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Reviews

THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT edited by Kevin J. Vanhoozer with assistance from Daniel J. Treier and N.T. Wright *SPCK* London, 2008, pp. 240, £10.99 pbk

This 'book-by-book survey' of the New Testament asks in its introduction, 'what, then, could possibly justify adding one more item to an already well-stocked inventory?' (p. 13), and this is a good question. The book presents an anthology of exegesis of each book of the New Testament (there is a companion volume for the Old Testament) with contributing authors each tackling a specific text. And its aim is clear: 'our hope is that this work will encourage others to recover biblical studies as a properly theological discipline' (p. 16). This takes on an even more particular veneer: 'theological interpretation of the Bible, we suggest, is biblical interpretation oriented to the knowledge of God' (p. 24). It is a confessional interpretation, of use to the church. Praiseworthy enough, yet the question that is posed at the outset hangs over the whole work: what justifies one more book asking for a theological approach to Scripture?

Part of the answer, Vanhoozer describes, is leading by example. The academic theologians contributing to the volume are seeking to demonstrate what is meant by theological interpretation of scripture and so begin a "recovery" of such an approach. So, not only should the book bring its readers to assess the Bible in terms of its object, namely, God and his salvific actions in history, but these chapters will also suggest what results this approach might yield for each book of the New Testament.

Since such an anthology with diverse authorship is always likely to be diverse in approach, it is not an ideal format to provide a clear example of what is thought to be missing in other interpretative methods, which is the very goal of the book. This problem is noted for, 'the present volume is less a manifesto for a single way of interpreting the Bible theologically than it is a call to theological interpretation and a display of "best practice"' (p. 23). Yet, already, the purpose is weakened it seems to me. Is the gap between theology and biblical criticism really so large that any foray into theological interpretation is enough to plug it? Surely there are already approaches to exegesis that seek to receive the text as one leading to a greater knowledge of God? (One thinks of canon criticism, pioneered by Brevard S. Childs.) The unity is presumably found in the interpretative goal, rather than the specific approach. The authors here are seeking to interpret the scripture as revealing God and leading them towards God, but this is a far-reaching goal indeed.

Even so, there needs to *be* a goal or a structure that the editors want explored when looking at a specific biblical text, to exemplify the type of interpretation or interpretations the book supports. So Vanhoozer gives us the brief that was presented to the authors of the chapters:

> Each author was asked to discuss something of the history of the interpretation, the theological message for the book, its relation to the whole canon, its unique contribution to the people of God, and to provide a brief bibliography for readers who may wish to probe further (p. 23).

This is quite a task in just the few pages each New Testament book is given. The purpose, then, is to begin (or begin *anew*) the project of the theological interpretation of Scripture, and to encourage others to take it on in similar vein as a method seeking knowledge of God and so of use to the church.

So, does the book justify its contribution in this regard? As noted, the first problem for the project is one of space. All 27 books of the New Testament are scrutinised yet the volume extends to just 250 pages. The lack of room to explore interpretations must be the reason for the summary exegesis, each chapter only giving a snapshot into what scripture might offer us were we to open it in this way. It can be said that the point of the book is only to *introduce* such an approach, but without sufficient space all the authors can do is summarise some of the theological exegesis that has been achieved, choosing what seems most important to them and drawing some conclusions. There is little space in which to present an example of "best-practice".

Also, as Vanhoozer notes, 'not all authors answered this editorial call in the same way' (p. 23). There is no unified example of theological interpretation with which to recover biblical theology. As mentioned, the apparent unity in an interpretative goal of 'growing in knowledge of God' is far too vague to cope with the format of many contributors. While there are of course different approaches to the Bible as God's Word, the intention to display "best-practice" – leading by example in the (new?) field of theological interpretation – results, it is acknowledged, in *diverse* interpretations. Not then a clear example. However, as is explained, "(t)his is intentional; we are only at the beginning stages of recovering this complex practice" (p. 23).

And this is the underlying difficulty – the unexplained assumption that theological interpretation of the New Testament needs recovering at all. I do not see that we are at the beginning stages of recovering such a practice. Indeed in 1992 Childs wrote a work entitled *Theological reflections on the Christian Bible* while already in 1980 James Barr published *Historical Reading and the Theological Interpretation of Scripture* (in *The Scope and Authority of the Bible*). If these and the many other past examples of engagement with and exercise of theology in scriptural interpretation are not adequate we are not told why. If these are examples of the type of practice this book seeks to recover, we are not told this either.

Although the authors here offer valuable theological insights and useful summaries of biblical thought what is missing is a demonstration that existing interpretation lacks such a theological imagination or purpose, that current scholarship requires to be shown what is meant by theology in the Bible, and even that a trajectory of biblical theology has actually been stifled and needs to be recovered. The assumption is that such theological approaches are few and far between among students of the Bible but there is no argument or evidence to show that this is the case.

One clue as to the precise need identified by the editors is in the confessional purpose of such interpretation. It is clear that what is meant by theological interpretation from the editors' point of view refers to an appreciation of its subject and source – God. And this highlights another mistaken presupposition of the book: that interpreting the Bible as a believer for the church is a uniform concept; that everyone understands the same thing by ecclesial authority and even by theological interpretation.

This work certainly has value as a textbook for those studying the Bible for the first time and is very useful as a good summary of Christian thought on the texts of the New Testament. However, the book is too diverse and too brief to realise its desire to be a starting point for 'biblical scholars, theologians, pastors

and laypeople' (p. 22) entering into theological interpretation. I am not at all sure it can answer adequately the question with which it began.

