

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 McNerny 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 Glöckner (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.

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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 Tripes' 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