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## **Vassal Treaties and David's Kingship: Dynastic Oracle and Suzerainty Treaty**

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not so during the later part of his life and right after his death when he was attacked from all sides: for what some considered his defense of certain Aristotelian conclusions, for his theological opinions where everybody had his own notion of what is meant by substantial form, and even in his professed religious life where the secular clergy seemed loath to admit the possibility of the perfection of a vowed life. They must have been tedious disputations for the Saint but from them come some of his most mature work. Eventually, the *Summa of Theology*, unfinished in its third and last planned part, was composed as a primer for the young friars so that they might get their definitions straight and see the whole theological vista in one panoramic glance. It should be said in passing that we happily have his works as copied by secretaries for as he grew more and more mature, Aquinas' hand-writing degenerated into an almost unbreakable cryptogram.

Author Bourke's even-numbered chapters, showing the evolution of the thought of Aquinas, are less than satisfactory. The titles and probable dates of his works are of course carefully given along with the authors who influenced him and the events that brought them into life. Selected samples are given, it seems, for atmosphere. However, the problems are framed always in neoscholastic terminology and things are let go at that. There is a certain quaint thirteenth century aspect to the whole thing. The specific problems explored are hardly relevant to the modern reader. Almost completely ignored is the whole existential side of the Saint's thought. If the author had developed that aspect, the reader approaching St. Thomas for the first time would accept him as the true genius that he was, a creative, courageous torch-bearer for the perennial philosophical and theological problems and mysteries that are as alive today as they were then or at any time. It would be in this that a modern popular life of St. Thomas would be welcomed and would be significant in clarifying some of the truly important and as yet uncrystallized philosophical and theological thinking that is going on today.

GABRIEL POORE, F.S.C.

## VASSAL TREATIES AND DAVID'S KINGSHIP

**DYNASTIC ORACLE AND SUZERAINTY TREATY.** By Philip J. Calderone, S.J. Loyola Heights, Q.C.: Loyola House of Studies, *Logos* 1, Ateneo de Manila University, 1966. 80 pp.

This volume is the first in a series of scholarly publications published by the Loyola House of Studies. The series will cover various subjects in the fields of Scripture, theology, philosophy. The present

monograph is a portion of Fr. Calderone's doctoral dissertation presented at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome.

Fr. Calderone studies a brief pericope in the Old Testament—Nathan's oracle to David, promising him an eternal dynasty—and finds parallels to this in the legal material of ancient empires of the biblical world, particularly in the "suzerainty treaties" between the Great King of the Hittites and his vassals. To those not too familiar with OT research, like the present reviewer, the relevance, of a vassal treaty for understanding the OT would appear to be virtually nil. However, scholars have shown in recent years the influence of this type of literature on Israel's covenants at Sinai, at Shechem under Joshua, in the book of Deuteronomy, and also on many covenantal elements, such as curses and blessings, promises and prophetic denouncements. The originality of the present work lies in the independent observation of the similarity between Nathan's dynastic oracle and the vassal treaty, with emphasis on the promises of protection to the vassal and his posterity in perpetuity.

The first part of the book is a technical analysis of the elements in the ancient treaties, particularly of the concern for dynasties. It is to be noted that Nathan's oracle and David's subsequent prayer center on Yahweh's promise that David's dynastic line will endure forever. Now in all the ancient literature, Fr. C. points out, there appears no instance of a god promising an enduring dynastic line. Such a promise, outside of Jewish literature, is found only in the suzerainty treaties, as expressions of the king's benevolence towards the vassal. It is in these treaties then that we should seek the source-idea for Nathan's oracle.

In the second part the author analyzes Nathan's oracle in the light of the treaties, noting similarities in form, content, background, purpose. There are significant differences too, but these can be explained by the peculiar circumstances of David's historical situations. Moreover, the oracle contains covenantal motifs and references, linking the new King to Israel whom God had made His people through the Sinai covenant. Hence, Yahweh, who had been conceived as the king over Israel through the Sinai covenant, is here pictured as making Israel's ruler His vassal king through an oracle that has points of contact with both the suzerainty treaty and the Sinaitic covenant.

It is regretable that this monograph is limited to a study in comparative literature. Questions more interesting and more pertinent to strictly OT literature and theology are left unanswered. For example, what is the literary type of this brief oracle? What is its place in the whole of 2 Samuel 7? What relationship is there between this Davidic covenant and the more ancient covenant of Sinai? The outline of the original dissertation provided in the appendix shows that these have been treated by the author, who promises that they will be published in the future. But even this brief monograph is valuable and interesting,

at least insofar as it provides a concrete example of Israel's anthropomorphic concept of God, and of their firm belief in their own divine vocation.

The long footnotes make for difficult reading and the printing leaves much to be desired. But the high scholarship augurs well for the *Logos* series, of which this volume is the first number.

EDUARDO HONTIVEROS, S.J.

## ON LITURGICAL RENEWAL AFTER VATICAN II

THE CHURCH WORSHIPS. Concilium. Theology in the Age of Renewal, Volume 12. New York: Paulist Press, 1966. 175 pp.

This book is the twelfth of the ambitious *Concilium* series which hopes to gather the best of conciliar and post-conciliar theology. The impressive names listed for the editorial committee and cooperating editors almost guarantee that this series will be among the most influential works of contemporary theology.

These early volumes, by and large, are steps along the way, dusty with the confusion stirred by the sudden prominence of ideas considered at least peripheral, if not heretical so short a theological-time ago.

The editors have chosen to concentrate the doctrinal section of this book on the "liturgical Assembly," unquestionably a key theme of liturgical renewal, responsible simultaneously for the most ecstatic lyrical flights and the most eloquent shrugs. Fathers Lécuyer and van de Walle explain the Biblical and patristic teachings which form the basis for their convictions about the importance of the Assembly in Christian worship. The Christian community gathered at Mass is a visible sign of the presence of Christ who in His Spirit is a unifying invisible bond among the members. Furthermore, Christ's worship in the liturgy is offered by Him as *caput humanitatis*, and so any Christian wishing to join himself with Christ in this worship should do so in the body of the faithful. The Assembly, like the Eucharist sacrifice itself, is a sign: a sign of the unity of Christians and of their involvement with one another in this world. Signs usually point to a reality which they themselves are not. Just as Christ's Body and Blood is itself, by way of exception, a sign and a reality, so too the Assembly is both the sign of Christ's unification and the actual Body of Christ.

Since the assembly does not meet to comply with a juridical precept—the law must preserve individual freedom and can only prescribe *mi-*