BRUNO CLIFTON OP

WISDOM IN THE FACE OF MODERNITY: A STUDY IN THOMISTIC NATURAL THEOLOGY by Thomas Joseph White OP, *Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University*, 2009, pp. xxxiv + 320 and $32.95 pbk

In its decree *Optatam Totius* (On Priestly Training) Vatican II required that 'In order that students for the priesthood may illumine the mysteries of salvation as completely as possible they should learn to penetrate them more deeply with the help of speculation, under the guidance of St. Thomas [Aquinas], and to perceive their interconnections' (§16). In his encyclical *Fides et Ratio* John Paul II also stressed this point, qualifying it by saying 'the Church has no philosophy of its own'. Yet in this twenty-first century with its post-foundationalism there is still radical disagreement among scholars, even Catholic ones, about the validity of Thomistic metaphysics, the very heart of St. Thomas' philosophical thought.

A major effort to meet this problem has recently been supplied by a theologian at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington D.C., Thomas Joseph White. In his Introduction and Part I White explores the accusation by Martin Heidegger that any 'metaphysics', such as that of Aquinas, finally collapses into a Kantian 'ontotheology', in which all concepts and principles are purely mental inventions. (This view is supported by and supports the current popularity of such atheistic books as Richard Dawkins' *The God Delusion* (2006) and the physicist Victor J. Stenger's *God: The Failed Hypothesis* (2007)). White's book, with its extensive bibliography, is a very penetrating Thomistic defense of the existential validity of metaphysics and of a metaphysical natural theology.

Part II deals with Aristotle's break with Plato and concludes 'In contrast to Heidegger's characterization of ontotheology . . . the logos of Aristotelian metaphysics is not reducible to the techne of rhetoric — a discourse constructed for merely instrumental and political ends' (p. 66). White then asks whether Thomas, although he certainly follows Aristotle, differs from him (1) in thinking always in a theological context; (2) in denying that, as Aristotle seems to think, since the universe exists necessarily, God is not truly a Creator in the biblical sense; (3) in emphasizing that there is not only an analogy of proportionality (A is to B as C is to D) between imperfect creatures and a perfect First Cause, and also a causal analogy of attribution of creatures to God of the *multa ad unum* type, but also of the *ad alterum* type. Analogy of attribution *ad unum* is a set of relations of many effects to a single cause such as the ten Aristotelian categories have to *ens commune*, but is *ad alterum* when nine categories of properties other than substances are considered as the effects of the single category of substance. If for Aristotle the relation of lesser beings is only one of the attribution *multa ad unum*, then for him God again is not, as for Aquinas, strictly speaking the Creator. (4) 'How can a Thomist attain demonstrative knowledge of God that is analogical, based upon a causal study of the beings we experience?' (5) Can the human person supply an analogy to God with respect to intelligence and will? Some historians think that Aristotle held that since God is 'Thought Thinking Itself' God does not know the universe that he causes. White admits these obscurities in the Aristotelian texts as we have them, but holds, as I would do, that Aquinas clarifies them in important ways.

Moving in Part III to twentieth-century interpretations of Thomas, White deals very effectively with the existentialist views of Etienne Gilson, known for his

opposition to the Louvain transcendental Thomism that was better known to Heidegger. From 1929 to his death in 1979 Gilson headed the Medieval Institute of Toronto and his anti-Aristotelian interpretation of Thomism as rooted in the 'judgment of *esse*' has predominated in Canada and the USA, especially through John Wippel at the Catholic University of America. White concludes that the more Gilson separated Thomism from Aristotelianism and placed its 'analysis in the service of the defense of Christian teaching within theology', the more his view also became liable to what Heidegger attacked as ontotheology.

Next White discusses Jacques Maritain's view that Thomist philosophy is rooted in an 'intuition of being', a theory familiar to me personally from a brilliant disciple of Maritain's, my revered teacher Yves Simon of the Universities of Notre Dame and Chicago. White applauds Maritain's 'personalism' but claims (pp. 156f) that it is 'a philosophical exposition of metaphysics [that] lacks a study of the intrinsic causes of being qua being, meaning a study of the substance and actuality as the formal and final causes of a thing's existing'. This criticism I deal with below.

Then White takes up the personalism of the Jesuit thinkers Joseph Maréchal and Karl Rahner, in which the human person is a 'Being-Toward Truth' and concludes (p. 198) that 'suggestive as Rahner's thought is, it leaves unresolved the question of in what way really (if at all) human spiritual acts of knowledge and love are analogous to the transcendent wisdom and love of God'.

In Part IV White gives his own reading of Aquinas (pp. 206–216), which he opposes in detail to that given by Ralph McInerny in his *Praeambula Fidei: Thomism and the God of the Philosophers* (2006) and my own *The Way Toward Wisdom: An Interdisciplinary and Contextual Introduction to Metaphysics* (2006). We and others hold that there would be no science of metaphysics (as Aristotle shows in *Physics* VIII and Aquinas in his commentary expounds without dissent) unless natural science (*physica* which Aquinas never separates from the 'philosophy of nature') has first proved the existence of spiritual beings, including the First Uncaused Cause. White admits (pp. 206–210) that this position is a 'reasonable viewpoint', but finds it 'insufficient or problematic' for six reasons.

First, it is contrary to many statements by St. Thomas: *Quod primo cadit in intellectu est ens* — 'what first falls under the intellect is being'. White admits, however, that many notions such as substance and the categories are first grasped intellectually only in a 'vague embryonic way . . . from the time of our initial experiences of the world'. Thus it is not sufficient to form a valid metaphysics that we have a vague intuition that immaterial as well as material causes exist. Throughout all human cultures there are beliefs in spiritual realities, but only with Greek philosophy (and perhaps later the philosophies of India) did these become sufficiently defined as to make them principles of strict demonstration in an analytic discipline. Unfortunately this historic fact undercuts White's position as well as those of Gilson and Maritain.

