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Norms for the New Theology: The Concept of Truth and Theological Renewal

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on 25 May 1897. He is already in Talisay by then. He is there till the 4th of June, when he moves to Paliparan. Thence to Minuyan where he stays a considerable amount of time in July. He does not get to Biak-na-bato till the 2nd of August. Sastrón's claim therefore that Aguinaldo was not involved in the battle of Puray (14 June) because he was already in Biak-na-bato by then, anticipates his arrival in Biak-na-bato by six weeks.

One passage in Quirino's book is particularly well done. It is his description of Aguinaldo's journey from Biak-na-bato to Sual for transportation to Hong Kong. It was a triumphal march in which Aguinaldo was acclaimed by both his countrymen and his former enemies. This was (as Quirino points out) "Spain at her best."

Quirino's second volume, dealing with the Malolos Republic and the Philippine-American War should prove equally interesting. We hope that it will be as good — if not better — than the first.

MIGUEL A. BERNAD

NORMS FOR THE NEW THEOLOGY

THE CONCEPT OF TRUTH AND THEOLOGICAL RENEWAL (THEOLOGICAL SOUNDINGS 1/2). By Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., translated by N.D. Smith. London: Sheed and Ward, 1968. x, 212 pp.

This is the second volume of a projected series of a selection from the writings of the well-known Flemish Dominican theologian, a series which has much in common with the *Theological Investigation* of K. Rahner, S.J. In the Preface to the first volume the author notes that the series, to be called *Theological Soundings* (*Theologische Peilingen*), will comprise eight main volumes: 1. Revelation and Theology, 2. God and Man, etc. The book here reviewed is the second part of the first main volume. It would have been less confusing to have entitled it *Revelation and Theology II*, as it is called finally on p. 1, after pp. i-x.

There is little fault to be found with this generally smooth translation, although the definite article does not help the English in expressions like "the Transubstantiation" and a few errors may be noted, like the incorrect grammatical construction on p. 80 and the rendering of *derivatio boni* as "the diverting of the good", instead of the "derivation" or "communication" (p. 163). There are several typographical errors in the Latin citations and p. iv stands in need

of correction: "Originally published...1900. This translation is based on the second revised edition of 1900.

The volume consists of four essays, originally published between 1953 and 1963, and an appendix which is longer than any of the essays and was published in 1952. In the opinion of the reviewer this volume is both excellent and timely in all its parts, and marked by a theological depth joined to balance and clarity of exposition, which are not too often found in the writings of contemporary theologians.

There is today what has been termed "a crisis of truth". There is no truth "out there" waiting to be decoded; in a very real sense man makes the truth. To acknowledge this and at the same time to avoid sheer relativism constitutes the crisis. The philosophical approach to God has been rendered quite uncertain and what appeals to contemporary man is the rational character of atheism and the consistency of a humanism without God. It is basically to this problem that Schillebeeckx addresses himself. "For the first time in history since the Hellenistic period, we are confronted by a complete break with the dualistic conception of man...man is spiritual even in his physical nature...and all his activities, even his most exalted spiritual and religious actions, always bear the stamp of his earthly physical nature....All this enables us to gain a more subtle insight into the essential ambiguity of everything that is human".

Part I of this volume, *The Value of Our Speech about God and of Our Concepts of Faith*, contains two of the four essays. The first of these, "The Concept of 'Truth'", together with the Appendix, deals directly with the contemporary "crisis of truth". The author would avoid, not only the relativist view, implicitly atheistic in its denial that absolute truth exists, but also the view, still "held in many scholastic circles with regard to truth", that we possess an awareness that is able to transcend all relative standpoints and thus survey all objective reality. This latter, representational conceptualism, according to which conceptual contents are directly applicable both to worldly and supramundane realities has led to an impasse in neo-scholasticism. The lengthy Appendix ("The Non-Conceptual Intellectual Dimension of Our Knowledge of God according to Aquinas") supplements the first essay and argues to a radical difference between historical Thomism and later Thomist thought. For Aquinas, "we work, with regard to God, only with natural concepts, in which the notional representation is of its very nature creaturely....We do not attribute the concept as such to God, but we know that God is, as it were, situated in the extension of this concept....The metaphysical problem was, however, basically altered in the work of Dun Scotus, who forms the link between Aquinas and later Thomism, and this

