

that could pass (just about) the test of orthodoxy – as, we might say, Newman himself had just managed to do in escaping the ecclesiastical penalties sought by the Benedictine bishop of Newport, Thomas Joseph Brown.

After the passing of the ‘cloud’ with his naming as a cardinal by Leo XIII in 1879, Newman began to warm to the theology of the Roman schools, and a renewal of interest in Athanasius – as ‘pope’ of Alexandria in some sense the hierarchical predecessor of Pope Leo – shows him re-interpreting the theology of that figure in the idiom of the Latin tradition (ancient, mediaeval, modern). There emerges at Newman’s hands a Latinate and indeed Scholastic version of the Greek-speaking Egyptians of the first five centuries, Athanasius above all. Newman was reconciling the outstanding patristic enthusiasm of the period of his conversion to the Catholic Church with his final coming-to-terms with the ecclesiastical culture and policy of the late nineteenth century church of Rome.

This summary will make it plain that, for King, Newman’s likes and loves (the question of hates does not arise in this context) rose and fell according to his own fortunes in the two communions to which, in sometimes turbulent fashion, he belonged. Is it too neat? I have said that my summary would be ‘somewhat simplified’ and the inevitable price of clarifying King’s story-line in this review is to accentuate the impression that it is too symmetrical for its own good. Still, Newman’s famous sensitivity makes such a general outline, biographically speaking, not implausible. The only convincing way to substantiate it, though, is by detailed comparison of Newman’s comments on this or that writer from the ancient Church at this or that point in time. This is what King does so well, with an enviable grasp not only of Newman’s corpus but also of his Anglican and Catholic contemporaries and of the Fathers themselves.

Students of Newman’s perennially fascinating figure, and admirers of his prose, will, if they are serious, want this book for the light in throws on his spiritual journey, especially in this Beatification year. But the wider story King has to tell concerns the impact on patristic studies, at any rate in the English-speaking world, and notably at Oxford, of the lead Newman gave. As his Conclusion explains, English (and the word here is effectively synonymous with ‘Anglican’) patristic study continued to highlight the Alexandrians. It sought to rehabilitate Origen’s exegesis. It treated Athanasius as *the* doctor of the Trinity, in whose works all subsequent patristic Triadology, whether Oriental or Latin, could recognize its true source. Even so egregious an heresiarch as Maurice Wiles, former Evangelical, patrologist, Regius Professor, could not escape the agenda Newman had established, much as he disliked the doctrinal outcomes which Newman espoused.

This review has not done justice to the extraordinarily detailed scholarship of this book. Read, and be amazed.

AIDAN NICHOLS OP

FROM HERMES TO BENEDICT XVI: FAITH AND REASON IN MODERN CATHOLIC THOUGHT by Aidan Nichols OP, *Gracewing*, Leominster, 2009, pp. vii + 254, £14.99

This new book grapples with an ancient issue – the interplay between faith and reason. Since pre-Socratic philosophers and even before, thinkers whether they be religious or otherwise have debated whether or not and in what manners religious faith might relate to human reason. Commenting on such a debate depends a great deal on what is meant by ‘faith’ and ‘reason’. Tertullian, the North African theologian of the second and third centuries, is still remembered for asking ‘What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?’ In other terms, do the arguments of the philosophical academy impinge on the faith that motivates worship? Aquinas,

although not a pan-rationalist imagining that reason illuminates all matters without deference to divine revelation, was never afraid to subject his faith to critical reasoning and questioning. In this, he is a model for students of theology and philosophy today. Kant is famously remembered as noting that reason needs to make room for faith. Pascal thought that the heart has reasons that reason does not know. Contemporary eliminative postmodernists contend that the truth is there is no truth: reason is irrational, and faith is fanciful. Into all this, Aidan Nichols has bravely dived with his book, *From Hermes to Benedict XVI: Faith and Reason in Modern Catholic Thought*. It is intended as an exercise in fundamental dogmatics (p. 2), and is at home with the conclusion that philosophy conceived as 'originative reason' 'can shape a natural wisdom well-placed to say much of value about the nature of God, world, soul, and the human good' (p. 240).

It is an erudite, informative, carefully argued, and scrupulously documented text. The reader has much to learn on every single page. It is a welcome reminder that there is a rich tradition of modern Catholic reflection on dialectics of faith and reason. Fideism, superstition, irrationalism, rationalism, and hyper-rationalism are constant traps waiting to ensnare either those who think faith has no relation at all to reason, or people who are convinced that reason is the arch-antithesis of faith.

From Hermes to Benedict XVI begins with an introductory discussion before attending to its first figure for analysis, Hermes. The introduction, it is important to note, explains that the author's coverage of topics and authors is not exhaustive. With any book, there is always much more that could be said. There is a slight risk that the reader may be confused as to the Hermes in the book's title. It is not the Greek god by that name, depicted in sculpture since Greek antiquity, but an eighteenth and nineteenth-century Prussian university teacher.

