Reviews

**GOD, MYSTERY, AND MYSTIFICATION** by Denys Turner, *University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, 2019, pp. xviii + 185, $50.00, hbk*

This volume of eight essays presents Denys Turner as a teacher. All but one of the essays were first given as university talks or lectures; and, as even a brief perusal of the Contents page indicates, Turner is not concerned in this volume with tackling one or two big topics in exhaustive detail, but, rather, with a broad range of topics, each very substantial in itself: God and evil, prayer and the darkness of God, faith and reason, medieval biblical hermeneutics, science and religion, the thought of Marguerite Porete and of Herbert McCabe. And what an excellent teacher Turner is. For a start, he is expert at constructing dramatically satisfying theological narratives in engaging and accessible prose. Opposing views or an intellectual impasse are first presented, with Turner presenting ways forward by invoking the thought of favoured theologians, in particular Aquinas.

But Turner’s ability as a pedagogue is perhaps most evident when he explains complex and subtle ideas using simple comparisons. Take, for example, the use of the music of Mozart to explain the fittingness of the existence of sin within the story of salvation (Julian of Norwich’s ‘sin is behovely’). Mozart’s music, we are told, is ‘supremely unpredictable’; and yet as the music progresses each new note seems just right, to the degree that looking backwards the music now seems ‘supremely retrodictable’ (p. 19). Just listen to the opening movement of Mozart’s Piano Concert No. 20 in D minor, K.466, to appreciate the aptness of Turner’s example.

Or, consider how Turner makes the case for the importance of the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation (entailing that the substance of the bread is not present in the Eucharist, but has been transformed into the Body of Christ) against the Lutheran doctrine of companation (the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist alongside the unchanged substance of the bread). To most Catholics this distinction is obscure and irrelevant. But in the context of discussing the thought of Herbert McCabe, himself an outstanding teacher and noted Thomist, Turner supports McCabe’s view that we cannot fully understand the human meaning of food unless we understand its Eucharistic depth. The Eucharist has metaphysical and explanatory priority. And so Turner insightfully points out: ‘The Eucharist is not the presence of Christ as an add-on meaning of eating and drinking together: it is the meaning of eating and drinking together’ (p. 153, italics not added). Companation undermines the metaphysical and explanatory priority, whereas transubstantiation does not; and Turner deftly shows why.
Yet, in one, and admittedly only one, essay, ‘Reason, the Eucharist, and the Body’, I thought that Turner’s relatively broad canvas approach was problematic, though the essay still has considerable merit. Here Turner argues not only that Aquinas believed that the existence of God is rationally demonstrable; but that even if all the attempted proofs of the existence of God thus far fail as rational demonstrations, it remains the case that we should accept that such rational demonstration is in principle possible. This is clearly a contentious position in the context of contemporary philosophical theology; and it should be noted that Turner has backed down from the stronger claim about the role of reason in theology that he previously defended in his 2004 book, *Faith, Reason, and the Existence of God*, that the Fathers of the First Vatican Council had solemnly declared as *de fide* that the existence of God is rationally demonstrable.

To illustrate the position he argues for, Turner gives the example of Fermat’s last theorem, the (corrected) proof of which was published in 1995 (see p. 46). Just as this theorem was (let us assume) known to be true even when unproven, and thus for Turner it seems to follow that there had to be in principle a proof of the theorem, so too, Turner suggests, since we can know that God exists, then in not dissimilar fashion there must surely be a demonstrable proof of God’s existence.

I accept that there is an intuitive plausibility to the claim that if we accept the truth of Fermat’s last theorem then it follows that there must in principle be a proof for it. But this is to rely on the intuitive plausibility of a claim that I could also imagine mathematicians arguing about: that there must be a proof for every possible true mathematical theorem. To be fair to Turner, he does not use the Fermat’s theory example as the basis of a proof for his position on faith and reason. But a more revealing problem is that the grasp of the proof of Fermat’s last theorem, being a deductive proof, requires simply the ability to engage with advanced mathematics, whereas Turner’s case in favour of the in principle rational demonstrability of the existence of God turns out to go beyond the specificity of such straightforwardly deductive reasoning to incorporate a much more inclusive conception of reasoning.

My concern is not that Turner proceeds in this direction. It is, rather, that I sensed an under-addressed tension throughout the essay between two different views: God’s existence as rationally demonstrable along the lines of a deductive proof (and thus the sort of proof that should convince anyone without conceptual or factual error and who possesses the intellectual capacity to engage with the methods of proof used) and God’s existence as rationally demonstrable in ways that require engaging with the world in terms that include meaning and value (and thus the sort of proof that would require some element of receptivity to, and appreciation of, the transcendentals of goodness, truth, and beauty).

