

is mainly of a moral and practical nature: to know in what our eternal happiness consists, God must reveal it to us. Hence the need for the scientific/sapiential knowledge that is *sacra doctrina*.

Laurence Hemming re-evaluates the relationship between Aquinas and Heidegger on the question of 'being'. He believes that Aquinas does not have a 'philosophy' and so cannot fall into that confusion of ontology and theology of which Heidegger accuses the western tradition generally. At the same time Heidegger and Aquinas are concerned with incommensurable things in their investigations of 'being', and what they say cannot be compared either on their own terms or on any other one might set for them. Their understandings of 'truth' are a better basis on which to place them in confrontation with each other, Hemming thinks. But Aquinas's account of truth, like his account of being, is theological, so it is not clear how this is a good alternative. But a review of what Heidegger says about Nietzsche, Plato, and Aquinas sheds light on what Aquinas is undertaking in his thinking.

Philip Reynolds considers what he calls 'a conspicuous example of the intrusion of philosophical concepts and vocabulary into the realm of faith: Thomas's doctrine that Christ is an efficient cause of salvation and of the final resurrection' (p. 218). His treatment is a fine reminder of the role Thomas sees for the humanity of Christ in the work of salvation and in the sacramental economy of the Church.

Rich as this book is, and useful as it is for gaining an overview of Thomist studies today, there are (inevitably) significant 'thomisms' not represented. The most striking absence is Francophone scholarship, particularly what we may perhaps begin to call the 'school of Torrell' and its most able younger representative, Gilles Emery. One of the strengths of the Torrell school is that it does not confine itself to *Summa theologiae* (as many of the chapters here do) but looks also at other works of Aquinas, including, and in particular, the Scripture commentaries. But it is simply to endorse the book's agenda to point out that the contemplation of Aquinas is nourishing still further varieties of interpretation in places and modes that could not be considered here. And there is plenty to be getting on with in what is considered here.

VIVIAN BOLAND OP

THE WRECK OF WESTERN CULTURE: HUMANISM REVISITED by John Carroll, *Scribe*, Melbourne, 2004, Pp. 278, Aus.\$31.82 pbk.

This is an imaginative, at times brilliant book of vision and ambition, a rare example of sociological wrestling with the theological implications of culture. Carroll's earlier work *Puritan, Paranoid, Remissive: A Sociology of Modern Culture* (1977) marked him out as 'bright'. *The Wreck* well vindicates this reputation. In Australia, the book has aroused considerable critical response. Originally published in 1993, this new edition with an ending reflection on 9/11 fits in well with recent English works, notably from Bauman, Gray and Eagleton, that fret over the endemic fracturing of culture and the consequences of its de-spiritualisation. Not quite as Manichean in tendency as some other treatments, Carroll nevertheless offers a scathing treatment of the belief in humanism that has so dominated the past 500 years of European culture. To read Carroll is to make a stunning contrast with the assumptions of culture in *Gaudium et Spes* on its 40th anniversary.

For Carroll, humanism dies because it cannot cope with the metaphysical challenge of death. Treating the soul of the West and the failure of its spiritual history since the Renaissance, he taunts humanism with the failure to 'find a credible alternative to Christ crucified' (p. 6). Its cadaverous effect is expressed in a narrative that deals with the displacement of the *I*. Carroll provides an astute account of the shifting sands the *I* is placed on to fulfil the promise of humanism. Unfixity of stance

is what emerges in a movement from the hope and promise of self-realisation, to self-definition by reason, to its fracture in nihilism. God is dead and the *I* is god but now sadly worships alone, empty and devoid of moral purpose. Pride, rancour and mockery are the outcome of the promise of self-realisation promised by humanism and the villains of the piece are Marx, Nietzsche and – unexpectedly – Darwin. Part Four, on the death throes of humanism, involves two odd chapters on Henry James and John Ford. The ending reflection on 9/11 rather mechanically turns back on the themes of the book as if to say ‘told you so’.

In some respects, Carroll’s tract is not new: the fault lines of the Renaissance were well scrutinised in Blumberg’s *The Legitimacy of the Modern*. Here the theological stance is Protestant – theologians who appear often are Calvin and Luther, but the theologian Carroll should have invoked is Nicholas of Cusa; Calvin and Luther simply amplify the traits of culture Carroll so deplores, taking sociology into the cul-de-sac that Weber in melancholy mode so assiduously marked. The theological agenda that wiggles in and out of the text suggests that it is not just another Jeremiad on the state of culture. Unapologetically, Carroll repeatedly makes a theological stance, almost in imitation of Luther and this lends a puzzle as to where his sociological analysis will take him next.

The origins of the book are difficult to trace as the study has no footnotes. Instead of offering a hedgehopping history of culture over the past 500 years, Carroll exercises a brilliant strategy of concentrating on some masterpieces of high culture ‘that rattle their times’ (p. 9). There are no genuflections to multi-culturalism here. What lifts the book is Carroll’s clear, stinging prose where much is conveyed with great economy. This is the believer’s revenge on cultural despisers.