Second, White argues that natural science depends on metaphysics for its own principles. I grant of course that it is a task of metaphysics, once its validity has been demonstrated, to review the definitions and principles of all the inferior sciences by relating them to each other. But for Aristotle and Aquinas it can do this demonstratively only after natural science has first established that a First Non-material Uncaused Cause of motion, change, causality, and the categories has been demonstrated to exist. Metaphysics reflects on the findings of the other disciplines; it does not demonstrate them. Yet its proper object, according to Aquinas, is not God, but *ens commune* and the transcendentals, such as One, True and Good, analogically found in all the sciences. God, on the contrary, as Aquinas shows in the *Proemium* of his *Commentary on the Metaphysics*, is not included in the formal object of metaphysics, but is its goal. Aristotle in the *Physics* established these principles from sense experience from the sensible

fact of motion, while in the *Metaphysics* he compares and distinguishes their analogical meanings in all the analytic disciplines. Therefore Metaphysics is called First Philosophy not because it is first known, but on the contrary it is last known and should be studied only after the other disciplines because it is a reflection and comparison of their respective findings.

Recently the noted physicist Anthony Rizzi, Director of the Institute for Advanced Physics (cf. www.iapweb.org), in *The Science Before Science* (2004) and *Physics for Realists* (2008), has shown that modern science can in fact establish the validity of Aquinas' metaphysics if it is understood in a truly empirical way, rather than as what Maritain calls an 'empiriological' way, that is, as merely a set of mathematical models that can be used dialectically in research but that can never be precisely and positively demonstrative. Aristotle and Aquinas admitted that such a 'mixed science' has research value, but because its explanations are only dialectical it cannot ground metaphysics. Rizzi goes beyond Maritain, however, in proposing to rethink modern science on the basis of Aristotle's realistic and demonstrative Physics. This need in no way neglect the value of modern scientific theories, including evolution, but reconciles its dialectical theories with a genuine science of nature. It is this direction that I also believe Thomism should take in order for it to reconcile modern science and the Catholic Faith, a major task recognized but not solved by Vatican II. White does not deal with this promising project.

White's third point is that 'the proposal that the object of metaphysics is provided by natural philosophy insofar as the latter yields a demonstration of immaterial substance, flies in the face of Aquinas' explicit proposals.' He then refers to many texts where Aquinas speaks of immaterial substances from a metaphysical viewpoint, but I have already admitted this. Moreover, White does not explain why Aristotle's *Physics* and Aquinas' commentary, which both these authors say should be studied before metaphysics, avoids any demonstrations not directly based on sense experience. Again White simply assumes that the *Physics* VIII proof of the existence of a First Cause is metaphysical not physical.

The fourth point raised by White is that 'no proper analogy for transcendent being is possible if there is not initially some knowledge of being as a proper object given in common human experience'. He means by this that 'at the very least, these notions [motion, subsistence, actuality, potency] as they are employed in the *Physics* are already implicitly metaphysical, and become in some sense explicitly so even at the term of the argumentation of Aristotle's (and Aquinas') natural science. If this were not the case, not only would the final primary mover of Aristotle's *Physics* literally be unthinkable, but also any possible metaphysics of God would disseminate into unintelligible polysemy. From terms taken from the physical world, we could derive only a purely equivocal language for the divine'. This objection takes us back to White's first point. I would note, however, that while to declare that an Unmoved First Cause of natural motion exists and is the cause of the existence of all natural motions requires us to admit that such a First Cause is only analogically a 'cause', this, however, does not result in pure equivocation but in an analogy of attribution *ad alterum*, as White rightly insists, and then consequently in analogies of proportionality, as many other Thomists have shown.

White's fifth criticism of McInerny's and my views is '[I]f we cannot know being conceptually from the start based upon direct experiences, we never will come to know this object through purely mediate and non-experiential philosophical demonstrations'. This objection is really the same as the first point above. The Aristotelian view against Plato that Aquinas accepted, and McInerny and I defend, is that all our natural knowledge is based on sense experience. In every demonstrative discipline, however, the definition of terms and the principles of that science are abstracted from this direct sense knowledge as material being

in its *essentia* and its correlative *esse*, either in a vague or in a scientific way. Thus the scientific fact of the existence of material being would be true even if there were no immaterial beings, although in fact by arguing from effect to cause Aristotle in *Physics* VIII shows this is not the case.

White's sixth point is that our 'textual citations of Aquinas to the effect that without the demonstrations of immaterial substance natural science would be 'first philosophy' are not entirely transparent. Equally reasonable alternative interpretations of these passages exist'. This also reduces to White's first point, since for him the fact that a term is 'real' and not merely 'logical' means that it is implicitly metaphysical, while for McInerny and me this merely means it is known in a vague common sense way and not in a demonstrative, scientific way, which is what is required to have a demonstrative discipline of metaphysics. White seems to admit my position is valid (p. 216), but wants also to leave room for his position which is the subject of his book that seeks to dialogue with current thought. He has in fact left metaphysics without a defense in the face of modern science and today such a valid defense is what is sorely needed. Without it the harmony between reason and Christian faith John Paul II calls for in his encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* remains dubious. If Thomists are to maintain the light of St. Thomas in the service of theology and the Church we must face up to the confusions produced by the mathematicism of modern science that has become a set of technologies that are practically very effective but intellectually obscure. Therefore we need not only to attack the Heideggerian claim that St. Thomas' metaphysics is nothing but a Kantian ontotheology but must first establish that it is itself valid because founded in the directly empirical principles of natural science.

Too often it is forgotten that the distinction of 'science' from 'philosophy' is not Thomistic. For Aquinas 'philosophy' included all the rational disciplines. These were analogically united and clarified, first by a comparison of their terms and then by their relation to a non-material First Cause by 'First Philosophy.' This came to be called (probably by the editors of the Aristotelian corpus) 'metaphysics.' Such terms as 'psychology', 'ontology', and 'epistemology', were introduced into Neo-Scholasticism by the German Protestant hypnotist (!) Rudolph Glocenius (1547–1628). They came to influence the Thomism of Leo XIII's Revival through the textbooks of the Enlightenment thinker Christian Wolff (1679–1754). Wolff divided 'empirical psychology' from 'rational or philosophical psychology' and thus initiated the modern separation in our universities of 'science' from 'philosophy' and the classifying of the latter with the 'humanities' as against the 'sciences.' Regrettably White's helpful book, like so many others on the subject, is still caught in Wolff's confused terminology and his Neo-Scholastic division of the sciences.