It also concerns me that Turner makes a number of claims that are disputable and insufficiently argued for. Turner, for example, states: ‘I cannot see Thomas Aquinas being much disconcerted by the nonequivalence of
the divine names, philosophy proving God under one description, faith believing another…” (p. 50). Even if this is largely correct, say, such ease of assertion is problematic given some of Aquinas’s own remarks, such as: ‘Belief in God as descriptive of the act of faith is not attributable to unbelievers. In their belief God’s existence does not have the same meaning as it does in faith. Thus they do not truly believe in God’ (ST 2a2ae 2, 2 ad.3; translation by TC O’Brien). Turner also frequently (e.g., pp. 51, 52) assumes that faith entails knowledge. This is presented without both the subtle qualifications found in Aquinas and the sort of explanation and justification that those shaped by modern epistemology might seek.

Had these concerns been raised in the Q&A following the talk or lecture, I expect that Turner would have given helpful and enlightening responses. In any case, my concerns are few and for the most part minor in the face of a multitude of virtues. A number of the essays can be read as expertly delivered summaries of key ideas and arguments found, albeit sometimes in different form, in some of Turner’s most important books: Julian of Norwich, Theologian; Faith, Reason and the Existence of God; and, to a lesser extent, The Darkness of God (Essays 1, 3, and 6, respectively). This book is thus a wonderful introduction to the thought of Denys Turner as well as the topics he addresses. I was sorry when I came to the end of this book. It was like being in the company of a highly insightful and exceptionally engaging teacher for a couple of hours.

JOHN O’CONNOR OP

THE LORD’S PRAYER [Interpretation: Resources for the Use of Scripture in the Church] by C. Clifton Black, Westminster John Knox, Louisville, 2018, pp. 400, $40.00, hbk

In 2019 French- and Italian-speaking Catholics joined their Spanish brethren in their wording of the sixth petition of the Lord’s Prayer. Their missals now read (here in English): ‘Do not let us fall/give into temptation’. This followed Pope Francis’s statement in December 2017, that ‘temptation’ is not a good translation: ‘It is not [God] that pushes me into temptation and then sees how I fall. A father does not do this. A father quickly helps those who are provoked into Satan’s temptation’ (p. 203). When Black carefully analyses the troublesome peirasmos, he finds that temptation may not be the central issue, when God sometimes uses trials to determine loyalty; that the great apocalyptic testing which brings travail to all is part of the final progress of the kingdom; and that the devil’s temptations are probably not in view here (pp. 205–7). Perhaps the foreseeable ordeal of drawing these worthy thoughts together in a single word or phrase is why the German Catholic Bishops have decided not to make the Pope’s change after all.
The centuries of reciting, studying, and meditating on the Lord’s Prayer make these few verses of two Gospels of immense interest to the churches. The genius of Black’s commentary on the Lord’s Prayer is the thorough-going exegesis of the complexities which his subject contains. So, our believing author (p. xxiii) approaches his subject with historical-critical tools, producing a commentary of interest to the churches’ scholars, teachers, and preachers (p. xxii). To this end it is pleasing to see some direction offered: the Prodigal Son, for example, described as a distinctively Lucan commentary on the Prayer (p. 79). Black is loathe to settle on a single reading of the Prayer’s petitions, especially since facile answers to the thorny questions the Greek presents (and its likely Aramaic foundation, p. 44) are in fact unhelpful.

Two background chapters precede those on individual phrases of the Lord’s Prayer: The Religious World of the Lord’s Prayer (which covers the Greco-Roman, Hebrew Bible, and Second Temple evidence) and Prayer in the Gospels (which begins with Mark and John before Matthew and Luke). The petitions of the Prayer are dealt with in a chapter each. In addition to his superior exegetical work, Black includes some reflections in a pastoral style at the end of each chapter; some appear out of place, but all are designed to assist preachers. We can be grateful that the historical-critical analysis is searching and thorough, even for terms of legendary difficulty such as *epiousios* and *tois opheiletais*. Final chapters are devoted to the doxology with its long, but not likely primitive, history and the ‘pastoral coda’ to apply insights to various contemporary audiences.

Black accords pride of place to neither version found in the Gospels (p. 49), even if he comes down saying Luke’s length is the oldest recorded form (p. 48); he only affirms that Luke’s version may be closer to Q than Matthew’s (p. 46). Mercifully, he does not put forward a primitive pre-Gospel wording of his own; his exegetical attention throughout is on the wording of canonical texts (p. 49). But he is decidedly pessimistic about the evangelists’ transmission of the words of Jesus himself: ‘That oral form is beyond recovery’ (p. 45). Some deeper discussion of orality and transmission would have been welcome in this volume. For example, Chapter Two on ‘Prayer in the Gospels’ could have been better shaped as Prayer in the New Testament, showing how the Gospels can be situated between Paul and the later New Testament and first-century writings. Further, the possible parallels of kingdom/will and temptation/evil might have presented opportunity for uncovering a preserved orality which Luke does not have.