In the second chapter sparks begin to fly as Carroll finds in Holbein’s *The Ambassadors* and Hamlet a common concern with the skull. Death stalks both thus disclosing something corpse-like in the formulation of humanism in the Renaissance period. The actors stand uneasily before death. Perhaps the most moving section of the book is Carroll’s inspection of Poussin’s *The Plague of Ashdod*. In the painting, a small boy points innocently towards the chaos others fear to enter. He represents ‘the grace of the “I am” expressed through vocation – the sacred work of the person’s central life activity’ (p. 86). Here a struggling Calvinist vision of alternative culture emerges from a rather muddled and arbitrary dismissal of Catholicism.

Carroll is also highly persuasive in his treatment of Velazquez’s *Las Meninas* where the artist takes on the power to re-arrange the portrayal of the royal household in a god-like manner, exercised without regal redress. Here the artist realises a gift of humanism: ‘I can become what I will’ (p. 98). Likewise, dilemmas of faith and the self are well illustrated in the same chapter where Carroll focuses on Rembrandt’s *The Sacrifice of Isaac*. In these paintings, the *I* is released to stand alone. This allows Carroll to insert in theological notions of fate and freewill. These are Protestant dilemmas expressed in faith and reason, resolved only through grace. As these dilemmas become loosened from their Protestant moorings, the *I* increasingly seeks to stand alone to forge its own destiny. As reason is enthroned as sovereign in the Enlightenment, the fearsome God of Protestantism fades into insignificance. But the *I* bound to the claims of reason falls into the terrible tyranny of unfettered calculation. Carroll turns the ‘I think therefore I am’ of Descartes into the destruction wrought by Nietzsche and Marx, where rancour leads to nihilism and the adage becomes ‘I think therefore I am not’.

In the end, Carroll retreats back to the terrain of the faith, to the interior castle of Protestant conscience, where what is beyond reason is to be found and where choice is to be made between the death of death or the skull (p. 260). There is no sense of going out to build a new Jerusalem, for the weakness of the book is that it proffers a theology that demands a retreat from the cultural. Ironically, the best part of the book involves Protestant eyes gazing at Catholic paintings; yet their theological

context is arbitrarily ejected from the account. Not unexpectedly, the end is dark. There is to be no compromise with the world, only the *word* is to count. Carroll seems to have gone no further than the ending of Weber's famous essay on 'Science as a Vocation'. So the book peters out leaving one to wonder if Carroll might stumble over the rock of Peter and see the light.

KIERAN FLANAGAN

THE CONSTITUTIONS OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS, PART VIII: UNION AMONG JESUITS by Antonio M. de Aldama SJ, translated by Ignacio Echániz SJ, *The Institute of Jesuit Sources, Saint Louis, MO, 1998.*

This English translation was authorized from the original Spanish of 1989 published in Rome from the *Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis*. Father Aldama actually wrote the Foreword in 1975, however, and the translator gives a note from 1995 in which he harmonizes General Congregation 34 with the text by updating the references and bibliography. Even so, nothing substantial has been added to the exegetical commentary of Aldama of which the present work is an abridgement. This Part 8 follows in the series after Part 7 which appeared in English translation in 1996.

Emphasis must be placed on the expression "exegetical commentary" in order to understand what type of book this really is. Aldama tells us that he wishes to look over the shoulder of Polanco (whose role cannot be underestimated) and Ignatius as they are writing, correcting, amending, and finalizing their text. This is an effort to be faithful to the original and to enter into the mind of the author and the secretary, even though spanning the centuries. The historical context must be understood, but on the other hand nothing must be allowed to impede the true meaning of the text from reaching us, not even historical analysis. This translation is made with the faith that the "union" envisioned in the sixteenth century is still possible today.

What helps toward the "union of hearts" in the Society? The first aid "on the side of the Subjects" is severe selection of potential members, and even more severe admittance to a final grade. This was clearly the intention of the Founder. The second instrument of union is obedience, which is seen as a real bond and a virtue to be maintained in full vigor if the Society is to be itself. Following from obedience is subordination, where even the local Superior is subordinate to the Provincial, and he to the Superior General. Ignatius still belonged to the pre-Newtonian cosmology which understood the heavens to sing and the angels to be subordinate to God. However, the essence of it is that the love of God is the chief bond among Jesuits, and this is a vertical union. Any horizontal union is secondary. Subordination of the members to their Superior is merely the extension of the vertical union which all experience in the love of God to which they, including the General, are subordinate. An obvious corollary is that disturbers of the peace are to be excluded from the Society since they disrupt union. Dismissal is an ordinary, not an unusual, part of the Society's way of proceeding. If this seems harsh, it is clearly not so in view of the prisons that were established by the Franciscans and Dominicans to contain their unruly members. Ignatius ruled out the erection of prison punishment as an institution in his way of proceeding (p. 14). Ignatius also envisioned the office of "collateral" to assist the Superior and to bring about better union. The collateral or assistant was usually not to be under obedience to the Superior, and was thereby free to perform a variety of functions for the benefit of the members. The only relic of this office which has survived in the contemporary Society is the office of "socius" to the Provincial (p. 21).

What aids union from the side of the Superiors? While Christ is the true head of the Society, the unifying value of the office of General is clear from the thought of Ignatius. The authority of the Provincials should flow from the General. This is