BENEDICT ASHLEY OP

MEISTER ECKHART AN ASIAN PERSPECTIVE by Hee-Sung Keel (Louvain Theological & Pastoral Monographs 36) *Peeters Press*, Louvain, Paris and Dudley MA, 2007, pp. xii + 319, £24.50 pbk

Hee-Sung Keel's efforts 'to illumine the thought world of Meister Eckhart in the light of Asian religious traditions in general,' (p. x) as he states, is an admirable undertaking. His conviction that Eckhart 'and most of the illustrious Asian religious thinkers share a fundamental belief in divine human unity as the core of their thoughts,' (p. xi) is perhaps ambitious but plausible. He clarifies this stating 'What I have sought to do in this book is to demonstrate broadly a fundamental unity of spirit between Eckhart's mystical thought and traditional Asian religio-philosophical thought in general' (p. xi). He does not disappoint

in his attempting to meet these goals. But he goes on to declare, 'My primary intention in writing this book is to share the great joy I had in discovering Eckhart's thought . . . ' (p. xi). He certainly maintains this intention throughout, and yet we see his real purpose when he declares: 'Above all, I have written this book in order to stimulate interreligious dialogue and strengthen our vision of the spiritual unity of mankind' (p. xii). Indeed Keel has undertaken a most promising work but one that I fear falls short of the mark and does more damage to interreligious dialogue than it does good.

Meister Eckhart An Asian Perspective leaves the genuine disciple of Eckhart puzzled and the sensitive student of world religions wondering. I think one could argue that the trouble arises from the word 'perspective' which can imply a relative view that makes subjective the object seen. One of the important principles of interreligious dialogue is fairness and accuracy in presenting one's own tradition and when characterizing another's. This requires a level of detail and precision that, when it is lacking, ill serves the dialogue. Keel himself is aware of this when he qualifies his purpose saying 'religious tradition in general' or, 'to demonstrate broadly' or, 'a fundamental unity of spirit' and, 'thought in general'.

This is especially unfortunate in the case of Meister Eckhart whose thought merits more clarification and greater nuance than Keel gives. One such example is in Eckhart's understanding of *imago dei* or image. On page 112 Keel disparages as inadequate the notion of image for Eckhart without giving a reasonable argument for stating this but telling the reader 'as we shall see' with no reference as to where this discussion is treated. It takes a trained eye to see that in fact it never is adequately examined, for on page 152 Keel again tells us of the inadequacy of *imago dei* for Eckhart, with no more explanation than to say 'as we have discussed earlier' (where exactly this took place escaped this reader). He then concludes that Eckhart 'was not entirely happy with the concept of image . . . .' Interreligious dialogue ought not to be built on such thin argumentation, for it serves no one well.

Another difficulty is in Keel's generalizations of Christianity and his allegation that it is dualistic. In so broadly characterizing Christianity he does a disservice to the ecumenical reality of post Enlightenment Christianity and Catholic Christianity, of Gnostic elements and orthodox teaching. This prejudice undermines Keel's efforts throughout even to his conclusion where he states: ' . . . the fact that it [Eckhart's thought] is remarkably free from the 'dualistic' mode of thinking that has dominated Christian theology from antiquity down to the present day: the dualism of God and the world, the supernatural and the natural, grace and nature, the religious and the secular, this world and the other world, reason and revelation, as well as the dualism of spirit and matter, the soul and the body' (p. 295). Such a statement fails to appreciate Christianity's battle against dualism from Nicea in 325 to the present, and why Keel fails to understand the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation that is so essential to Eckhart's notion of *Gottesgeburt*.

This brings me to another difficulty. Early on Keel made the decision, the wrong decision, to do only a partial reading of Eckhart. This decision to ignore or limit Eckhart's Latin works does a disservice to Eckhart and misleads the reader. In chapter one after dismissing the Latin works Keel states: 'From a religious perspective, we might even argue that the *real* Eckhart if not the historical Eckhart, is found in his German works' (p. 29) [emphasis is Keel's]. I am dumbfounded that any contemporary scholar would exclude half an author's *opus* in this way. Eckhart's brilliance is as present in the Latin works as it is in the German and I frankly find Keel's decision irresponsible. Finally there are a number of statements Keel makes that are false or simply ignorant. I offer just two examples. Again in his arguing for a partial reading of Eckhart Keel states, 'As if he [Eckhart] had felt constrained by the strict boundary of thought set by the church, the Dominican gave vent to his thought *ad libitum* in his mother

tongue in front of mostly nontheological audiences [sic]' (p. 29). This completely ignores the subtlety of thought and genius of expression found in Eckhart's Latin commentaries on *Genesis*, *Exodus* or *John*; or his tenacious argumentation in the *Parisian Questions*; or his inspirational preaching found in his Latin sermons. Furthermore it renders insignificant the theological capacity of the women religious that constituted much of Eckhart's so-called 'nontheological audiences.' Secondly, Keel shows limited understanding of the last twenty years of research into the nature of the bull of condemnation when he states, 'And for this boldness he had to pay the price of being condemned for spreading heretical ideas' (pp. 297–98).

Perspective can be extremely valuable when it does justice to the wider realities. However perspectives can often be quite relative and partial. There is much of value in Keel's work: his delight in discovering Eckhart, his effort to engage Western Christianity and Asian thought, as well as his efforts at interreligious dialogue. But at the risk of seeming harsh, I must say that Keel's 'Asian Perspective,' while promising to achieve so much in its broad and general claims, could have done so much more. Unfortunately what could have fostered both interreligious understanding of Eckhart and the critical study of the divine and human dimensions of Christianity's Incarnation, and similar notions in the great Asian religions, was difficult to see.