There is also much more work to be done in a volume such as this on the reception of the Lord’s Prayer, especially in the earliest centuries’ writings. For example, he mentions and dismisses the Eucharistic reading of ‘bread’ as the primary referent from which eucharistic readings emerged (p. 149). But how we might reconcile the exclusion of eucharistic readings (p. 149) with the non-privatism of the Prayer itself (p. 78) is not easy to see from Black’s solutions. Similarly, there is little discussion about the
ways the Prayer has been appropriated by artists, musicians, and popular authors. Perhaps Black arrives at the positions already reflected in the reception, but the reader may not be aware how the modern author situates himself within the tradition of praying.

Throughout this volume there is a welcome variety of interpreters’ views presented when those are considered helpful to Black’s historical-critical analysis; there is also a ‘Conspectus of Interpretation’ in an appendix. Of course, Black gives pride of place to Origen, Luther, and Jeremias (p. 49). But among the ancient authors Black draws on, three from North Africa were roughly contemporary: Tertullian, Cyprian, and Origen. Well might we ask what precipitated such revealing and revered treatment of the Lord’s Prayer at that time. Certainly, the cosmologies of biblical demiurgists were perceived as threatening the Christian positivity about the Father’s interest and involvement in his noble creation. From this, could we say that the Lord’s Prayer receives close scrutiny when a prevailing orthodoxy is threatened? What might that say about the task Black set himself, and the people and times he wrote for?

Almost every year of late, the secularising Left in some countries has been moving to scrap public recitation of the Lord’s Prayer. In the name of inclusivity, some progressive Christian and Jewish religious leaders as well as non-religionists have voiced an objection to the Prayer’s appearance in advertising, cinema, and parliament. Black’s commentary may not only be the next stage in the Interpretation series, but it might also signal the continuing decline of religious literacy and tolerance in the West. If that is the case, Black’s commentary shows us how the simplest, most beautiful and familiar prayer which Jesus taught is an offering to God which every Christian ought freely and joyfully to make.

PAUL ROWSE OP


The most important sentence in this collection of essays is in the conclusion written by one of the editors, Fr Andrew Hofer: ‘In renewing Thomistic study with an emphasis on the Greek Fathers, we should not have as the object of our contemplation Thomas Aquinas, but God’. There speaks a true disciple of St Thomas. He and his colleagues are only instrumentally concerned with the facts of St Thomas’s reading of the Greek Fathers; his remarkable knowledge of the teaching of the post-Chalcedonian Councils (Constantinople II and Constantinople III); his evident admiration for Athanasius, Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Damascene, Denys, and Gregory Nazianzen; the ways in which he follows their opinions, or
differs from them. The formal object of most of the contributors to *Thomas Aquinas and the Greek Fathers* is what St Thomas tells us is the object of *sacra doctrina*: God, and other things in relation to God.

The article of Dominic Legge OP is a good example of a properly speculative theology emerging out of a comparative study of authors. By contrasting in one respect the understandings of the Transfiguration to be found in St Thomas and the Greek Fathers, Fr Legge shows that, whereas the latter speak of only one visible mission of the Holy Spirit to the incarnate Word, namely at His Baptism in the Jordan, the former adds that there is a second, on Tabor. ‘[T]his view is, as best as I can discover, first articulated by St Thomas and is an original contribution of his thought’ (p. 13) – that is, to the understanding of the mystery by all the faithful. Legge concludes, turning from what he has found through a comparison of St Thomas’s works with those of the Fathers, to the truth of the matter: ‘As we receive [the] Spirit, we are configured to Christ the natural Son, and thus made adopted sons and daughters of the Father – and so we will shine, we firmly hope, with a glory like what Christ revealed at His Transfiguration’ (p. 29).

John Baptist Ku OP likewise sheds light on the Divine Paternity itself through the careful reading of what St Gregory Nazianzen and St Thomas said about it. He demonstrates that there is ‘a profound agreement’ in the thought of the two Doctors: ‘Namely, (1) the Son, though perfectly equal to the Father and in no way a creature, (2) receives everything that He has from the Father, who produces Him according to a mode of efficient causality, and (3) the Son is in no way less than the Father, but the assertion that the Father is greater than the Son can be correctly said to mean that the Father is the principle of the Son’ (p. 129). Notice, here, how focused Fr Ku is on the consubstantiality and coequality of the Divine Persons, and on the order of the Divine Processions: the analysis of texts and the consideration of differences in historical context are but a means towards attaining the great goal of *intellectus fidei*.