has resulted in the obscuring of the distinctive character of Aquinas' thinking about the analogy of God". Schillebeeckx holds that the Thomist strain which begins with Cajetan and receives its modern classic expression in Pénido is, under the influence of Scotism, diametrically opposed to the teaching of Aquinas. In it the abstract character of our concepts is the ground for the affirmation that our concepts are really capable, not only of reaching out for the reality of God, but also grasping God conceptually. In seeking an answer to the central question of how our concepts of faith ("truth as a human possession") are related to "truth-in-itself", Schillebeeckx explicitly rejects the solution of J. Maréchal, S.J., to embrace that of D. de Petter. The solution proposed by Maréchal is that "our knowledge of God is a projective act by means of which I reach out beyond the concept in the direction of God, thanks to the natural dynamism of the human spirit toward the infinite". Schillebeeckx finds this unsatisfactory because "the reality and validity of knowledge is based on an extra-intellectual element". He chooses to follow rather de Petter who affirms that while a non-conceptual aspect is the basis of the validity of our conceptual knowledge, this is a non-conceptual dimension of knowledge itself, an objective dynamic element in the contents themselves of our knowledge, "intending" or referring to, or opening perspectives on the infinite. One may be permitted to wonder if the rigid distinction on which Schillebeeckx insists between the theories of Maréchal and de Petter is really necessary. Perhaps, the shadow of *Humani generis* loomed too large over the writing of this Appendix (1952) and the charge of professing the "new theology" was then too readily given a hearing. The school of de Petter does after all affirm that concepts as such cannot reach reality or truth and, therefore, that they can do so only as elements of a greater whole. On the other hand, the school of Maréchal is not anti-intellectual; it emphasizes rather the oneness of the human spirit.

The second essay, "The Non-conceptual Intellectual Element in the Act of Faith: A Reaction", is a detailed analysis followed by critical reflections on Max Seckler's *Instinkt und Glaubenswille nach Thomas von Aquin* (Mainz, 1962). In the opinion of this reviewer, this is the best of the chapters in this volume. Schillebeeckx does not hesitate to state that Seckler's study is the most satisfying of all the books and articles which have appeared during the past fifty years about the *instinctus fidei*, the divine impulse, which prompts and invites us to believe. "I can best characterize this book as a genetic study, almost on the lines of form-criticism, of the non-conceptual aspect of the act of faith in the works of Aquinas. And let me say at once that Seckler's study surpasses everything that we have hitherto been offered in the way of historical and theological analysis of the grace of faith as the basis of the entire life of faith according to Aquinas".

In the critical reflections after the laudatory analysis, Schillebeeckx gives, together with his reasons for parting company finally with Seckler's interpretation, the most trenchant criticism which has yet appeared of Karl Rahner's "supernatural existential". Those who fault Rahner's theory because in it "human nature" can be no more accurately described than as a "remainder concept" do not effectively challenge Rahner's position. If, as Rahner seeks to show, the postulate of the supernatural existential is essential, then what happens to a clear-cut concept of human nature is of minor consequence. But Schillebeeckx is more incisive in pressing his objection: "I am afraid that Seckler ultimately fails to appreciate Aquinas as a *doctor gratiae*. It is, however, not easy to situate this failure without doing Seckler an injustice.... 'Nature' is a concrete offer of grace, not on the basis of its having been created, but on the basis of its having been created by a God of *salvation*. What I especially welcome in this solution is the care which the author takes not to situate man's *factual* state of being destined to the supernatural order in a kind of 'intermediary' between nature and supernature, as Rahner and von Balthasar have tried to do.... But an intermediary or 'linking reality' of this kind is useless and in itself meaningless, because the problem of the relationship between nature and supernature is in this way only transferred to the relationship between nature and this 'intermediary', which is not natural and yet is not sanctifying grace either. But with this agreement with Seckler's deepest intention, my agreement with Seckler.... must end. Both Seckler and the originators of the 'supernatural existential' have, in my opinion, been led astray by an illusion of perspective.... A reality *in* man which, being neither 'nature' nor 'grace' nor 'historical nature', is supposed to be the term of the supernatural destination, as a preliminary (at least, according to logical priority) to the real gift of grace is quite unacceptable. Seckler's proposition that man's factual being destined supernaturally, as a reality *in* man, is 'of grace, without actually being grace' seems to me to be the fundamental error, not only of Seckler's entire argument, but also of Rahner's and that of von Balthasar".