MICHAEL DEMKOVICH OP

CAMBRIDGE THEOLOGY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: ENQUIRY, CONTROVERSY AND TRUTH by David M. Thompson *Ashgate*, Aldershot, 2008, pp. x + 208, £55.00 hbk

As every schoolchild knows, the two premier Universities of England are Oxford and Cambridge, both of which can boast, since the Reformation, a continuous history of theological study albeit outside the embrace of the mother who bore them. It befits the journal of the English Dominicans, who are planted in their groves, to allow some assessment of what these Faculties have been about. In what concerns the crucial nineteenth century background to twentieth and early twenty-first century endeavour, far more is known about Oxford than Cambridge. So David Thompson, professor of modern Church history at Cambridge, rightly remarks in explanation for writing this expensive but well-produced book. Why do I call the nineteenth century background 'crucial'? In institutions defined by traditions of learning, it was then that a frame was put in place for the epistemological issues raised by the secularization of the European mind. It was then, too, that fundamental decisions were made as to how to approach the emerging higher criticism of the Bible, theology's core text. Naturally, subsequent intellectual revolutions could not be ruled out. But when they occur they will generally be found to take their shape from accepting some features of an inheritance and abreacting – which is also a form of indebtedness – to others. A syndrome is constructed with which any *doctor catholicae veritatis* must reckon in this place and time.

Cambridge has known a continuous tradition of theological study – inevitably, since dons were clergymen and the University, until the late nineteenth century, was a part, in effect, of the Church of England. But a 'Theological Tripos' dates only from 1871, even if a 'Voluntary Theological Examination' was put in place thirty years earlier. Significantly, only the Lady Margaret chair, the creation of a major figure in the Catholic 'Pre-Reform', was well endowed. In what concerns systematic theology, as that discipline was known in Lutheran Germany, Calvinist Scotland, and Catholic Europe, Anglicanism was handicapped

by an institutional deficit – not least at Cambridge. As Thompson shows, this had (among signal disadvantages) one manifest advantage. The opportunity was to hand for theological energy to be dedicated instead to the felt issues of the hour. In this case, those issues were chiefly the apologetic defence of Christian truth claims, and the need to take up some view on the new biblical scholarship coming across the German Ocean. Still, the pre-eminent Cambridge professors of the latter part of the century, J. B. Lightfoot, B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort, were, after all, in priest's orders, if not indeed, as the first two of that trio, eventually bishops. As Thompson shows, ecclesiality – the indispensable place of the *ecclesia* in doctrinal thinking, downplayed, except in a political sense, in the first half of the nineteenth century – certainly entered their thought.

It is good, though, that Thompson, himself a Disciple of Christ who accepted ordination in the United Reformed Church, has included in this survey the Protestant Nonconformists permitted to take up teaching posts from 1871 (though not to take degrees in Divinity till 1913). The star of his study, in my judgment, is the Congregationalist Peter Taylor Forsyth in whom the gift of constructive dogmatics was far more fully displayed than in any of the Anglican writers discussed. Perhaps I am influenced here by the deep respect in which Hans Urs von Balthasar held Forsyth's writings.

What should a Catholic reviewer make of this history, relayed as it is with an impressive panoply of reference to primary sources as well as a palpable mastery of secondary discussion? Thompson brings out the commitment, at least as old as Paley, to natural theology and apologetics, disciplines that have an honoured place in classical Catholic theology too. Paley's rejection, widely shared at Cambridge, of the 'habit of presenting the doctrines of Christianity before any consideration of its proofs' (p. 30) is a different matter. The organism of doctrine, in its beauty and power of illumination, is in itself, at the hands of successful dogmaticians, a suasion to faith. The primacy accorded by Cambridge to apologetics – including here the critical but believing study of the biblical text – helps to explain its lack of hospitality to systematics. The late twentieth century movement Radical Orthodoxy, which errs in the opposite direction, was Cambridge-born but cannot be said to have fared well at Cambridge hands.

In his epilogue Thompson remarks that the influential 1961 essay collection *Soundings*, by considering objections, philosophical or exegetical, to Christian belief, points to the twentieth century continuance of a recognisably Cantabrigian set of concerns. He also records the comment of its editor, Alec Vidler, that no theological synthesis lay behind it. In retrospect, it was a pity that Michael Ramsey, author of *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* as well as Christological studies open to the integration of exegesis with doctrine, did not stay long enough (1950–1952) at Cambridge to make his mark. Not that Ramsey could have furnished an epistemology fit for theology to live with. In that regard we might be inclined to regret more the evanescence of the influence of Coleridge – though Thompson's account thereof does not sound the depths once explored by Colin Gunton of King's College, London (not accidentally, perhaps, a fish from the same pond as Forsyth, if we allow the United Reformed Church to be English Congregationalism's legitimate successor). Of the two Roman Catholics who, in more recent years, have held an institutional chair in Cambridge Divinity (Nicholas Lash and Denys Turner), one was chiefly a methodologist and the other a (short-lived) philosopher of religion. Neither, unless I am mistaken, gave much of an impetus to dogmatics proper so called. Nor, with the flight to the Scottish Universities of such Oxford figures as John Webster and Oliver O'Donovan, can it be said that – despite the Tractarian imprint, and the subsequent Celtic visitations of John Macquarrie and Rowan Williams – doctrinal thought has currently a very favourable environment in the 'other place'. Sympathetic readers of *Theology in the Public Square* (2005), by Gavin d'Costa of the University of Bristol, may find

their prejudices confirmed by these indications of limits on scope in the premier league.

AIDAN NICHOLS OP

THE JUNG-WHITE LETTERS edited by Ann Conrad Lammers and Adrian Cunningham *Routledge*, London and New York, 2007, pp. xxxii + 384, £50 hbk

The exchange between Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) and Fr Victor White OP (1902–1960), published for the first time as a whole in this volume, exemplifies one of last century's brilliant dialogues of faith and science. It illustrates the hopes of interdisciplinary work between psychology and Christian thought. However, it also brings to the fore one striking failure in the process of theoretical bridge-making.

