

gistic inference as the author has been telling us to discard. For why cannot the idea of God come from anything less than God? Only because an effect cannot be greater than its cause. So after all Dom Illtyd too is arguing from effect to cause, using the said principle as one of his premisses. And does not this implicit recourse to inference suggest that he himself is not wholly satisfied with his 'direct apprehension' of God as a means to certainty that God actually exists?

My second point concerns the way he states the Thomist proofs themselves. On a rather flippant page near the end of the book (p. 129) they are caricatured. Earlier (pp. 44-51) they are taken more seriously, but still in a somewhat off-hand way, I think. The nerve of Dom Illtyd's objections is that every syllogism concluding to God's existence must already have affirmed his existence in one of the premisses. This is a real difficulty, no doubt. But I would ask Dom Illtyd to reconsider the argument from movement. Are not three syllogisms involved in this? (a) movement is potency-to-act; every potency-to-act requires a prior active act; ergo: (b) every potency-to-act requires a *first* active act (a First Mover); this movement x is potency-to-act; ergo: (c) this movement x is the effect of a First Mover; a First Mover is 'God'; ergo. Now of these three syllogisms it is the first two, clearly, which do the real work; and they work, it is true, by the force of a metaphysical principle discovered in the analysis of movement into potency and act. But this principle does not of itself, I suggest, entail the *existential* conclusion 'God is'; to get this conclusion we have to combine it with the existential proposition 'a given movement is'.

KENELM FOSTER O.P.

LE CHRIST, SACREMENT DE LA RENCONTRE DE DIEU, by E. H. Schillebeeckx, O.P.; Editions du Cerf, NF 10.50.

It is a mistake to think that nothing has happened in theology since the death of St Thomas. Far too little has happened, it is true, and far too often a theological training has meant nothing more than an exchange of theological *clichés* and the manipulation of unreal problems. In the last thirty years or so, however, in response to a period of intense social and moral unrest, when all values have been under revision, theology too, which is the self-consciousness of faith, has taken a fresh lease of life. We have had no theologian of the stature of Karl Barth, who put through, single-handed, a revolution which affected Catholic theologians almost as deeply as Protestants. But we have had a whole generation of gifted theologians, mostly Jesuits, whose curiosity, learning, compassion and invention have done much to enliven our understanding of the faith, and to fortify us to confront the stress and the adventure of our environment. Few of these writers and teachers have more to offer than Fr Schillebeeckx, a Flemish Dominican who is professor of theology in the Catholic university of Nijmegen. He has done the most massive and decisive work in recent years on the doctrine of the sacraments. Most of his work is accessible so far only in Dutch, but it is

with great satisfaction that we see this popular exposition of his basic ideas becoming available to the French-reading public. It was written for theological students, catechists, and theologically interested layfolk. The level of theological and biblical culture it assumes is deeper than is yet common in England, but this need not put anybody off. It is not the kind of book one would ever read quickly. Taken slowly and carefully, it could be a theological education in itself. Evidently, the professional theologian will want to dispute certain points, or seek clarifications. The ordinary reader, however, can rest assured of Fr Schillebeeckx's profound fidelity to the finest traditions of theology. The book cannot be too highly recommended to anybody who can cope with not very difficult French.

Simply by adhering to the bedrock fact of our faith, that God has come to us in Christ, Fr Schillebeeckx is enabled to make a fresh survey of the whole of theology, bringing out its rootedness in the gospel, and leading everyday life and piety into the theological setting in which the message may be most fruitfully heard. He sets out to teach us about the sacraments by reminding us of Christ. To understand the sacraments, we must go back to their origin in the incarnation itself. The incarnation, God's coming to us in Christ, was the culmination of a long process of preparation. The history of Israel is the history of God's desire for a personal relationship, a *communion*, between himself and the human race. The entire revelation of the Old Testament is the history of the course of this affair. It is in this process of God's invitation to love and Israel's repeated infidelity that revelation takes shape. Where there should have been only co-operation, consent, and loving dialogue, there was instead resistance, defiance, and deadly antagonism. And yet, in the worst of it, God undertook to create a relationship with the human race, a *covenant*, which could never be soiled and betrayed by human infidelity. This relationship, the *new covenant*, the *new testament*, is Jesus Christ himself. He embodies this loving dialogue between man and God. In Jesus, we may say, God loves man and man loves God. This is what it is to be the God-man. It is to be, in his very being at all, complete communion between man and God. Jesus is the totality of all possible communion between man and God (which is why we can say that he is the Church). The everlasting covenant was achieved by God's becoming human and entering into a permanent and irrevocable relationship with himself on our behalf. God's fidelity and man's fidelity to the covenant are realized together in the history of Jesus Christ. He is at one and the same time grace made visible and the human race in communion with the living God. To meet him was to meet God. 'Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father' (John 14. 9). Jesus is 'the icon of the hidden God' (Col. 1. 15). Indeed, he is a sacrament, *the sacrament*. In his very existence, he fulfils the traditional conditions for a sacrament. A sacrament, as St Thomas would have said, is a *signum rei sacrae inquantum est sanctificans homines*. That is a sacrament is that which shows us the sacred reality in the very act of sanctifying the human race. If we are to give a name to *that sign*, it must