In comparing ‘The Christocentric Mystical Theologies of Maximos the Confessor and Thomas Aquinas’, Bernhard Blankenhorn OP displays not only his intimate knowledge of the *corpus thomisticum*, but also his familiarity with the large contemporary literature relating to Maximos. He states his speculative intention in the first paragraph: ‘My aim is not to argue that Maximos and Aquinas consciously developed theologies of union with God in light of their Christologies. Rather, I seek to exploit the doctrinal potential and implications of their texts’ (p. 182). The question before him is whether the soul’s movement towards intimate union with the Triune God is a Dionysian ascent requiring the transcending of all sensible objects and intelligible forms. Fr Blankenhorn proves to my satisfaction that ‘such a reading of Aquinas is no longer tenable … [and that] Maximos can also be read differently’ (p. 204). Fr Blankenhorn’s summary of St Thomas’s doctrine of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, more exactly of the three Gifts that directly apply to contemplation (Understanding,
Knowledge, and Wisdom), argues that at the summit of mystical union with God, through the Gifts, there is, so to speak, no ‘disincarnation’, in either the bridal soul or the Divine Bridegroom: ‘[T]he intellect’s act still reaches completion by a return to phantasms … Aquinas never denies this principle of Aristotelian epistemology when he studies mystical cognition. *Thomas thus quietly brings history into the cloud*’ (p. 187). The mystic in the state of union remains a man of flesh and blood, of sense and spirit, someone who has faith in, and who loves, the eternal Word made flesh, crucified and risen. Blankenhorn reaches a lyrical expression of the issues at stake: ‘When the Blessed Virgin Mary sensed the baby Jesus kicking in her womb, or when she gazed upon her newborn’s body in Bethlehem, was she still one or two steps below the summit of noetic union with her divine Son? Should we not rather posit her perfect union as occurring simultaneously with the contemplation of her Son’s humanity?’ (p. 204).

I have given special attention in this short review to the contributions of three Dominicans, but in justice I should say that each of their distinguished colleagues should be commended for both the thoroughness of their historical theology and their constant speculative return to the rei veritas. For example, Brian Dunkle SJ’s examination of St Thomas’s use of Chrysostom in the *Catena aurea* and the *Tertia pars* seems at first to be simply a study of St Thomas’s sources, but in fact, in so doing, Fr Dunkle draws the attention of his readers to that much neglected part of the Christology of the *Tertia*: the mysteries of the life of Jesus, His *acta et passa*. What Chrysostom helps Aquinas to see is that the entire life of Jesus, as presented to in the Gospels, is pedagogical, ‘a teaching’ (cf. p. 160f).

Perhaps I am showing my age by regretting the fashion of distinguishing between ‘Thomasian’, the quality of essays and books in which the exegesis of St Thomas’s works is the primary and sometimes seemingly exclusive goal, and ‘Thomistic’, the attribute of writings in which the scholar above all seeks understanding of God and other things in relation to God according to the mind of St Thomas and his commentators. The authors of *Thomas Aquinas and the Greek Fathers* are neither narrowly ‘Thomasian’ nor simply ‘Thomistic’; their Greek Patristics, too, are properly theological without neglect of the investigation of sources and influences. Deploying the best resources in texts and historical scholarship, they try chiefly to understand the mysteries of Divine Revelation according to the minds of St Thomas Aquinas and the Greek Fathers, and in so doing, they demonstrate that these many minds are in a certain way one mind. In this admirable book, which opens new windows for the refreshment of dogmatic theology and the revitalizing of the dialogue between Catholics and Orthodox, Michael Dauphinais and his friends confirm the truth of the bold claim of Cajetan and Pope Leo XIII: ‘Thomas Aquinas venerated the sacred Doctors so much that he inherited the intellect of them all’.

JOHN SAWARD
Michael Sherwin OP is intrigued by the notion of love as charity – as a theological virtue which serves as lynchpin for the spiritual life. Thus, his new collection of essays, On Love and Virtue, like his earlier By Knowledge of Truth and Love, draws the reader into the heart of Catholic spirituality. Yet unlike his earlier monograph, this work assembles writings previously published in journals or delivered as talks. All are interconnected, as the title suggests, by the realities of love and virtue. Following two loosely connected introductory chapters, the core text includes five distinct chapters on love united by a historical thread, and a second section of five chapters on virtue.

Following the teleological structure of Thomas Aquinas’s prima secundae of the Summa Theologiae, Sherwin begins with the end. He touches on Thomas’s teaching on beatitude as a means of undermining dissenters of every era, including those who argued for a purely natural happiness. By way of response, Sherwin affirms the necessary relationship that exists between natural and supernatural happiness and between happiness and the moral life, concluding that nothing created can fulfill man’s deepest desire. In the second essay Sherwin surprisingly selects Robert McNamara and the Vietnam War as a means of contextualizing contemporary errors on love and virtue. He argues that US Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara’s ‘technical rationality’ failed for the same reason that contemporary understandings of love fail – both reduce the irreducible. Thus, twentieth-century ‘utilitarian calculus’ was applied indiscriminately for war and sexual reproduction, following the principle enunciated by Cervantes: El amor y la guerra son una misma cosa.

