

but fails to address the ongoing problem of its reception. Gerald O'Collins gives a highly useful account of *Ressourcement* at Vatican II, which he contrasts with 'manualism'. However, given the intellectual difficulty of reading many of the Fathers, often long and unsystematic (like Congar!), is there not room for renewed manuals, as far removed from 'manualism' as Thomas from 'Thomism', for the training of less able students who would still make good pastors? And as Christopher Ruddy points out, a real problem in the face of the widespread ignorance of many young Catholics about their faith, is how to make a clear presentation of the faith out of the authentic theological pluralism of Vatican II.

So a big, broad, wide-ranging book. As such, if read as a whole it can be somewhat repetitive – almost every author writing on a *Ressourcement* theologian or theologians sets the historical scene first. One wonders if it could have been shorter (and cheaper), had one historical introduction been written. On the other hand, this would take away from the synoptic character of the book, which is its greatest strength. We are able – at last – to enjoy and benefit from different perspectives speaking eirenically to each other, rather than the destructive dynamic of action-reaction which was so harmful before Vatican II and in its immediate aftermath. This does not mean that all disagreements are resolved – far from it. But there is a sense that most of these scholars know how to listen as well as talk, and indeed it would be delightful to hear them in a seminar together. This is surely a model for renewal in the church, a growth deeper into unity, a paschal rhythm through confronting and being confronted by difficult questions. There are omissions – while there is a lot, rightly, on metaphysics, patrology, theology of grace, and ecumenism, there is little on Vatican II's social teaching, which would have been useful for the current economic crisis. It would be good too to ask whether Liberation Theology is 'new' or a radical biblical *ressourcement*. Other areas surely needing examination are New Movements in the Catholic church (neo-Baroque or Baroque resourced in the light of Vatican II?) and how the Christian Tradition might be able to dialogue with contemporary non-religious spiritualities. Of course, one book cannot do everything. But *Ressourcement* does leave us with a framework – a theology, one might say – of addressing Christianity's and humanity's burning questions with the help of Vatican II.

DOMINIC WHITE OP

**REASON FULFILLED BY REVELATION: THE 1930's CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY DEBATES IN FRANCE** by Gregory Sadler, *Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C., 2011, pp vi + 317, £53.68*

The recent interest in the mid-twentieth century French theological exchanges between the *nouvelle théologie* and the neo-Scholastics that culminated in the controversy surrounding Henri de Lubac's *Surnaturel* has been widely published in the last decade and has initiated a conversation that has been both vigorous and sometimes heated. In the midst of these disagreements a broader French intellectual interwar milieu that is both rich and varied is often lost. Gregory Sadler goes a long way in rectifying this deficiency with his recent book *Reason Fulfilled by Revelation: The 1930's Christian Philosophy Debates in France*, which provides both an excellent historical survey of the debates surrounding the possibility of Christian philosophy as well as translations of twelve important documents that bring to light a series of philosophical exchanges that had a profound influence on later theological developments and occupied some of the most significant names in the French Catholic intellectual world—Jacques Maritain, Étienne Gilson, Maurice Blondel and Gabriel Marcel.

Sadler's intentions are two-fold: first, to provide English readers with a set of important philosophical articles previously only available to those with a command of French, and secondly, to offer a brief historical account of this largely forgotten debate which also provides historical background for previously translated works, such as Gilson's *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy* and Maritain's *An Essay on Christian Philosophy*, that emerged from this period.

Sadler understands the complexity and dynamism of the French milieu in which the exchanges took place, and he devotes the first third of *Reason Fulfilled by Revelation*, almost one hundred pages, to providing a philosophical and contextual overview of the debates. The complex period between the wars is examined in terms of Catholic philosophical thought, and the twelve articles that are provided in translation are firmly set within their original context. The relevant contributions of Gilson and Maritain, having long been available in English, are largely absent, but Sadler includes four articles of Maurice Blondel with the remainder belonging to Gabriel Marcel, Bruno de Solages, Antonin Sertillanges and several neo-Scholastics.

Lasting from 1931 to 1936, Sadler divides the debates into three phases and overviews the various positions of those arguing either for the possibility of Christian philosophy or against it. Several rationalists, such as Emile Bréhier and Léon Brunschvicg, as well as a number of prominent neo-Thomists from Louvain, including Ferdinand Van Steenberghe and Léon Noël, were the primary figures debating against the possibility of Christian philosophy. The rationalist position rests on several important points: first, reason is not specifically Christian, and the religious sentiments of the Christian philosopher are as accidental to his or her task as are those of the Christian mathematician or scientist. Secondly, the 'incarnation of the Messiah' is something that goes beyond reason and therefore provides no foundation for 'philosophical reason to build on' (p. 51). Various neo-Scholastics also argued for a strict separation between philosophy and theology. Philosophy remains strictly rational and Christianity 'never intervenes except in an indirect and accidental manner' (p. 82). Christian influences have merely helped to put the philosopher in the best possible position to develop a 'true philosophy' that is 'compatible' with and 'open' to Christianity, both sharing conclusions that will certainly coincide at various points.

