

experience or of causal explanation, but is a practice which is natural to human beings. At the same time Graham cautions against reading too much into Wittgenstein's *Remarks*, but argues that 'they do provide guidance on 'how to go on' with this application of Wittgenstein's philosophy' (p. 134).

In the final two chapters Graham follows this guidance in developing a conception of natural religion as a practice which springs from our natural human reactions. Here Graham returns to Scougal's notion of religion as a participation in the divine. His purpose is to avoid the intellectualism of natural theology, whilst at the same time showing how (true) natural religion is not merely expressive of human aspirations, but contains dogmatic truths. Throughout these chapters Graham skilfully carries out a dialogue between opposing positions, and attempts to show how the Wittgensteinian approach he is developing can find a path between extremes (such as that between deontologists and consequentialists). He does not, however, question the nature of these division and how they arose in the modern period. This entails that he continues to oppose natural theology to natural religion, and more generally metaphysics to the kind of philosophical practice he is seeking to develop. Yet, the very notion of participation in the divine is one which is derived from Platonism (here the influence of the Cambridge Platonists on Scougal), and opens up the possibility of a fruitful dialogue between those modern thinkers who sought true religion and those who see metaphysics as arising from our natural human reactions (e.g. Thomas Hibbs). Such a discussion promises to be fruitful for participants on both sides.

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CYBERTHEOLOGY: THINKING CHRISTIANITY IN THE ERA OF THE INTERNET by Antonio Spadaro SJ, *Fordham University Press, New York, 2014, pp. xiii+137, £15.99, pbk*

What is cybertheology? It could mean any number of things. It could be the application of theology to social communication in the era of the Internet. Or perhaps cybertheology's concern is how best to use the Web as a means of evangelization. Or maybe cybertheology is the discipline that considers how religions can manifest themselves in cyberspace. But for Antonio Spadaro, none of these definitions is entirely satisfactory. Spadaro wants cybertheology to be something more fundamental. Cybertheology is not just concerned with thinking about the Web from a theological perspective; cybertheology should also consider theology itself from within the Web's own logic.

To make the case that such an approach to theology is possible, Spadaro begins with the question: is the Internet changing our way

of thinking? Spadaro's conviction is that the Internet is now an all-pervading phenomenon of modern life and so this suggests he would answer the above question with a 'yes'. In particular, he claims that the Internet will be changing the way we think about our Christian faith. Accordingly, Spadaro emphasizes that it is not sufficient to consider cybertheological reflection as one of many cases of 'contextual theology', which only considers cybertheological reflection in a specific manner in the human context in which it is expressed. The reason for this is that the Web cannot be simply isolated as a specific and determinate case from our everyday lives; rather it has to be seen as an integral part of our ordinary existence. The Web gives us a new way of thinking. Spadaro is thus making a distinction between two different types of cybertheology. On the one hand, there is theological reflection on the Web which is a kind of contextual theology. On the other hand, there is what one might call a 'webological' reflection on theology in which the kind of thinking that has been shaped by the logic of the Web and of informatics is applied to theology.

Now as interesting as this distinction might be, an obvious objection is that whilst a theological reflection on the Web could be very valuable, it is not at all clear that the way the Web changes our way of thinking is conducive to doing theology. The examples that Spadaro provides are not particularly convincing. For instance, Spadaro notes the use of soteriological language in the field of informatics. We talk of justifying texts, saving documents and converting files. With regard to conversion, Spadaro writes: 'The conversion of a file can be necessary because the application that we are using cannot read or open it. As the user, I cannot relate to the data that it contains because I am unable to decipher the data and have a need to do so and for this reason I convert the file to a format that permits me to enter into a relationship with these data. Conversion is thus the redemption of incommunicability'. Spadaro goes on to ask 'Can technological conversion have an effect on the comprehension of religious conversions? In this case, if we consider the interesting connotations of opening (to open a file) and the restoration of a communicative relationship (reading a file) that technological conversion involves, we illuminate theological conversion through the original significance of reopening a broken relationship to re-establish a contact that generates sense'. Now whilst this example may in certain contexts be helpful as a metaphor, it seems far from obvious that anyone's comprehension of religious conversion is genuinely shaped by such an understanding of technological conversion. Although I have been converting files for years, I have to admit this is the first time I have ever thought of this process in terms of reopening a broken relationship.

As another example of how the logic of the Web might be applied to theology, Spadaro turns to Teilhard de Chardin. Teilhard saw the world as a large interconnected web that pointed towards salvation. He spoke

of the noosphere, the sphere of knowledge and thought. In the evolution of mankind, the noosphere started out as embryonic and very fragile, but over the millennia, it has grown powerful and sophisticated. Teilhard believed that the culmination of this process would be the Omega Point where the resurrection of Christ would summarize the meaning of the whole of history. The Omega Point would be the height of complexity and of conscience and would transcend the evolving universe. In Teilhard's vision, technological development plays a fundamental role and this final convergence of the noosphere towards the Omega Point would coincide with the Parousia. Tying this vision together with the logic of the Web, Spadaro writes: 'Teilhard de Chardin gives the significance of faith to the Internet's own dynamics within its anthropological space, which at this point can also be understood as part of a unique divine milieu, of that unique divine environment which is our world'. Now whilst Teilhard's theology might appeal to someone whose thinking has been shaped by the Internet, this example is not going to convince anyone that the logic of the Web is conducive to theological reflection if he or she believes that Teilhard's synthesis of technology and theology is fundamentally misguided.

To his credit, Spadaro does give several examples in which he shows how the logic of the Web can be problematic when applied to Christian theology. For instance, he discusses how the notion of sharing among web-users does not easily map onto the theological notion of gift. Neither can the horizontal structure of the Web help us to appreciate the hierarchical structure of the Church. As for the sacraments, Spadaro does a good job in demolishing the notion that they could be validly administered in a computer generated virtual world. But Spadaro is able to make such observations because he is thinking theologically about a specific human context. As a contextual theology, cybertheology works, but trying to make cybertheology into something more than this seems far more dubious.

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