is only a hair's breadth of difference between it and Christianity in its recognition of the gratuitousness of our world, that beyond it there is nothing and that in the end we cannot know the world. But there remains a difference that is everything. For the Christian, *we* are not able to understand the world's existing; for the Postmodernist, there is nothing to be understood. For the Postmodernist, the world is gratuitous; for the Christian it comes as a gift, an act of love. In the end the author is not really sympathetic to Postmodernism as he calls it a 'cynical corruption of intellect'. But he does recognise symmetries with Christianity.

The author is very good on parties and eating, but especially good on prayer (chapters 12 and 14). How not to Pray and How to be Distracted contain some of the wisest and most reassuring comments on prayer that I have come across, though I can hardly claim any expertise in this area which, paradoxically, is what the author said of himself to the seminarians he had been invited to address. He takes his cue from Paul that we do not know how to pray and he adds that praying, by the very nature of the activity, is never something we can be good at. The biggest danger is effortfulness, for the more we try to master the techniques of prayer the harder we will find it to express our deepest desires and simply trust God. And our deepest desires express themselves in distractions during prayer. Certainly the wish to banish effortfulness fits nicely with Paul's own theology of justification.

Not all the papers here are equally inspired, though no doubt different papers will appeal to different readers. Some of the sermons seem weird as *sermons.* But usually they are written with wit. Always there is the possibility of the unpredictable thought, as when a sermon on Remembrance Sunday is turned into a fierce examination of our social conscience. And nowhere did I glimpse the 'proneness to depression' and 'chronic sadness' that the author says is the lot of the intellectual. This theological miscellany, then, is a rewarding intellectual and spiritual investment.

GEOFFREY TURNER

RESTORING FAITH IN REASON With a new translation of the Encyclical Letter *Faith and Reason* of Pope John Paul II together with a commentary and discussion, eds. Laurence Paul Hemming and Susan Frank Parsons, *SCM Press,* **London, 2002, Pp.xii + 308, £16.95 pbk.**

As the title suggests the editors wish to provide a book that will contribute to John Paul II's summons, contained within his monumental encyclical, *Faith and Reason,* to restore faith in reason's ability to obtain the truth – the truth grasped by reason itself and the truth offered to reason by God's revelation. The first part of

426

the book (173 pages) contains the Latin text of the Pope's encyclical along with, on facing pages, a new English translation done by Anthony Meredith, S.J and Laurence Paul Hemming. Having the Latin text is very useful for scholars and the translation is accurate and readable. For those for whom it matters, the translators do attempt to make the translation more gender inclusive than the original Vatican translation without distorting the Latin original, though this reader did have to smile when, on a few occasions, 'he' and 'him' in one paragraph became 'she' and 'her' in the next.

The presentation of the encyclical's text is followed by a 'Commentary' by James McEvoy. While McEvoy's commentary may not be the most insightful, he does highlight a number of important issues. For example, he discusses how the theme of truth 'lends unity to the entire Letter' for it is truth that lies at the heart of what, for the Pope, 'it means to be human' (177). Therefore, revelation and the knowledge of God are not contrary to an authentic humanism but its very source. 'Thus St. Augustine's *noverim te, noverim me* – if I knew myself I would know you – can be validly reversed by the creature: *noverim te, noverim me* – inasmuch as I know you, I know myself' (181). McEvoy also has a very good discussion on the relationship between the unity of truth and the multiplicity of cultures. He concludes his commentary by noting that the Pope himself exemplifies his own teaching, in that he has, as a 'Christian believer', admirably combined within his own life and teaching faith and reason.

Following McEvoy's commentary there are seven discussion articles authored by Christians of various denominations. This gives to the book a good ecumenical feel. Here I will briefly comment on only the ones that I believe to be the most significant.

Wayne Hankey, discussing the practical considerations concerning the teaching of philosophy and theology in the contemporary setting, bemoans the fact that most young students today are illiterate in that they are unable to read texts with any depth of understanding or analysis. Thus, 'theological movements now sweeping the Anglo-American world feed upon these kinds of illiteracy, upon ignorance of history, literature and philosophy, and upon the absence of a disciplined critical faculty' (201). He believes that the university curriculum must be modified so as to once more introduce students to the classic authors of philosophy and theology. Only then will they possess the ability to critically and accurately assess contemporary thought.

Aristotle Papanikolaou contributes a very engaging essay entitled: 'Reasonable Faith and a Trinitarian Logic: Faith and Reason in Eastern Orthodox Theology'. Papanikolaou is critical of much contemporary Eastern Orthodox theology for neglecting the value of philosophy in relation to theology. He states that this is not in keeping with 'the Eastern Christian patristic tradition' (244). Arguing

427

that the history of dogmatic development illustrates the proper relationship between faith and reason and that faith itself demands its own ontology and particular mode of reasoning, Papanikolaou is also very critical of the Pope. He believes that the Pope has given too much autonomy and authority to reason in that reason appears to be the ultimate arbiter of the faith. I believe that Papanikolaou misunderstands, and so misconceives the Pope's teaching. It is quite evident, as Robert Sokolowski points out in his insightful contribution on 'The Autonomy of Philosophy in *Fides et Ratio*', that reason and philosophy, while autonomous, do not sit in judgement over faith. He writes: 'Does this acknowledgement of the autonomy of philosophy mean that reason can set itself up as the tribunal for faith, as it does in pagan thinking? Obviously not; in fact, there are passages in the Encyclical that seem to make the opposite claim, to subordinate reason to faith, and to restrict the autonomy of philosophy' (283). The critical points that Papanikolaou wishes to make are valid, the only reservation being that they do not apply to John Paul's understanding of the relationship between faith and reason.

Angelo Scola in his essay on 'The Integrity of Human Experience', picks up on a theme that I believe the Pope could have exploited more within his encyclical, that of human beings being created in the image and likeness of God. As Scola notes it is because man is created as the *imago Dei* that he possesses the intellectual ability to obtain truth through reason as well as being open to the truth of revelation that comes from God. As the *imago Dei* men and women are, by necessity, men and women of *fides et ratio*.

In conclusion, I would recommend this book as one of the places to start if one wanted to obtain an overview of the Pope's encyclical along with the questions that it raises and the issues that it treats.

<div style="text-align: right">THOMAS G. WEINANDY OFM Cap.</div>

TRUE RELIGION by Graham Ward, *Blackwell,* **Oxford, 2003, Pp. ix + 168, £12.99 pbk.**

Do not misled by the title; more than a touch of irony is at play here. For *True Religion* (published as part of the Blackwell Manifestos series) is not an attempt to identify some essential distillate of that strange entity we have learnt to call 'religion'. On the contrary, starting from the claim that 'religion' can only be understood as a product that appears within specific social formations, Graham Ward sets out to offer a genealogy of the idea of 'true religion', exploring some of the forms that it has taken in the Christian West during the modern era. Drawing on examples

428