Sherwin’s survey of key errors leads into a proper discussion of love. Chapter Three, analyzing Chaucer’s first song of love in Troilus and Criseyde, and Chapter Four, a profound historical study defending Augustine’s teaching on love, demonstrate the author’s depth of analysis and breadth of interpretation. Together, these essays create a backdrop highlighting distinctive elements of Aquinas’s teaching, specifically distinctions in defining love: 1) complacentia, ‘with pleasing assent’, preserving concomitantly necessary aspects of passion and of will; 2) dilectio, ‘pleasing to’, implying choice; and 3) amor concupiscentiae (proper to desire), subordinated to yet underlying 4) amor amicitiae (proper to friendship). Such distinctions serve not only to interpret Chaucer’s teaching on the instability of amor concupiscentiae, but also to demonstrate how Aquinas preserved and developed the riches of Augustine’s theology of love rooted in hope.

In the subsequent chapters on love, Sherwin first analyzes the concept of love in the Angelic Doctor’s commentaries on the Scriptures. He then illustrates John Chrysostom’s masterful transformation of the fourth-century social concept of patronal friendship into virtuous love between God and
person, and of person for person in imitation of God’s love. Chapter Eight returns to Augustine, this time, analyzing friendship with the Bridegroom (cf. Jn 3:29). Though applicable to all Christians, Sherwin underscores the pastoral perspective emphasized by Augustine. The final section on virtue follows logically upon the understanding of love both as the first movement of the passions and as the primary Christian virtue. The first article of this section serves as a short introduction, laying out fundamental elements of the discussion of virtue today – specifically on virtue as habit, on the role of knowledge and emotion, and on the necessity of infused virtue for the Christian life.

Chapter Nine is a well-known article published in *The Thomist* in which Sherwin attempts to lay out the distinct nature and necessity of the infused virtues. Matt Talbot provides an apt example not only of the reality of infused virtue in act, but perhaps more importantly, of the interplay between acquired and infused virtues. The debate, while not new, is still relevant, touching upon the ever-new question of the relationship between nature and grace. The subsequent chapter, a reprinted article of 2012, parallels Sanford’s *Before Virtue: Assessing Contemporary Virtue Ethics*. Both address: 1) the return to virtue ethics inspired by Anscombe, Geach, MacIntyre, *et al.*, and 2) the subsequent failure of moral theologians who missed the mark. Some ignored or misinterpreted Anscombe’s demand for ‘an adequate philosophy of psychology’. Others, as Sherwin notes, failed to distinguish between popular virtue ethics and true virtue rooted in Scripture, the Fathers, and Aquinas. Still others stumbled in the face of ‘moral elitism’. Here again, Sherwin renews the call for a return to virtue which avoids error by grounding their theology in the Scriptures and Catholic moral theology as taught by the likes of Augustine and Aquinas. Paralleling an earlier chapter on love, the author includes a discussion of Aquinas’s scriptural commentaries, this time on virtue. All texts are read in the light of a pithy Thomistic phrase in *Super II Corinthians*: fire growing in water (*ignis in aqua crescit*). This vivid image serves to help us grasp the reality behind Paul’s paradoxical teaching that virtue is ‘made perfect in weakness’ (2 Cor 12:3).

The work ends with Christ, which again reveals structural similarities between Sherwin’s work and the *Summa Theologiae*. He concludes the discussion of the life of virtue rooted in charity with a *tertia pars*, a demonstration of how Thomas ‘portrays the Father as a teacher and Christ as what is taught’ (p. 225). Christ manifests himself not only as a model of virtue, but as the model of the teacher of virtue – the master of the art as he demonstrates by his manner of *examinatio de dilectione* (*Super Ioannem* 21.3 – p. 231). Christ’s teaching is not merely about knowledge. Masterfully weaving the theoretical and practical together, Sherwin concludes by referencing the intimate connection Thomas proposes between Christ the Teacher and the Apostolic mission. Delving into the *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Sherwin shows how Thomas believed that those who possess the Spirit’s gift of love in Christ become the friends of Christ.
Thus, virtue which begins as *amor concupiscientiae* truly becomes *amor amicitiae* – and these friends, ‘by living well’ and ‘by teaching well’ will become *magistri orbis terrarum* (*Super Ioannem 6.1 – p. 246*). This work will surely help others to enter into that friendship.