The conditions for the encounter were ripe on both sides. Jung's novel stance in the psychological establishment of the early 1900s had set the stage by rejecting Freud's depreciation of religion and culture. Moreover, in the field of empirical psychology, Jung was making one of the most important contributions to the recognition of religious experience as a potentially positive psychological phenomenon. From the late twenties, the Swiss psychologist and founder of Analytic Psychology published several notable articles that made overtures to Catholicism. Jung expressed an appreciation for its sensitivity to the feminine (especially its veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary), its respect for humanity and reason (in contradistinction to the *sola fide* vision that he received from his father, who was a Zwinglian Pastor), and its inclusiveness (integrating elements from diverse cultures and religions).

White had earnestly been engaging contemporary science from an orthodox Catholic perspective. His serious openness to the psychological sciences imitated the model of his mentor St Thomas Aquinas instead of the reified manuals that for centuries had tended toward legalistic and static views on ethics and philosophical psychology. However, as for Aquinas' dialogue with Aristotelian science and psychology, White ran the risk of incomprehension on two sides: both from those who did not understand the potential and place of contemporary psychological typologies, especially in the wake of Catholic resistance to reductionist trends in modern sciences (the Modernist crisis), and from those who misjudged the level at which insights from empirical psychology and world religions could be integrated into a Catholic metaphysical worldview and theological value-system.

White initiated the dialogue with Jung in 1945, at a time when the older man was open to finding a collaborator within the Catholic Church. White, one of the foremost English Dominicans of the time, boldly sent the Swiss psychologist several essays written between 1942 and 1945 that displayed his capacity to synthesize Jung's psychology with orthodox Catholic thought, cogently calling on Scriptural, Patristic, Medieval, and Magisterial sources. White expressed his understanding of and optimism concerning Jung's theories, for example, on individuation, collective unconscious, integration, agency, and the spiritual meaning of psychic energy and emotions.

Jung responded to the priest's letter and articles with surprising enthusiasm, reporting to White: 'You are to me a white raven inasmuch as you are the only theologian I know of who has really understood something of what the problem of psychology in our present world means. You have seen its enormous implications' (p. 6). From the start, nonetheless, Jung had to address questions that the English Dominican posed about the psychologist's notion of transcendence and Christianity. Jung was open and remarked, 'I would need some solid theological

help. I realise that it can come only from the catholic side, as the *sola fide* standpoint of the protestant has lost the Tradition of the doctrine too much to be useful in disentangling the knots in the empirical material' (p. 8). White immediately took up the invitation.

In addition to the carefully edited correspondence, Lammers and Cunningham include other unpublished or hard to find texts to complete the context. Murray Stein pens a helpful foreword and in her masterful introduction Ann Lammers outlines the protagonists' distinct philosophical backgrounds and belief systems. The first appendix provides further correspondence by Jung about White, which gives another side of the psychologist's consideration of the English Dominican as well as information about White's death. Appendix Two contains Adrian Cunningham's extensive memoir of Victor White's colourful life, including his existential crises and vocational hesitations. Other appendixes contain Jung's 'Gnoseological note' and White's 'Notes on *Psychologie und Alchemie*', 'Footnote on Good and Evil' and the stinging critique 'Jung on Job'. Moreover, the editors have adeptly translated the Latin, German, French and Greek expressions of the two erudite interlocutors.

The collection of letters between Jung and White reveals three things that are not blatantly evident in their articles and books. First, behind the academic writings and scholarly lectures was a deep and frank dialogue, a give and take of unexpected dimensions. Second, they were for each others' arguments a whetstone, sharpening their own thought while ultimately coming to divergent conclusions on important matters. Third, throughout the decade and a half of mostly intense correspondence there grew a tender friendship between the men. Both were able to express their dreams without complex. Both were able to articulate their affections in the midst of disagreement, even after they renounced their early hopes.

The men concurred on the relevance of the religious side of psychological 'facts' (experience) and on the potential for healing that psychology and Christianity shared. They both even had a surprising attraction to the I Ching and alchemy. White however could not follow some of Jung's psychological conjectures. For instance, Jung paired psychic mysticism with subatomic phenomena. He explained that: 'Psyche being an *energic* phenomenon possesses *mass*, presumably a very small amount of it, but obviously enough to establish a reflex of subatomic conditions, which needs must be explained by a 4-dimensional continuum. That is also the reason, why you discover synchronistic phenomena when you begin to integrate the unconscious' (pp. 71–72; see also p. 167). White calls this suggestion 'appallingly difficult' and humbly admits that he has the Thomist habit of thinking non-dimensionally (p. 72). White's allegiance to Thomist concepts and constructs did not disable the conversation with Jung. Rather it was part of what attracted the psychologist, who repeatedly expressed fascination at the insights and arguments of Aquinas and who even invited White to present his Thomist (what White had described as a specifically non-Kantian) view of the human person to the annual gathering of Jung's close associates, the Eranos lectures in 1947 (pp. 39–40, 84). Jung for his part pressed White on aspects of his theory and its application. For example, Jung called White to square better his understanding of the 'transformability of instincts' with current biological findings (pp. 27–28) and his understanding of good and evil with psychological 'facts'.

At the end of 1949, the intensity of the Jung-White exchange increased over their construals of good and evil: Jungian shadow theory and White's *privatio boni* (privation of good) approach. White thought the two theories were compatible. Jung did not. Their discussions on this issue often involved a deaf ear, inasmuch as the diverse foundational presuppositions rendered competing arguments incomprehensible and attempts at reconciliation un-receivable. At the end of 1949, Jung

mused: 'As long as Evil is a *mu on* [non-being] nobody will take his own shadow seriously. [. . .] it is a fatal mistake to diminish its power and reality even merely metaphysically. I am sorry, this goes to the very root of Christianity. Evil verily does not decrease by being hushed up as a non-reality or a mere negligence of Man.' (p. 143). White accepted Jung's position to a point. However, a standoff became evident as early as May 1950, when White said to Jung: 'For the moment I do feel that *that* discussion has reached deadlock. What is so perplexing to me is the fact that it is precisely your psychology which has enabled me to *experience* evil as a 'privatio boni'! For my part I can give no meaning at all to psychological terms like 'positive-negative', 'integration-disintegration' if evil is not 'privatio boni'. Nor can I see any motive for 'integrating the shadow' – or any meaning in it either – if the shadow is not a good deprived of good!' (p. 148).

