

sacrifice and aid'. Mary is mother of the Lord and our mother. She is not a mediatrix as Christ is mediator, but she is a mediatrix as we are mediators. She belongs to us as we belong to one another. We are to bear one another's burdens in our daily lives as parents and teachers and priests and doctors and members of 'bus queues. It is wonderful to read such May Devotions, to realise Mary's work in the worshipping community and to realise the work of all the baptised, standing together, the holy company of the redeemed, bound together, important for one another, before the eyes of God.

At the end of one of these meditations Rahner prays 'May the blessed Virgin forgive us for having spoken more about man in general than about her alone. She was meant'. In all that he says about Mary we see ourselves transfigured, and in all he says about us we see Mary as our example, the woman who because the Lord is with her prays for us now.

HAMISH SWANSTON

THE COMING OF HIS KINGDOM, by Alois Winklhofer; Herder-Nelson, 30s.

The Egyptians made a covenant with Death, and their memorials shall lie beneath the Aswan waters, and their graves be plundered to satisfy the idle curiosity of visitors to the British Museum. 'I am a God of the living', says the Lord. Our expectation is of an eternal kingdom and our hope is certain. What part, then, has death in our condition? Karl Rahner has presented us with a theology of death, Teilhard de Chardin has urged us to share his vision of the last things, now Fr Winklhofer issues a set of theses, ill-disguised by pious rhetoric and references to second-rate modern novels, as a commentary on the death of the individual and the end of the world. Winklhofer is described in as mendacious a blurb as one might meet in a year's reading as having relied on the insights of Rahner and Teilhard and at the same time placed these insights in the matrix of traditional theology.

In his introduction to the book Fr Matthew O'Connell laments that biblical theologians have lately paid attention to death, the resurrection and the second coming of Christ 'at the expense of the intermediate realities of which Scripture says so little'. Winklhofer, however, remedies this sorry situation. If we are to progress in our understanding of the faith presented in scripture we must of course have a developing dogmatic and speculative theology which is alive to new questions in the Christian community. But the kind of book, of which Winklhofer has produced an example, which regards scripture as a compendium of dogmatic remarks to be adduced when reasoning has had its way, does not seem much to the purpose. Three examples of his characteristic misuse of scriptural revelation may be enough to shew the folly at work in various ways. Winklhofer states without qualification that 'Elias' in Mt. 17. 11 refers to Christ himself: but Mt. 17. 13 is explicitly opposed to this interpretation. He is insensitive to the strangeness of tone in his remark that 'Scripture confirms the pro-

position solemnly enunciated by Benedict XII in 1336' concerning the intuitive vision of the divine essence. He writes of 2 Peter's description of the end of the world involving fire and destruction as if it were some prophecy of atomic war, thus ignoring all we have learnt about biblical themes of judgement and their imagery and which he could have found in so popular a book as Fr Charles Davis' *The Study of Theology*.

The book is a catena of rhetoric and tautology, of pious waffle and dogmatic opinion. Winklhofer has an assurance in his dealings with the details of the parousia second only to that of a primary school child who has gained full marks in a catechism test. An assurance which includes in its reference what a dying man thinks immediately before death, what the eye of a dead man focuses on, and falters only in answering the question 'where is heaven?'. The absence of an index might be more regretted if one could believe that a reader would derive much from consulting the book.

HAMISH SWANSTON

LA FOI ET LA THEOLOGIE, by Y. M. J. Congar, O.P.; Desclée. n.p.

This is a *canevas d'étude*, not a developed and well-rounded dissertation, on the faith seeking understanding, the bearing of God's Word in man's mind and heart and sense, which St Thomas calls *sacra doctrina*. It is very welcome as redressing the balance, for the contemporary and understandable reaction against a theology presented as a geometrical scheme of definitions, theses, and corollaries, divided between 'dogma' and 'morals', the last being parcelled out between moral theology treated as a catalogue of precepts, ascetical theology as the rules for those who would follow the counsels, and mystical theology as an investigation into miraculous psychology, has swung to the extreme of existentialist protests against logic in religion which reduce theology to little more than a sacred rhetoric, and for those who are already in the swim.

To the two main parts, first, a study of God's saving revelation through deeds and words in Jesus Christ and of the human response in the mind of the Church, and second, an introduction to the ordered body of knowledge that is built up in consequence, there is added a brief history of theology. It is the second part that merits the closest attention.

Here the test is whether the thought sustains the level of St Thomas and, in our century, of Gardeil. There grace and nature are not seen as two co-operating principles each doing a part, but in subordination, civil and free, not despotic and servile, each making the whole. Otherwise Christian theology becomes a mythology, or a hybrid of faith and reason, or an apologetic on the make, or a mere philosophy of religion exercising itself on alien data. Père Congar has been justly admired for his appreciation of the concreteness of Christian truths in the stream of history; nobody would accuse him of arid abstractionism or of gate-crashing into the temple with metaphysical analyses. So then his insistence on the continued vitality of scholastic theology is all the more impressive, also his