be the name of Jesus. He is the supreme efficacious sign of grace. He is the paradigmatic sacrament. His human love is the sacrament of God's love for men, the redeeming mercy of the eternal God descending on us in a human heart. His human love is the manifestation, declaration, and communication of God's love. Everything he does, and is, is shot through with that love. Everything he does, therefore, is redeeming and sanctifying. This is the condescension of grace, entering human history in the heart of Jesus, to sanctify the human race. There is, however, also an upward movement in the God-man's heart. This is the prayer of Jesus, his life-long acknowledgement and adoration of the absolute divinity of God, his perfect sense of creaturely dependence on the Father. His life was wholly an act of worship, his life was a permanent liturgy. Jesus is not only the definitive emergence into history of God's invitation to the human race to live in communion with him. He is also the prototype, the complete expression of the perfect human response to that invitation. Putting the two together, now, as Fr Schillebeeckx does, we can say that Jesus Christ is a 'sanctifying cult-mystery'. That is, being at once Servant of Yahweh and Son of God, his life is a perfect unity of liturgy and grace, of serving God and of saving men.

Since the ascension, however, this 'sacred reality', ever-living and indestructible, has withdrawn from the scope of our experience. Christ is risen, and hence out of ordinary contact with us. We can no longer meet God in another man, as Philip and the other disciples were invited and enabled to do. Christian life now is a perpetual advent, a state of waiting for the Lord, not of being with him. Christianity, as Fr Schillebeeckx puts it, is the religion of *maranatha*. But this is not the whole story. That we wait at all makes sense only because we still, or already, enjoy a certain contact with the risen Lord. This takes place not only in our memories of him, not only even in our faith in his invisible activity in the world, but in our faith in the visible manifestation of his presence in the Church. Just as Jesus Christ is the sacrament of our encounter with God, so the Church is the sacrament of our encounter with Jesus Christ, now risen and ascended into glory. In the visible activities of the Church, the heavenly Christ sacramentalizes his permanent intercession and efficacious communication of grace. The sacraments, then, are the visible earthly expression of the 'sanctifying cult-mystery', of the reality of salvation itself. It is in and by the sacraments that we enter into contact with this mystery. The earthly Church is the sign of Christ's triumphant grace—or, putting it the other way round, the living reality of the risen Christ is 'ecclesialized', that is, takes the visible shape of the community which we know as the Church, so that its characteristic behaviour—the sacraments—may give expression to Christ's own heavenly activity. The Church is Christ, sacramentally, 'mystically', and the Church's official actions—the sacraments—are Christ's own actions. The sacraments are, in one way or another, the great gesture of love by which we are redeemed, reappearing in the setting of the Church, touching each one of us personally and palpably. But these privileged moments are not exotic or unaccountable, entirely set apart

from the rest of our lives. One cannot isolate the sacraments from life, and the splendid way in which Fr Schillebeeckx proceeds to integrate his outline of sacramental doctrine into a general theory of Christian life should be of particular interest to layfolk. Briefly, if the rest of a man's behaviour is not a preparation for, an expression or intensification of, his sacramental behaviour, it must at least be a dissipation and annulment of it. One can have moments of greater depth or actuality of religious experience outside the sacraments, but the sacraments always remain the normal *points de repère*, the moments which epitomize the rest of our life. Every Christian's life is the visible sign of grace in the world. That the Church is the 'sign lifted up among the nations' is verified not only in encyclicals and pontifical ceremonies but also in the self-sacrificing love, the responsibility, the humble confidence, with which ordinary Christians face the trials of everyday life. Grace becomes manifest in the world in the personal holiness of each one of us: that is where God invites unbelievers to find him. People cannot be expected to believe in the Church unless they see that we love one another—unless the reality of charity is made present in their lives by their contact with Christians.

It is impossible to give an adequate account of all that this slim book contains. One might, however, in view of the revision of our attitudes to our separated brethren which is in process, draw attention to the useful remarks Fr Schillebeeckx has to make about the value of non-Catholic sacraments. All in all, one cannot imagine a work of theology which could be at the same time more solidly grounded in traditional doctrine and more engaged in the special challenges of living the faith at this time.

FERGUS KERR, O.P.

THE CONVERSION OF AUGUSTINE, by Romano Guardini, translated by Elinor Briefs; Sands, 18s.

This book manifests a profound and discerning sympathy with its subject. If, as may be feared, it does not succeed in generally communicating this sympathy to its English readers, the fault will lie with the style. It is too lush. Favourite words of the author are 'rich' and 'warm'. There are not a few imposing sentences which the more carefully they are read and re-read, the less they seem to mean. There is no reason to suppose that the translator has not done her work well (I have not read the original), and there are reasons to suppose that the author's style and mind are not well suited for translation into English, a light-minded language for a light-minded people. Take this last sentence of a footnote, for instance (p. 88): 'Ernest Hello in his book *L'homme* has deep things to say on the whole sinister problem of laughter and the laughable'. I suspect that Augustine himself would have been amused. Sometimes one would be inclined to suspect a little one-upmanship—if such behaviour were compatible with the author's undoubted seriousness; for example: 'Opposed to this attitude (an autonomous attitude towards life) is another, which—to avoid the negative