Jung and White's miscommunications at the deepest level concerned the fundamental or ontological goodness of creation and the Creator. Jung stayed on an epistemological level accessed by his empirical psychology alone (a psychological epistemology). His approach, while admitting archetypal and symbolic transcendence, was naturalistic instead of properly theological. Jung recognized that: 'The difference [between White and myself] lies between theological thinking and psychological nominalism' (p. 151). White attempted building a non-exclusive bridge between his own theological and philosophical position and Jung's psychology. He tried to convince Jung, saying: 'your empirical psychology is not necessarily bound up with *any* particular philosophical system of interpretation, & that the facts & aims of your psychology are at least as amenable of statement in terms of the philosophia perennis as of Kant or any kind of positivism & religious irrationalism' (p. 189). However, Jung's facility with Christian concepts hid (from White at least for a while) his naturalistic approach to religion. With time, Jung's approach came to manifest more decidedly philosophical presuppositions and commitments to neo-Kantian subjectivism, Nietzschean amoralism and oriental dualism. On several occasions and not always in jest, White even came to call Jung's work Manichean or Gnostic dualism. He openly wondered if Jung's other 'theologian informants [were] Marcionists or polytheists' (p. 268).

On the occasion of the psychologist's sustained attack on the *privatio boni* theory in *Aion: Untersuchungen zur Symbolgeschichte* (1951; English translation, *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of Self*, 1958), White redoubled his attempts to convince Jung that a Catholic understanding of good and evil was compatible with Jung's psychology. However, Jung continued to push his own theory further. In 1952, he published *Antwort auf Hiob*, which projected the light and shadow metaphor on to God. The English translation, *Answer to Job* (1954), brought open pressure on White, because of Jung's representation of God as evil and amoral. In response, the English theologian published an untypically scathing and personal critique. His 'Jung and Job' (in *Blackfriars*, March 1955) called the book childish, ignorant, and an expression of bad faith and paranoia (p. 254). White intended his critique for a Catholic audience, including colleagues who had high hopes for Jungian psychology. White quickly came to regret however the hurtful parts of the attack.

In 1955, both men admitted a stalemate. Jung held strong: 'I shall stick to my conviction that my 'Answer to Job' is a straight forth application of my psychological principles to certain central problems of our religion' (p. 264). White responded: 'I certainly appreciate 'Antwort' as a stimulant to consciousness. [. . .] But now I find myself quite definitely in painful agreement, not only with your theological & philosophical, but also with your scientific critics. For the clarification of my own position, I am truly grateful; but finding myself in opposition to your views, & indeed to your own 'union of opposites' (or its transposition to the Divine sphere) is naturally painful' (p. 267). White's conclusion was that

'any would-be Christian' must make 'an 'agonizing reappraisal' of his position vis-à-vis analytical psychology' (p. 272).

One of the notable lessons found in this exchange involves the failure to forge an adequate foundation for the interdisciplinary project. On the one hand, Jung's approach manifested the limits of naturalist and dualist presuppositions for a Catholic interlocutor. On the other, White's Thomist philosophical and theological foundation could not conform to significant applications of Jung's psychological theory to Christianity. These differences, stemming from their diverse presuppositions, barred the way to integrating Jungian psychology and Catholic faith. The situation put the two men's friendship to the test, but it did not end it. *The Jung-White Letters* illustrate the give and take, the break, and the reconciliation *in fine*. It is a moving exchange. In the face of stark differences at the end of their lives, especially concerning the construal of good and evil, the Swiss psychologist and the English theologian each greatly benefited not only from reciprocal friendship and intellectual challenge, but also from each one's own critical appropriation of the other's work.

CRAIG STEVEN TITUS

LIVING FORMS OF THE IMAGINATION by Douglas Hedley *T&T Clark,* Edinburgh, 2008, pp. 308, £24.99 pbk

If you are a famous atheist in Britain today, you probably explain the phenomenon of theism solely in terms of 'imagination'. God is an illusion, or delusion, something believers 'make up', like a lying child. In debates, you can belittle believers in God by telling them that they have 'an imaginary friend'. And you are sure that this is where the moral evil of theism resides: like children, believers are not willing to admit to their over-active imagination. They stick to their lie; and religious violence is always, at the root, a strop about being found out. So, with more relish than regret, you have to upgrade Occam's Razor to a combine-harvester, getting rid of not just unnecessary explanation, but all of what Mr Gradgrind calls 'fancy'. You might quote your departed friend, Douglas Adams: 'Isn't it enough to see that a garden is beautiful without having to believe that there are fairies at the bottom of it too?' And if God is a fairy-tale, why not put all theology in that section of the library? A.C. Grayling once listed a number of beings in the same category as God: Little Red Riding Hood, Rumpelstiltskin, Santa Claus, Betty Boop, Saint Veronica (who 'allegedly started out as sweat on a cloth and became a person'), Aphrodite, Wotan, Batman . . .

One course of defence theologians might usefully adopt would be to say (very quietly) that yes, the imagination is what tells us about God; and what it tells us is true. This is Douglas Hedley's position in this book: 'neither the inspired symbols of revelation nor the great conjectures about God are mere fantasies, since the imagination of the human soul mirrors, however darkly, the fecundity of the divine mind' (p. 8). As that quotation suggests, this is an up-front and unashamed contemporary version of the sort of Platonism that inspired John Smith, Henry More and Ralph Cudworth. It could hardly be more unfashionable if it tried. When Richard Dawkins is openly attacked, Hedley's champion against him is *Benjamin Jowett* (p. 44).

