

convincingly that *The Spiritual Foundations* develops an ecclesiology based on the Christological notion of divine-humanity, which he places in the context of the beginnings of the Catholic ecclesiological renewal and the thought of Johann Adam Möhler. One could have wished that Pilch had emphasized to a greater degree the role of Solov'ev's contemporary Russian ecclesiologists, who also applied the notion of divine-humanity to the Church, such as Alexander Katanskij (1836-1919) and especially Evgenij Akvilonov (1861-1911), who was one of the first, in the circles of the Russian Theological Academies, to define the Church as a 'theandric organism'. But the interest of Pilch's research is above all to show the evolution of the notion of deification in Solov'ev's thought, and its application at the social level (state and ecclesial) in his fascinating – and often disregarded – book, *The Justification of the Good*.

Pilch's research is not only an excellent introduction to Solov'ev's thinking from the key notion of deification, but also a remarkable and original effort to show how his thought is deeply 'ecumenical'. One can only hope that Pilch will continue his research in this area. His study testifies once more that Russian thought is never so fertile, and never so Russian, than when it embodies the fruitful meeting of the West and the East.

HYACINTHE DESTIVELLE OP

CONSCIENCE BEFORE CONFORMITY. HANS AND SOPHIE SCHOLL AND THE WHITE ROSE RESISTANCE IN NAZI GERMANY by Paul Shrimpton, *Gracewing*, Leominster, 2018, pp. xxi + 304, £ 15.99, pbk.

What makes a nation great? Faced with this question in 1808, when practically the whole of the German-speaking world was under French control, Crown Prince Ludwig of Bavaria created the Walhalla, a temple of German-ness towering over the Danube. Historian Neil MacGregor called this building the 'highest form of passive resistance', a bit like a National Portrait Gallery created as a first step to national liberation. Among the many busts of emperors, politicians and poets, one finds a bust of the young student Sophie Scholl, a 21-year old student of biology and philosophy who, together with her brother Hans, was executed in 1943 for urging fellow students at Munich University to oppose the Nazi-regime by means of illegal leaflets. The story of Sophie and Hans has been subject of at least two films *The White Rose* (1982) and *Sophie Scholl. The Final Days* (2005) and many TV-adaptations. Every German town and village seems to have a street or a school named after Sophie and Hans, and every bookshop seems to stock books by and on them. Interestingly, these books can often be found in the spirituality section, and not in the history section where you might have expected them.

Luckily, Paul Shrimpton's book *Conscience before Conformity*, helps to explain this specific point to the English-speaking world. The reason why Sophie, and Hans, are great role models for the German nation is that they dared to let their Christian informed consciences speak against the Nazi-regime while living, studying, and working in the midst of it, knowing that they would pay with their lives for this bravery.

Shrimpton's book takes an original angle to study the history of the Scholls and their resistance group. He argues that the Scholls were deeply influenced by the writings on conscience by the nineteenth century theologian John Henry Newman (1801-1890). He develops this point starting with Newman's reception in Germany in the inter-war years, highlighting the work and translations of the philosopher and cultural historian Theodor Haecker (1879-1945). Haecker was driven by the conviction that by the early 1930s his country had descended into a cruel national egotism and ethnocentrism that justified itself by means of Darwinian racial science. He described the 'modern intellectual man' of his day as someone who is no longer spiritual, who is 'the ambiguous fudge of good and evil, wanting in all decision, and incapable of saying 'no' to anything' (p. 12). One wonders what Haecker would have made of today's consumerist society enthralled by social media and often misled by strong opinions and 'fake news'?

In the subsequent chapters, Shrimpton presents the lives and actions of the Scholl siblings. He makes ample use of the letters that they exchanged with their family and friends. What is unique in Shrimpton's presentation of these letters is that he points out to the intellectual and spiritual growth that both brother and sister experience as they first try to make sense of their lives within the Third Reich and their growing concern that what their nation experiences should be opposed. Shrimpton does not shy away from the fact that, initially, the Scholl family was a very well established, well-off household within the Nazi-regime, although the father of the family, a major, never hid his discontent with the regime. This caused him to be imprisoned for a time.

Both Hans and Sophie were enthusiastic members of the *Hitler Jugend*. However, slowly, but surely, their eyes were opened. Both brother and sister dare to be different, which, initially consisted in studying the sort of poetry, philosophy, and theology that the regime had forbidden. In this way, the Scholls came to know Newman's writings on conscience. Shrimpton then carefully tries to reconstruct, although sometimes one gets the impression that he also actively constructs, the impact of the encounter with the Christian, Catholic, intellectual traditions of Newman, Przywara, and Maritain on the students and their friends as they engage in writing and distributing pamphlets against the regime.

After the Second World War, Sir Winston Churchill said that 'the political history of all nations has hardly produced anything greater and nobler than the opposition which existed in Germany. These people fought without any help...driven only by the uneasiness of their

consciences.’ (p. 279). Shrimpton’s book is a tribute to a kind of political theology that developed from informed Christian consciences under great duress. Had the Scholls been Catholic and not Lutheran, then the Roman Catholic Church would, in all likelihood, have recognised them as saints. However, I am sure that the wide recognition of the Scholls in Germany as role models for students, their mark on the German historical conscience, Sophie’s place in the ‘Walhalla’, can be seen as a kind of secular recognition of this heroic, but hidden, Christian sainthood.

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EMBRACING OUR FINITUDE: Exercises in Christian Anthropology between Dependence and Gratitude by Stephan Kampowski, *Cascade Books*, Eugene, Oregon, 2018, pp. 172, £18.00, pbk

St Catherine of Siena received many extraordinary graces from God. One of the first was a vision of the Lord Jesus, who appeared to her while she was saying her prayers, and told her, ‘Do you know, daughter, who you are, and who I am? If you know these two things, you will be blessed. *You are she who is not; whereas I am He Who Is.*’ This reminder from God of the difference between Himself and His creatures served as the first principle of St Catherine’s doctrine. She was instructed from Heaven in the truth for which her fellow Dominican, St Thomas Aquinas, argues in the *Summa*: the Creator exists of His very nature, the creature by His gift. God is infinite, without bounds, but the creature is finite, limited in what it is and what it can do, utterly dependent for its being and activity at every moment on the Almighty and Eternal God. This truth is taught throughout Scripture. Indeed, the experience of daily life brings home his frailty to every human being – or so you would think. Yet the men and women of the twenty-first century seem to forget, even deny, their limitedness and their infirmity, physical and moral. In 2017 *The New Yorker* ran an article on the efforts of the technocrats of Silicon Valley to make death ‘optional’: ageing, they say, is encoded in our genes; therefore, once we have cracked the code, we can live for ever – assuming we do not fall under a bus as we cross the street. In such a culture of denial Stephan Kampowski’s book comes as a gift of illumination and encouragement.

In the first chapter, the foundation for all that follows, Kampowski considers the givenness of human life. We exist, we are alive, but only under certain conditions: ‘we are born; we will have to die; we do not live alone in this world’ (p. 4). Following Hannah Arendt, Kampowski refers to these givens by the terms ‘natality’, ‘mortality’, and ‘human plurality’. We are contingent beings, dependent on one another, and most fundamentally on God. In the language of Christian doctrine, we