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## Poety, Perception and Metaphor

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her disposal more than 250 documents, all of them dealing with her precise subject: Philippine nationalism.

MIGUEL A. BERNAD

## POETRY, PERCEPTION AND METAPHOR

A POEM OF THE NEW CREATION. By Peter Milward S.J. The Hokuseido Press. Tokyo. 1970. Pp. 73.

Peter Milward is a very competent critic whose works have already been reviewed in the pages of *Philippine Studies*. From his professorial chair at Sophia University have issued two of the best commentaries on the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins, one on T. S. Eliot's *Quartets*, an anthology of Chesterton's essays and remarks on Shakespeare, and several books dealing with English literary history. In the book under review Father Milward puts aside criticism and literary history to don the cap of the poet. His subject is as grand and as profound as could be imagined. As the title suggests, it is about "the new creation": namely, the supernatural destiny which God has given to man; man's fall from that destiny through sin; man's redemption by Christ; the new supernatural life which that redemption brought to man, whereby man becomes a living image of God and a partaker in His divine life.

It is in fact the subject that Milton himself had attempted to treat in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. Milton of course was the much greater poet, but he was an uninstructed theologian. If Milton had the theological learning — and the theological panoramic viewpoint — that Peter Milward has, *Paradise Lost* and its sequel might both have become far greater poems than they actually are.

Milward is a far better theologian than Milton: but it is not degrading to anyone to be informed that he is not as great a poet as Milton. Nor is Milward as good a poet as his great English fellow Jesuit, Gerard Manley Hopkins. The difference lies in the ability to embody an abstract perception in a concrete and brilliantly perceived deeply felt metaphor.

Yet Milward's poetic essay is full of insights. Paraphrasing T.S. Eliot's "Teach us to care and not to care, teach us to sit still", Milward says, in lines reminiscent of the *Quartets*:

Prayer ascends from earth to heaven  
Rising from restlessness to rest  
Moving from dissipation to pure action

Drawing the powers of the soul within  
To concentrate all attention on One.

By alluding to such well-known terms as "the cloud of unknowing" and the "dark night of the soul", Milward attempts a theological synthesis:

Hidden from us in a cloud of unknowing  
Hidden in a dark night of the soul  
Hidden under a veil of mystery  
He is the mystery of Divine Love.

What Milward's poem needs is an organic structure of metaphor that would have given his insights not only a theological but also a poetic (i.e. an imaginative) synthesis. Such a structure of metaphor is evident in the poetry of Hopkins, who sees in the flashing wings of a dragon-fly, and hears in the sound of a pebble hitting the sides of a deep well, an image of the Divine Life by which Christ lives "in ten thousand places".

MIGUEL A. BERNAD

## THE BIBLE: A CONTEMPORARY TRANSLATION

THE NEW ENGLISH BIBLE WITH THE APOCRYPHA. New York: Oxford University Press Cambridge University Press. xxi, 1166; vii, 275; ix, 336. \$9.95.

The New English Bible is the latest translation of the Scriptures by British scholars which has been planned and directed by representatives of eleven churches, councils and Bible Societies in Great Britain. The book jacket enhances its official status by terming it an "authoritative translation" but does this refer to the competence of the translators or its ecclesiastic patronage? It is not a revision of the prestigious King James version, like the British and American editions of 1885 and 1901 and the new universally popular Revised Standard Version (RSV) of 1952. Scholars have made a new translation from the original Hebrew and Greek texts, utilizing the latest findings in the textual, linguistic and historical fields. A panel of literary advisers helped the translators in literary and stylistic questions to insure a modern and literate English and not merely an accurate, scholarly rendering of the ancient texts. The presence of Roman Catholic observers at the final stage of the work is a sign of the times in ecumenical courtesy. The labors lasted for almost twenty-five years, with the