But then Hedley is not really defending the God that Dawkins, Grayling and others attack. He is defending something even more unfashionable: the concept of imagination itself; and in this sense, the defence is as much Romantic as it is Platonist. The *Prelude* is as important as the *Phaedrus:* Wordsworth's definitions in the *Prelude* of imagination as 'clearest insight', 'amplitude of mind' and 'Reason in her exalted mood' guide Hedley's thinking throughout. He argues that

imagination is natural to the human being; that it is essentially creative, part of what William James calls the 'exuberant excess' of human capability; that it plays a part in any proper understanding of what it is to be human; that the imagination acting ethically unites us with the Divine – 'conscience is the candle of the Lord' (Butler); that this combination of creativity and ethics helps us to think of symbols and tell stories that are not necessarily to be described in narrow terms as 'fiction'; in fact, such symbols and stories are 'tautegorical' (a term he takes from Schelling and Coleridge) and, unlike allegorical symbols, do not have to be boiled down. They can lead to substantive knowledge; among other things, to knowledge of God and the good.

With this concept of the imagination to hand, Hedley revisits areas of theological enquiry: metaphysics, psychology, ethics, aesthetics, mysticism, apocalyptic and the atonement. At all times, Hedley is keen to assert the irreducibility of imagination, against the oversimplifications of modern reductive science. However, the difficulty in correcting an oversimplification is how to correct it simply; how to avoid embodying the complexity one wishes to uphold. This is a pitfall familiar to those who read Rowan Williams' work; and Hedley does not always avoid it. His bewildering range of reference can sometimes overwhelm the line of argument; and for someone with plenty to say about storytelling, the glaring weakness of this volume is its lack of a coherent narrative. There seems almost a reluctance to jettison research and example in favour of summary and elucidation.

Take, for example, chapter 7. This is entitled 'Inspired Images, Angels, and the Imaginal World', and purports to deal with 'special revelation'. Following Austin Farrer, Hedley says he will develop a concept of revelation through images that, unlike 'Barthianism', will depend 'less upon the verbal articulation of its revelation than it does upon its iconic structure.' In the very next sentence we are told that Hölderlin's 'Patmos' will be used as a departure (presumably alongside Austin Farrer). The sentence after that reminds us that Hölderlin was a lyric poet shaped by the tradition that runs from Milton to Klopstock. Then we have a quotation from Milton; one from Marx; a reference to Ovid; and then Wordsworth and Goethe are brought in. Then we are wrenched back to Hölderlin. Then we reference Wallace Stevens, Rilke and Klee, before the section ends. The next section begins with the apparent *non sequitur* 'In Proust's *À la recherche* . . . ' and quotes from Proust in French without translation. The reader waits and waits for more explication of the 'iconic structure' of revelation. Any three pages in the book could have been described as I have described these three (pp. 211–213). Of course, this is not an unusual level of difficulty in reading a work of contemporary theology. But it seems to me *unnecessary* difficulty. Some blame lies with the publishers, whose readers have not served Hedley well. And section headings within chapters seem to have been imposed by an editor; at times they interrupt and actually obscure Hedley's argument (e.g. p. 20).

This is unfortunate, because any student would learn so much from this book. Taking a lead from Charles Taylor, Hedley has plenty to say about the limits of analytic philosophy (though I wished he had taken note of Mary Midgley's 'Science and Poetry'). It does seem odd that philosophy undergraduates may still limit their discussion of imagination to considering the statement 'The King of France is bald' (p. 176). But the book has theological as much as philosophical or scientific targets for rebuttal. The reductive modernist theology influenced by Bultmann was a lifeless dead-end because Bultmann underestimated the imagination: 'the mythic dimension of Christianity was less of an obstacle than Bultmann supposed' (p. 126). Hedley presents telling readings from those masters of the fairy-story, J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, and agrees with Lewis: 'If God chooses to be mythopoeic – and is not the sky itself a myth? – shall we refuse to be mythopoeic?' (a quotation from the essay 'Myth Became Fact').

Some may ask whether Hedley takes seriously enough the challenge that runs down from Xenophanes to Feuerbach: are we forming gods in our own likeness? Hedley's line of argument says that what we do by inhabiting the Christian imaginary is discover truths about ourselves, rather than project untruths onto reality. But how do we know for sure that this is the case? We might reply that we cannot know for sure; the real illusion is the idea of sure knowledge outside any sort of imaginary. The problem for Hedley here is not that he cannot deal with the projectionist hypothesis; but that the force of the arguments he rejects is greater than the force of his own argument. As with brains in vats and other epistemological problems, eventually one comes not to a solution, but to a provisional position; and the provisional position of entering by faith into the religious imaginary is not likely universally to satisfy. What Hedley is arguing against – the dismissal of religion as fiction – is about as sophisticated as Samuel Johnson dismissing idealism by kicking a stone. But plenty of scientists and philosophers are passionate stone-kickers when it comes to religion. And increasingly, so are educated men and women outside the academy. What Hedley prescribes is a vast Bodleian of resources that will allow us to enter the world of faith. But is it only the erudite who inherit the kingdom? And if not, why should anyone bother? Surely the next project for Hedley should be an exploration of 'sin'. Much here is about the elevating aspects of faith: the notion of ascent to the divine, as found in Plato and Wordsworth. Much more universal, it seems to me, is the imaginative apprehension of the descent into hell – recorded by atheist and believer alike.

Nevertheless, this book is a triumph of against-the-grain ingenuity and scholarship. Hedley deserves our thanks for refusing to accept the scything reductionism of his philosophical contemporaries with their accusations of 'imaginary friends'. Instead, he opens up new fields of enquiry, which theologians of all sorts would do well to enter.

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