

illustrated how 'the ascetic strain in Catholic doctrine has struggled with its incarnational and life-affirming aspects for centuries' (p.123). Boss, however, sees this as a partial reading of the evidence, and herself wants to argue that the doctrine follows a similar pattern to that of Mary's motherhood. In which, an earlier theological emphasis on Mary as Godbearer gives precedence to spiritual symbols rather than to the more concrete images of physical contact. She then proceeds to flesh out the background to the doctrine and to put forward some of the arguments in its defence.

Finally, she deals more fully with the problems of how domination and repression affect psychological changes in Marian devotion, and the effects of Virginity and sorrow for Mary's childbearing. Then in a short conclusion Boss sets out some provisional pointers to how this history of Marian devotion can be taken forward in a world where the dominating leitmotif is one of materialism and the consumer culture.

There is a comprehensive bibliography, but it is a shame in the age of computerisation that the book uses endnotes after each chapter instead of the more reader-friendly footnotes.

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TRINITY AND TRUTH by Bruce D. Marshall *Cambridge University Press*
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Bruce D. Marshall, who teaches at St Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota, the leading Lutheran school of theology in the United States, has published much-discussed essays in *The Thomist*. His contention that the notion of truth needs to be 'robustly trinitarian' may sound Barthian. 'Most of all', however, he tells us, he has 'learned to think about truth and justification of beliefs in a trinitarian way by reading Thomas Aquinas, especially his profound and unjustly neglected commentary on the Gospel of John'. Moreover, 'on the questions at issue here, as on most others, [Thomas] presents a far different and more compelling figure than is often supposed nowadays by his admirers and detractors alike'.

The book opens with John 18: Jesus himself is the truth—as Aquinas says: *Ille homo [est] ipsa divina veritas*. Chapter 2 insists that, contested as it may be, the primary Christian doctrine is the doctrine of God as Trinity. We are taken through the American Lutheran eucharistic liturgy: whatever Christians believe about anything has to fit with the priority of liturgical identification of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Chapter 3 analyzes presuppositions about truth in modern theology: beliefs are true when they express certain inner experiences; beliefs are justified when grounded on incorrigible data; Christian beliefs, anyway, must meet the same criteria for deciding the truth of any beliefs whatsoever. In chapter 4, Marshall demolishes these moves one after the other, in an exhilarating and rigorously argued display of familiarity with recent work on truth in the Anglo-American analytic tradition (Frege, Tarski, Quine, Davidson, Dummett *et al.*).

Chapter 5 insists that coherence with the central Christian beliefs is what counts when it comes to deciding about truth—any truth. This 'sweeping epistemic claim' is not unprecedented: 'Whatever is not in

agreement with Christ is to be spewed out ... because he is God' (Aquinas in *Coloss.* 2:2). More elegantly: 'Whatever is found in other sciences which contradicts the truth of this science [*sacra doctrina*] is totally to be rejected as false' (*Summa Theol.* 1a q1 art.6 ad 2). Chapter 6 faces obvious objections: surely this commits Christianity to sectarianism? Not at all. Aquinas assimilated Aristotle, in almost every particular, without generating inconsistency with central Christian claims. Moreover, Marshall argues, citing Vatican II, the church is learning to live with the permanence of the election of the Jewish people.

Certainly, as chapter 7 shows, there are no coercive arguments for the 'epistemic ultimacy' of Christian doctrine—only in the Spirit does anyone ever call Jesus Lord.

In chapter 8, Marshall finally follows Donald Davidson: the concept of truth is already as clear as could be, we don't need to explain it in terms of correspondence. Indeed, we have a much firmer grip on the concept of truth than on any of the concepts introduced to elucidate it—'Why on earth should we expect to be able to reduce truth to something clearer or more fundamental? After all, the only concept Plato succeeded in defining was mud (dirt and water)'—so Davidson, famously.

'Jesus is risen' needs no more epistemological machinery than 'Grass is green'—but for one thing: believing it depends wholly on Jesus' initiative, as the resurrection narratives indicate. For this belief (as chapter 7 showed) we need more than ordinary truth conditions; we have to allow for an 'uncreated' action, 'the specifically uncreated (or divine) truth condition for the belief'. Invoking Aquinas on the relation between divine and human agency, Marshall insists that the uncreated condition required for anyone to hold 'Jesus is risen' as true is not in competition with created truth conditions. What is special about the uncreated condition required for having true beliefs about the Trinity is, however, that it also makes us bearers of Christ's image. This retrieves the notion of correspondence—though as 'participatory likeness' (Aquinas) with the new creation in the risen Christ, rather than *adaequatio intellectus ad rem*.

Marshall argues, finally, in chapter 9, for the truth-bestowing role of the Trinity in all our beliefs about the world. 'Grass is green' if and only if grass is green; but this, after all, is as much God's arrangement of the world as Jesus's being risen. Marshall has no space to discuss problems about propositions in logic and mathematics (cf. page 273). Sentences, such as those expressing evil states of affairs, which the arrangement of the world makes true, are not an image of the Trinity. But every sentence with truth conditions that God as Trinity wills to meet, exhibits a 'created trace'. We need not always be able to tell which beliefs God makes true; beliefs incompatible with those which are epistemically primary for Christians cannot be true; but otherwise, 'justified beliefs are true on the whole'—a suitably Davidsonian conclusion for a very fine reconsideration of a basic theological issue in the light of the best recent philosophical discussion.

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