Gilson offers a rejoinder by attempting to steer a middle course between rationalism and 'theologism', which sees philosophy as only diminishing Christian revelation. Gilson admits that reason in Christian philosophy is conditioned by faith, but he asserts that every philosopher's reason is conditioned by something non-rational. Using such examples of the creation metaphysics of *Exodus* and creation *ex nihilo*, he examines the course of Western philosophy historically and observes that Christian revelation has influenced philosophy significantly and promoted certain novel developments. Maritain stands in essential agreement with Gilson, but he attempts a more theoretical approach that sees Christianity as purifying and elevating philosophy.

Maurice Blondel, also a proponent of Christian philosophy, argues strongly against the 'historicism' and 'conceptualism' of Gilson and Maritain. His arguments are essentially an extension of his 'philosophy of insufficiency' that he put forth in his seminal treatise written in 1893, *Action*. He asserts that 'far from stabilizing everything in closed concepts, reason discovers in itself needs that nature does not satisfy at all, something unattained, always naturally unattainable and nevertheless incoercibly hungering for attainment' (p. 70).

Gabriel Marcel proposed a fourth major position for Christian philosophy by stressing several points: first, pushing Gilson's thesis further, he writes that Christianity has made contributions to philosophy through experiential dimensions of the sacramental and religious life rather than the dogmatic, and secondly, Christian philosophy remains—and must be—a paradox and a scandal as the

incarnation stands as ‘a certain datum—a revealed datum—whose signification, whose value is absolutely transcendent to any experience susceptible of being constituted on purely human bases’ (p. 165).

When the complex issue concerning the natural desire to see God in Aquinas emerges in Sadler’s treatment of Blondel’s contributions, we are not surprised to find that Henri de Lubac was following the debates closely and wrote an article, ‘Retrieving the Tradition: On Christian Philosophy’, that served as a kind of a postscript to the exchange in that he attempted to summarize the developments and main phases of the various interventions. However, he provides much more than a summary, and while his words point to the enduring relevance of this interwar debate, they also testify to the importance of this recent publication by Gregory Sadler, which is both timely and well conceived. De Lubac writes that although the language might shift, the essential problem ‘has imposed itself on centuries past [and] will continue to impose itself on centuries to come [and] under various names designating by turns its many aspects never ceases to haunt our minds’ (De Lubac, Henri. “Retrieving the Tradition: On Christian Philosophy.” *Communio*. Vol. XIX, No. 3 (Fall 1992): 478).

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**THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF THE TRINITY** edited by Gilles Emery OP and Matthew Levering, *Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2011, pp. xvi + 632, £ 95, hbk*

The Trinity is the fount of all mysteries of the Christian faith. Yet by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was a noticeable dearth of writing about the Trinity. This beautifully produced volume with 43 articles of uniformly the highest standard, relating the most elevated of Christian mysteries to many areas of Christian life (prayer, politics, art and social relations), lets us know that this situation has now been more than remedied by providing a survey of the latest scholarship about the Trinity from an array of Catholic, Reformed and Orthodox scholars. The overall plan of the book, divided into seven sections covering Scripture, the Patristic age, Medieval and Modern theology, Systematic theology, Prayer and Contemporary Issues, could hardly be bettered. This handbook goes a long way towards implementing the plea made by von Balthasar in 1952 that all courses of theology be presented with a Trinitarian perspective.

In the opening section on the Trinity in Scripture Khaled Anatolios informs us that the Trinity was a criterion for deciding the canon and shows that revelation of the Trinity fulfils the history of salvation set out in the Old Testament. Karin Rowe and Mark Edwards present *Hebrews* as an unexpected source for Trinitarian doctrine. Rowe also shows us that ‘Trinitarian grammar’ is presupposed for any proper understanding of St. Paul’s letters. Ben Witherington III junior, in a detailed examination of the Trinity in St John’s Gospel, shows convincingly that the Trinity was not a construction of the post-apostolic Church but already embedded in the New Testament.

One of the things that struck me in reading this book was how little progress was made in enunciating a clear doctrine of the Trinity in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries. This of course was quickly put right in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. J. Warren-Smith’s article, while it barely discusses the theological issues, provides a most useful historical account of the Arian controversy. Lewis Ayres, in his article on St Augustine, starts with the Word and shows that the Trinity preserves the simplicity of God (the Father and the Son are *one* in *St John*), also how arguments not always central in Augustine were developed later by Aquinas and Hegel. Byzantine theology is