Catherine Joseph Droste OP

The Oxford Handbook of Mary edited by Chris Maunder, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2019, pp. xx + 702, £110.00, hbk

It seems quite difficult to do justice to a collected volume of this size and breadth of subject in such a short review, particularly as Chris Maunder has gathered together so many different contributions from various backgrounds. The first thing to say is that this is not a textbook on mariology and it does not trace, in any systematic way, developments in mariology or consider doctrinal or dogmatic definitions regarding the life and role of the Blessed Mother. In some sense this perhaps makes this collection slightly different to other Oxford Handbooks on, for example, the Trinity or Christology, which are framed in terms of the history of dogma from the Scriptures, through the Fathers, to the Middle Ages and beyond. To be sure, something of this clearer approach remains in the volume’s division into Eastern and Western Christianity, as well as a consideration of Mary from a Reformation and Counter-Reformation perspective. In these sections there are good introductory chapters from Andrew Louth on patristic and contemporary Orthodox considerations of Our Lady, as well as John McGuckin’s introduction to *Mary in the Hymnody of the East*. For the West, good contributions come from Matthew Levering on *Mary and Grace* and Robert Fastiggi on *Mary in the Work of Redemption* and *Mariology in the Counter Reformation*. However even these contributions grouped under Eastern and Western theology do not give a doctrinal history but seem rather to focus on the liturgical celebration of Marian feasts or the devotional practices of particular Christian communities throughout history and in different cultural settings. In many of the contributions, authors simply highlight the difference between Eastern and Western theology on questions like the Immaculate Conception, and after highlighting the difference, do not go on to clarify what these differences actually are, nor do they fruitfully engage with the opposing view. In this sense the volume is something of a lost opportunity.

More fundamentally the different approach taken by Maunder means that this volume loses something of the coherence which the more standard structure provides. But on the other hand, taking this different approach, which focuses more on piety, liturgy, and cultural appropriation of the person of Mary, offers a more varied perspective on the topic. So while those hoping for a systematic exposition of mariology will be...
disappointed, those who are interested in Our Lady as what we might call a cultural icon will find interesting perspectives here.

Much of what is dealt with in this Handbook is sociological or anthropological investigation into the cultural appropriation of Our Lady in various different situations around the world. One particular theme which comes out strongly is her appropriation by migrant groups and the disadvantaged around the world, and of particular interest here is Elina Vuloa’s chapter on female converts from Lutheranism to Orthodoxy among the Skolt Sámi in Finland. Many of these chapters could profitably be read by those in formation for, or those already in, active pastoral ministry, particularly in diverse urban contexts, and might help us to reconsider the place of Marian piety in our liturgical celebrations, particularly when ministering to migrant communities.

One theme dealt with in the final section of the volume is the continued popularity of Marian pilgrimage, apparition, and miracles. Dionigi Albera’s chapter on multi-faith pilgrimage is especially enlightening. The pattern of Muslim pilgrimage to Marian shrines will be familiar to anyone who has travelled to the Middle East or North Africa, and this chapter brings to prominence something which is perhaps forgotten more recently with the rise of the rate of persecution of the Christian minority in the Middle East and Africa. Her chapter offers a new perspective on Muslim pilgrimage, particularly as it has been assimilated by these communities as a form of ziyara or pious visit, to the tombs of Islamic saints. But the chapter does not simply paint the picture of a golden age of tolerance before the twentieth century’s increase in violence between communities, and Albera does show how this practice has always been viewed in a dim light by what she calls ‘rigorists.’

In this final section of the volume we see something of the appropriation of Mary by migrant communities, particularly in Catrien Notermans’s chapter on pilgrimage and African ‘Mary-craft’ in Europe. Notermans’s chapter explores the way in which migrant women with an African Catholic background appropriate knowledge of Marian apparitions and various Marian devotional practices in order to combat witchcraft in their own communities. By doing so, they actually appropriate these Christian practices in a way similar to the witchcraft they seek to fight. This worldview helps them to live in a transnational context, where their families are dispersed to different parts of the world, and gives them a privileged context to live their sometimes lonely lives in a community where they feel safe and respected.

So while this collection is something of a missed opportunity for a real engagement between East and West on theological questions through a historical account of dogmatics, there is still much that can be gained from it. This volume, unlike other Handbooks, has very few chapters which could really usefully be used as introductory texts, but there are some such as Matthew Levering’s on Mary and Grace. The real strength of this collection is the way that it shows something of the universality of devotion to
Our Lady, something which unites Orthodox and Catholic, but also shows Christianity’s ability to stretch to contain a bewildering variety of devotional structures and practices.

ALBERT ROBERTSON OP


In 1607 Pope Paul V brought the Congregatio de Auxiliis to a close. It had been established by Pope Clement VIII in 1597 to assess the orthodoxy of Luis de Molina’s Concordia. Molina’s ideas were innovative and had found favour principally among members of the Society of Jesus. Central to those ideas was the claim that efficacious grace, considered in itself, was ontologically the same as sufficient grace and that therefore the efficacy of actual grace depended upon the free consent of its recipient. Since human free choice determined the efficacy of actual grace, efficacious grace was straightforwardly compatible with human free choice and human beings were free because they were able to do otherwise, ‘granting all the prerequisites for action’ (Concordia I, disp. II, §3).