It is the tendency today to deplore the amount of space devoted by the manuals to the controversy *de auxiliis* in the treatise on grace. However warranted the rejoicing in the death of this type of theology, it should not go so far as to write off Molinism as finished. The extremely subtle theology of Luis de Molina does not so easily die. After alleging that the transcendental Thomists whom he opposes have been tempted to 'eisegesis' in their reading of St. Thomas and have been too selective in the use of his texts, Schillebeeckx concludes his criticism of Seckler, Rahner and von Balthasar with the observation that "this may well be Molinism, but it is certainly not an authentic interpretation of Aquinas".

Part II of this volume, *The Renewal of Present-Day Theology*, likewise consists of two essays. The first is entitled "Salvation History as the Basis of Theology: *Theologia* or *Oikonomia*". This lecture, delivered in 1953, is quite timely in 1969, when the transcendental Thomism of Schillebeeckx, Rahner and Lonergan is attacked as a futile rear-guard action in defense of metaphysics which, we are told, must yield to a "metachronics". Schillebeeckx points out that the laudable renewal of interest in salvation history has, with all its undeniable benefits for theology, led to an extreme in which any form of theology not directly based upon salvation history is violently opposed. As he notes, "One would be blind if one failed to see that this anti-speculative tendency frivolously rejected, along with the parasite of pure conceptual speculation of later scholasticism, the best in the sphere of reflection about the faith that theology has acquired throughout the course of history". This judgment, spoken of certain European theological tendencies immediately after World War II, might well be passed on the views of which the American religious journalist, Daniel Callahan, recently unburdened himself: "I believe that Jesus Christ is true God and true man. He is true God, because he continues to exist in a glorified body. He is true man, because he continues to exist in a glorified body. In other words he is true God and true man for the same reasons....The meaning of the Eucharist is that our God, Jesus Christ, is a God of flesh and blood. By participating in Eucharistic worship, we emphasize our belief that the God of pure spirit is a God we have transcended....I do not believe in the transcendent or immanent God of the Christian tradition. Such a God seems to me rationally implausible, a threat to Christian values and an offense to morality....Now we have the courage to believe in a bodily God, a God who shares our humanity, a God who is no longer (and who never could have been) a 'wholly other', an 'ineffable' something-or-other....Once upon a time, I did believe in the Trinity, and I knew all the traditional reasons why I did and why I should. But I can't recall just now how it all went".

What Schillebeeckx has to say with reference to such frivolity in religious journalism is this: "We are therefore confronted today with the problem of choice between *theologia* and *oikonomia*, with the problem in other words of how theology should be practised — according to abstract metaphysical principles or along the lines of concrete saving history....If theology is nothing other than....the faith itself as alive in the human reflective spirit, then the very structure of the reality of revelation must show us objectively whether we ought to follow a metaphysical, theocentric course or whether we should proceed along the christological lines of the history of salvation. The new note sounded by the spirit of the present age will, insofar as it is authentic and pure, be able to harmonize with the note sounded by the ancient, traditional faith only if we in our own time know how to listen

correctly to the eternal symphony of revelation... Theology is essentially christological as to its methods — in other words it has a basis in salvation history — but it is theocentric and trinitarian so far as its proper object is concerned — a reflection about God who addresses us in an *oikonomia* or plan of salvation... The way that leads to the inner mystery of God is the mystery of Christ, the history of salvation... *Theologia* is always based on *oikonomia*, but the two cannot be identified... The intelligibility of the living God... is the ultimate aim of theological reflection... But the history of salvation and therefore Christ is the only way towards this understanding of the *Deus salutaris* (John 17/3)".