Hermes was an important test case in the eyes of those observing the way the Catholic Church's leadership dealt with the Enlightenment. Nichols very adroitly explains his thought in addition to that of Anton Günther, Louis Bautin, Joseph Kleutgen, Etienne Gilson, Maurice Gilson, and Hans Urs von Balthasar. The outputs of all these are discussed as well as those of five popes: Gregory XVI, Pius IX, Leo XIII, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI. The reader will benefit greatly from concise expositions of difficult philosophers, such as Kant and Hegel.

Had the author wished or been able to extend the reach of his exposition, he may have included a more detailed discussion of the ramifications of the Modernist crisis (alluded to on p. 142). This was neither a proud nor rationally controlled affair in the history of Catholic theology. Faced with a choice between modernity and medieval modes of thought, the Church's leadership shunned the former, enforced the latter on all teachers and students of the theology, and hounded modernists who wanted to introduce into theological consideration the fruits of higher biblical criticism and the findings of new sciences. It needs to be remembered that some of the slighted modernists such as George Tyrrell (who incurred the penalty of excommunication) and Alfred Loisy (who suffered major excommunication: no Catholic could associate with him) gave their lives to an exposition of Catholic faith that was informed by new knowledge.

Another instance of a broader treatment of faith and reason in modern Catholic thought might have been the inclusion of liberation theology, the most significant development in theology during the second half of the twentieth century. *From Hermes to Benedict XVI* observes that 'for the New Testament, very broadly, faith is the reception of a message' (p. 4). According to the New Testament, it is also much more. For the Letter of James, famously, faith without works is dead. It is not the passive reception of a proposition, but a conversion of life manifest in compassionate action. For liberation theologians too, faith is not simply a matter of reasoned academic discourse, but a day-by-day *sequela Jesu*. In the eyes of Gustavo Gutiérrez, theology itself is a critical reflection on *praxis* in the light

of the Bible. In short, faith is multi-dimensional: it is not merely volitional or intellectual, but also practical.

There were many Catholic theologians and philosophers of the last century who distinguished themselves by commenting on faith and reason, and their voices complement, and sometimes contrast with, the approach of people like Pope John Paul II (who merits a chapter in the book under review) and Hans Urs von Balthasar. John Paul II could occasionally be quirky in his comments. For instance, in his encyclical of 1998, *Fides et Ratio*, he observes that 'the Church has no philosophy of her own nor does she canonize any one philosophy in preference to others'. This was certainly not the case in 1917–18, when the *Code of Canon Law* insisted that philosophy and theology in Catholic institutions of learning were to be studied according to the method and teaching of Thomas Aquinas (Canon 1366). Careers were unilaterally ended for not complying with this canon, and theologians were compelled to take an Anti-Modernist Oath right up until the eve of the Second Vatican Council.

The discourse of *From Hermes to Benedict XVI*, were it to be amplified into a larger tome, could in addition to the worthy people it probes, draw attention to Joseph Maréchal, Henri de Lubac, Jacques Maritain (briefly mentioned on p. 143), Marie-Dominique Chenu, Karl Rahner, Claude Geffré, Hans Küng, Edward Schillebeeckx, and David Tracy. All these have commented trenchantly on faith and reason. Moreover, discourse on faith and reason in England alone last century was enhanced by acutely perceptive philosophical minds, such as those of Michael Dummett, Herbert McCabe, and Elizabeth Anscombe.

This is a rich field of continuing discussion, and *From Hermes to Benedict XVI* is a much to be welcomed part of it.

PHILIP KENNEDY OP

THE CONTINUUM COMPANION TO RELIGION AND FILM edited by William L. Blizek, *Continuum*, London, 2009, pp. x + 426, £85.00

FILM, LACAN AND THE SUBJECT OF RELIGION: A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS FILM ANALYSIS by Steve Nolan, *Continuum*, London, 2009, pp. xii + 219, £65.00

Religion makes the eternal and unchanging really present to and in the empirical world. By this token film would seem to be a remarkably unproductive site of religious and theological investigation. After all, film is formally marked by rapid change (24 frames per second) and, even in the hands of an *auteur*, it is made with at least one eye towards money. When all is said and done films are commercial products, made to attract audiences in the market place. They are made according to criteria directly contrary to those of religion.

Furthermore the sheer plethora of films undermines religion, and this in two ways. First of all, they are complicit in what amounts to a contemporary over-production of the visual. Honest Protestant reflection ought to identify this as a massive problem; if films are one strand in the contemporary cultural dominance of the visual any theology which stresses the encounter with the word is challenged. Quite simply visual culture means that the word can never be confronted directly. Or as Blizek puts it in the Introduction to his collection without however – maybe understandably – taking the point to its logical conclusion: 'I believe that the power of film comes in part from the power of the visual (over the written word or sound)' (p. 1). What then is the future of Protestantism in a visual culture? The same point applies to Islam and it is noticeable how Ramji's otherwise thoughtful contribution to the Blizek collection rather fudges