Paul V’s decision surprised many; Molina had come close to censure no less than six times since the Concordia’s publication (p. 34), at least two of which occasions had occurred during the Congregatio de Auxiliis itself. Moreover Dominicans, with all the prestige of the Thomism at their command, had tended to take a different view and promote it vigorously. That view, known as physical premotion, was principally articulated by Domingo Báñez, a Spanish Dominican and professor of theology at the University of Salamanca. Báñez agreed that human beings were free because they were able to do otherwise – because they had the potential to do otherwise – but he denied that having such potential required that all the prerequisites for action be granted. Since the rational will’s object was the universal good (ST 1a2ae q. 2 art. 8) and any created good was only a limited good, the will was therefore in potency to any such good. As such it needed to be moved to act by something already in act, just as anything in potency did. That mover was God who, uniquely as first cause, could move the will through physical premotion. Efficacious and sufficient grace had to be intrinsically different in order to move the will in different ways, and freedom just required the potential to do otherwise, independently of the prerequisites for action.

This is the debate into which Robert Matava enters with his book Divine Causality and Human Free Choice. It provides a historical, critical, and synchronic study of the de Auxiliis controversy’s ‘select primary sources’ (p. 8) which is useful because we are still waiting for the judgment of the
Holy See in these matters and because Matava’s efforts are focused more towards Báñez, ‘the presently less-studied side’ (ibid.) of the controversy. However, Matava’s intention is not to rehabilitate physical premotion but rather to make a positive contribution of his own. This contribution – that God creates our free acts – is presented in chapter six and is defended in chapter seven. The rest of the book prepares the way for this claim. Hence Matava outlines and rejects the theories of Molina and Báñez in chapters two to four. In chapter five he does the same for Lonergan’s view, whilst in chapter one he outlines the background to and history of the de Auxiliis controversy.

The overall effect is impressive. The book combines careful historical scholarship with acute speculative insight. It is clearly written and will benefit anyone with an interest in the subject matter. It is a significant and worthwhile contribution to the de Auxiliis controversy. Yet for all the book’s strengths one can note areas of concern.

First, as long as one thinks of physical premotion as a kind of motion there is reason to doubt Matava’s characterisation of it as a ‘created reality’ (p. 73). In the Prima pars Aquinas insists creation is proper to beings, that is to subsisting realities or substances. Other realities such as predicamental accidents and forms are merely ‘of a being’ and therefore not created but concreated (concreata) (ST 1a q.45 art. 4). In the Commentary on Aristotle’s Metaphysics, Aquinas further distinguishes motions – imperfect acts – from accidents and substances (In meta. lb. 4, lc. 1, n. 13–15). Hence if accidents are not created then neither are motions and nor is physical premotion. Nor can we infer from this that motions are uncreated: ‘uncreated’ and ‘not created’ have different extensions: only God is uncreated, only substances are created, and anything else is not created, just reduced from potency to act.

Second, suppose Peter does A at t₁ and B at t₂. What guarantees Peter’s identity between t₁ and t₂? On Báñez’s account Peter is a created substance conserved by God between t₁ and t₂ and every other moment Peter exists. It is the created unit – the substance which Peter is – that guarantees Peter’s identity whilst its accidental potency is being reduced to act by other causes. That solution is not available to Matava, however. On Matava’s account the created unit is the substance together with the act (p. 302). Hence we have one created unit at t₁ and a different created unit at t₂ and whichever way Matava tries to explain Peter’s identity between t₁ and t₂, he will not be able to avail of God’s creative act to do so.

Third, given Matava thinks ‘an act of free choice cannot be determined by an exogenous antecedent’ (p. 212) one wonders whether Matava’s view is ultimately too libertarian for it to be legitimately attributed to Aquinas (p. 243). Aquinas thought God could move the will according to its mode (ST 1a2ae q. 113 art. 3) and interiorly (ST 1a q. 105 art. 4). Similarly Báñez thought God could move the will ‘according to the mode of its nature’ (Tractatus II c.1 §6). Since choice is an elicited act of the will we would expect both Aquinas and Báñez to be comfortable with the idea
God can move the will to choose for itself. That Matava is not suggests that whatever the merits of this fine book the view Matava puts forward is not that of Aquinas.

DOMINIC RYAN OP


In 1972, the Oxford Bampton lectures were delivered by Howard E Root, then Professor of Theology at Southampton University. Under the terms of the Bampton bequest, lecturers are required to publish their material, but Root, who died in 2007, omitted to do so. The present volume finally makes the lectures available, and reading them at this historical distance inevitably inspires a certain frustration over what might have been, had they been in the public domain earlier. More positively, there may be something happily providential about their appearing now.