The final essay, first published in 1961, bears the title, "The New Trends in Present-Day Dogmatic Theology", and is introduced by this observation: "It is not my intention to provide an outline of what is happening today in dogmatic theology. I think it is preferable to indicate the new emotional and mental attitudes which are developing in this area". The author proceeds to do this in a very balanced way by discussing good and bad influences of the following characteristics: The Appeal to Human Existential Experience; Greater Awareness of the "Human Condition"; The Historical Character of Human Life; Recognition of the Distinctive Character of the Religious Element and the Case for a Certain Secularisation; The Ecumenical Character of Present-Day Dogmatic Theology.

With a great variety of examples, ranging over the whole field of dogmatic theology, Schillebeeckx here develops further the point of the preceding essay: "The theological source, the *locus theologicus*, even of faith in the creation is really the personal, human history of the historical Christ. This applies to every theological treatise, and the consequence has been a complete renewal of the theological method — in contrast to the method employed by previous generations of theologians, we now come to a *theologia* via an *oikonomia*.... Speculative theology, therefore, automatically acquires a new form in the light of salvation history, whereas, in the past, theological treatises were often given a philosophical emphasis, and philosophy, on the other hand, was frequently given a theological slant". But there is a radical confusion of which certain kerygmatic theologians are the victims which would substitute *oikonomia* for *theologia*. "'Life' and 'thinking about life' do constitute a single whole, because human life is not simply lived, but is of its very nature, a life that man himself must direct; yet there is a difference between the two within the one totality of life... It is from this difference between life and reflection about life... that one of the basic attitudes of theology as a science becomes clear. This is that the science of theology never separate the saving value from the value as truth. It is precisely in the saving truth that the theologian discovers the saving

value of revelation for man. This testimony of the act of theological reflection is not the same as that of preaching or the kerygma, but it has its own special place in the fullness of the life of the Church and ultimately serves the Church's subsequent preaching by its distinctively scientific character". Again, many phenomenological attempts to reach an understanding of a dogma provide an excellent introduction to the theology of the doctrine in question. "But they do not come anywhere near the real problem of the dogma....The playing with concepts which characterized later scholasticism has nowadays frequently been replaced by a kind of literary playing with phenomenological ideas....I am of the opinion that a state of balance has by no means as yet been achieved in this eager recourse to phenomenological analysis, however necessary these may be in theological renewal. It is here, I believe, that the critical point of the new theology can be found — the point at which theology will either go on to make a new, authentic flight or else be fatally grounded in a complete emptying of content of the Catholic faith".

This is a book which provides some solid norms for a really critical evaluation of much that is being published in theology today.

JOSEPH F. MURPHY, S.J.

ON THE DIVERSITY OF PHILIPPINE GEOGRAPHY

THE PHILIPPINE ISLAND WORLD: A Physical, Cultural and Regional Geography, by Frederick L. Wernstedt and Joseph E. Spencer. Berkeley and Los Angeles: the University of California Press, 1967. 742 pp.

One who has been inquisitive about the geography of the Philippines puts this book down — having perused it — with a sense of awe and an admiration for its authors not unlike idolatry. Its virtues are countless. First of all, it is a handsome volume flawlessly edited. It is formidably learned; there are seventy-three pages of "notes" chapter by chapter which incidentally provide an ambitious bibliography of the subjects covered. As is stated in the subtitle, the book's chief preoccupations are with physical, cultural and regional geography. Part One focuses on the physical environment, Part Two on the cultural and economic environments; but the most impressive part of this generally impressive work is Part Three, the regional environments.

Instead of accepting the eleven regional areas used by the Bureau of the Census and Statistics, the authors break the country down into