013, pp. xii + 525, 800 rupees, hbk*

Catholic missionary theologians working in the East in the first half of the twentieth century were all formed in neo-Thomist theology. This shaped their approach to the cultures they encountered and to the intellectual traditions found within them. As the concern to develop inculturated forms of Christianity developed, Thomism determined the approach taken in a number of fundamental ways: first, it was argued that the encounter with the non-Christian thought of the East paralleled and further extended Thomas's own rich and creative encounter with Greek, Islamic and Jewish thought; second, Thomas's affirmation that grace perfected nature and that therefore revelation perfected human reasoning supported a positive openness to the truth and value of non-Christian intellectual traditions; and third, Thomas's account of God, creation and human nature formed the basis for identifying what counted as that truth and value. Thomism thus provided both the principles and the pattern for the modern engagement with non-Christian thought and for developing expressions of Christian faith which simultaneously were in continuity with the Christian faith held universally in the Church and yet properly inculturated into the traditions of the East.

In the case of India, Catholic missionary scholars undertook serious study of Indian intellectual and spiritual traditions. The twentieth century thus saw the flourishing of a form of Catholic Indology which met the scholarly demands of Indology, as the study of classical and later Indian languages, along with the textual traditions and the concrete spiritual traditions, while also Catholic in being concerned with what it meant for Catholic theology and faith to encounter them. At the centre of this endeavour was what came to be known as the 'Calcutta school of Indology,' whose members were principally Belgian Jesuits based in Calcutta. The Calcutta mission was the responsibility of the Belgian province at the time. It was this province to which Fr Richard de Smet SJ (1916–1997)

belonged and because of which his long and outstanding encounter with classical Indian thought came about. Arriving in India in 1946, de Smet lived and taught there for the next fifty years, having a reputation for never refusing when asked to do something, a generosity of spirit which left him little time to publish monographs. De Smet's work is found instead in a variety of journals and edited collections, many of which are increasingly difficult to obtain.

De Smet's particular interest was with the non-dualist tradition of Vedānta known as Advaita, whose greatest teacher was Śaṅkara (c.700 A.D.). Fully conversant with the Sanskrit works of Śaṅkara, de Smet was a pioneering and highly influential figure in establishing a new way of reading Śaṅkara: first, de Smet demonstrated that Śaṅkara's method was theological and exegetical in opposition to the prevailing tendency in earlier modern scholarship to label his work as philosophical in character; second, de Smet argued that the authentic works of Śaṅkara revealed him to have a realist account of the world and a theist account of ultimate reality, known as Brahman, in marked contrast to the general tendency to present his thought as teaching an illusionist cosmology and the impersonal nature of ultimate reality. It was on this basis that de Smet further argued for a convergence between the Advaita of Śaṅkara and the doctrines of God and creation found in Thomism. For de Smet, Śaṅkara's Vedānta could serve as both the basis for constructing an inculturated Christianity in India while also representing a convergent and complementary theology with which Catholic Christianity more widely could engage creatively and fruitfully.

In this edited collection of de Smet's work Ivo Coelho, himself a student of de Smet, has gathered together the principal essays which express de Smet's engagement with Śaṅkara, apart from two works which space prohibited including. Without this collection it would now be almost impossible for those interested in de Smet's work to have access to it, and so the collection is very helpful to those interested in de Smet and in what he achieved and represented. Coelho provides an excellent introduction, in which he charts out the development of de Smet's ideas as he came to rethink how to represent Śaṅkara's teaching. Coelho then groups de Smet's work into thematic chapters, in which we can see how de Smet engaged with Śaṅkara's work directly, with Śaṅkara's earlier and modern interpreters, as well as with the encounter between Thomism and the Vedānta. De Smet's work has proved very influential, and the collection appropriately finishes with a section in which de Smet himself comments on how later scholars, in particular the American Jesuit Indologist and theologian, Fr Francis Clooney S.J., have developed his own work in new directions. Coelho supports his own introduction and the collection as a whole with extensive footnotes and bibliography which enable us to read de Smet's work in the light of subsequent scholarship to the present.

This collection will of course prove of considerable interest to those interested in this particular encounter between Catholic Christianity and Indian thought, or in the wider achievement of missionary scholarship in the twentieth century. Yet, it should also be of interest to those interested in Thomism as a model for any contemporary engagement with non-Christian thought and culture, be it religious or secular. De Smet's work represents an outstanding example of what an earlier generation of Thomists was able to do, formed and inspired by Aquinas's own approach.

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