The lectures were given the intriguingly provocative title, the ‘limits of radicalism’, a notion which, for Root’s original audience, will doubtless have drawn particular piquancy from the lecturer’s own radical credentials developed during the previous decade. It has proved an enduring temptation to read these credentials in a somewhat superficially unilateral sense, in terms simply of an obdurate deafness to tradition, and it is a major and praiseworthy concern of his editor to set the record straight. This is clearly an act of justice to Root, which also enables a distinctive and valuable voice to be heard afresh in contemporary dialogue on the nature of theology.

Root was one of the instigators of, and a major contributor to, the symposium of Anglican theologians whose proceedings were published in 1963 as Soundings, under the editorship of Alec Vidler, then Dean of King’s College, Cambridge, and identified, surely plausibly, in the introduction to the present work as ‘probably the most influential volume of essays in British post-war Christianity’. That this influence, however, may on occasions have been in some degree of tension with the essayists’s own academic and apologetic intentions is suggested forcefully by Root’s preoccupations in the Oxford lecture series, which, as Christopher Brewer makes clear in his wide-ranging and helpful introductory essay, represent not a volte-face from, but an organic development of, his earlier work.

Brewer shows how, for instance, in his contribution to Soundings, Root envisages not a dismantling but a reinvigoration of natural theology, and thus not a repudiation, but an admittedly significant reconfiguration of the conventional systematic theological map. The impetus thus to ‘begin all over again’ lies not in a desire to capitulate to some putative set of
epistemological canons derived uncritically from secular modernity and thus of at least dubious authority for Christian theology. Rather, Root is reacting here with a certain scepticism towards the specific, currently somewhat modish, neo-orthodox tendency to disdain the deliverances of human reason per se, itself a highly eccentric position, of course, vis-à-vis many more venerable statements of the nature of the theological task within Root’s own Anglican communion as elsewhere. Root thus shows himself to be truly radical, perhaps, in the etymological sense of a willingness to return, albeit critically, to the roots of methodological practice, but scarcely in the more colloquial neophiliac one (a paradox to which he draws attention in the course of his own exploration of the nature of tradition). What is newly required is a re-examination of the scope of natural theology which, for Root, centrally invites reflection on the arts as theological resource, a point which he notes repeatedly in the Bampton lectures, and which shows him, suggestively, prefiguring certain contemporary emphases on the role of aesthetic categories in theology.

Root’s exploration of the relationship – symbiotic, he considers, rather than parasitic or simply oppositional – between tradition and radicalism as the latter is more conventionally conceived has lost nothing of its force since the lectures were delivered. Similarly, his treatment of the non-univocity of doctrinal statements, revealing striking points of connection between the hermeneutical presuppositions of those who would conventionally be labelled dichotomously as ‘progressive and conservative’ (or, indeed ‘radical and traditional’), is of enduring significance. So, too, surely, is his suggestive evaluation of the celebrated question posed by Leonard Hodgson to theologians and biblical scholars at once convinced of, and perplexed by, the ineradicably historical character of Christianity: what must the truth be, and have been, if it appeared like that to men who thought and wrote as they did? To be assured that this question is strictly unanswerable, and that a proper sense of historical responsibility does not require us to ‘spend most of our time trying to re-create within ourselves, a whole mentality foreign to our time’ is not, of course, to foreclose the question of the possibility of genuinely diachronic theological conversation. Rather, it is to underline the urgency of continuing to ask what this might in practice mean.

A significant factor in Root’s theological development is, as Brewer points out, his ecumenical commitment. An observer at two sessions of Vatican II, Root had, when he delivered the Bampton lectures, been for two years a participant in the first phase of the ARCIC dialogue. It would be interesting to know, therefore, whether his relatively muted treatment here of the notion of authority in theology was dictated at least in part by a tactful reticence about stressing what divides rather than what unites. It certainly should not be held against Root that he fails to provide a comprehensive answer to the issue of how far one might look to ecclesial agencies for guidance in doctrinal decision making. But it is certainly striking that he barely raises the question.
The retrieval of Root’s 1972 Bampton lectures is perhaps in itself best seen as a small but significant exercise in Anglican *ressourcement*, and Brewer is to be congratulated on the meticulous way in which he has accomplished it. The inclusion in this volume of Root’s 1967 Southampton Inaugural lecture, in which many of the same themes are rehearsed proleptically, and which would make a fine addition to an introductory reading list on fundamental theology, is particularly welcome. These are texts that deserve a far wider audience than that of specialists in the history of late 20th-century Anglophone academic theology, though they in particular will find much here to applaud.

ANN SWAILES OP