

constructive reappraisals of Jewish-Christian relationships, and these contributed to his developing biblical hermeneutics and political theology.

What of the book's central thesis that *nouvelle théologie* formed a bridge from modernism to Vatican II? The earlier side of the bridge is well delineated, with good discussion of the *Tübinger Schule* and Newman alongside Vatican I's *Dei Filius* and neo-scholasticism. Moreover, reflecting on the association with modernism helps account for the hostile reception *nouvelle théologie* was accorded by church authorities, while the long quotation from *Dei Filius* reminds us that historical discussions of the grace–nature relation served as a foil for debating that document. The bridge's later side (the author's fourth developmental phase) remains more implicit, however, perhaps because the case appears self-evident. Indeed, unlike the other three phases, it is not assigned its own section. Nevertheless, the thesis is well argued, and shows in detail where some of the key ideas of Vatican II came from. To reassure the anxious, however, let it be added that if *nouvelle théologie* functioned as such a bridge, then it was a bridge possessing its own distinctive features and not simply a means of transferring one set of doctrines, including some dubious ones, into a new context. By means of patristic *ressourcement*, including the recovery of the doctrine of the spiritual senses of Scripture, *nouvelle théologie* corrected serious deficiencies in the modernist project as well as embracing that project's underlying intuitions.

DAVID GRUMETT

**CRITICISING THE CRITICS: CATHOLIC APOLOGIAS FOR TODAY** by Aidan Nichols OP, *Family Publications*, Oxford, 2010, pp. 173, £11.95 pbk

This book consists of eight conference papers given to various audiences and responds to those who fail to grasp Catholic truth, whether they are inside or outside the Church. Nichols has preferred not to present the critics' arguments in full, merely that they critique the Catholic faith.

The marrow of '*For Modernists: Modernism a century later*' is the encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis*. The first part discusses the modernist as philosopher, believer, theologian, historian and critic, apologist, and reformer. The second part is Nichols' own categorisation of modernists today: comprehensive, kernel, sectorial, and negative. Nichols proposes as the remedy Thomistic ontology – without reference to what is now considered the Cajetanian and Suárezian trends of the anti-modernist heyday – patristics, liturgies, the other monuments of tradition, and obedience to the magisterium. Interestingly, Nichols argues that the pre-conciliar patristic and liturgical movements can be considered part of Pius X's move against modernism, yet are held in suspicion by traditionalist Catholics.

Chapter two, '*For Neo-Gnostics: Challenges to Orthodoxy and Mission*,' also centres round curial documents: *Dominus Iesus* and *Jesus Christ: The Bearer of the Water of Life*. Nichols sees St. Irenaeus as a Father tailor-made for our times, as referenced in these documents, the Catechism, and von Balthasar. Nichols makes two interesting points. First, he places modern neo-Gnosticism, Islam and Buddhism in the same essay. One cannot help think Nichols warrants this because they are non-Catholic and 'express religious experience in search of absolute truth' (p. 40). Second, our attention is drawn to the possibility of 'sub-mediations [by Gautama and Mohammed] in the unique mediatorial being and action of Jesus Christ' (p. 41) as a possibility presented by *Dominus Iesus*. We should include here the third essay, '*For Academic Exegetes: Reading Scripture in the Church*', for both concern the extent to which knowledge of God is privatised or grasped at by human efforts alone. In this case it is the academy's historical-critical method under the yoke of rationalism. Nichols summons François Dreyfus, Denis

Fárkasfalvy, Ignace de la Potterie, and Pope Benedict XVI. These theologians bring study of Scripture into the Church in dialogue with patristics, liturgy and the academy's historical-critical research, to the extent that the latter does not stand without the other referents.

'*For Feminists: How God is Father*' is an excellent summary of the Trinitarian theology of East and West. Nichols drives home the point that God is Father before he is Creator, because he is firstly Father of the Son, the *Logos*. This is the primordial truth which Nichols convincingly argues. Nichols makes contemporary cultural corollaries with Nietzsche and Freud's rebellion against a father figure, which Žižek takes to its conclusion in the disintegration of the Big Other. However, for a theologian fluent in the thought of von Balthasar, Nichols does not mention that von Balthasar readily describes the Father as supra-feminine and does not hesitate to present the generation of the Son as coming forth from the womb of the Father, von Balthasar always operating within the *analogia entis*.

'*For Liberal Protestants: How Christ is Priest*' occupies itself with developing a priestly Christology. Borrowing Hugh of Saint-Victor's concept of *sacramenta* within the Thomistic treatment of the Old Law, Nichols argues for a super-fulfilment reading of Scripture that presents persons and institutions – Melchizedek, Zodak, Temple – fulfilled by Christ the High Priest. Reading Scripture as a whole within the Church is fundamental, which makes the chapter on scriptural exegesis good preparation. Nichols demonstrates the intercessory and sacrificial nature of Christ's priesthood from the farewell discourse and the last supper. By combining Christ's self-understanding and fulfilment of Isaiah's Servant, and Daniel's transcendent Son of Man, Nichols presents Christ as the divine-human Priest of the New Covenant. By introducing Margaret Barker's tearing of the Temple veil identified with Christ's flesh, Nichols further shows that Christ's taking the garment of human flesh, transfigured white on Tabor, enters with his human nature into the true Holy of Holies by his Easter victory. Perhaps for liberal Protestants, the issue is also how Christ's priesthood is participated in by Christians. Nichols states that Christ's priesthood is continued in the Church, but does not develop an apologia for this Catholic belief.

In '*For Progressive Catholics: The Council and the Gospel of Life*,' Nichols develops his idea of attenuated existentialism as sincerity and autonomous conscience in moral decision-making, understood as the legitimate expression of Vatican II. The hermeneutics of rupture and continuity are examined in relation to *Gaudium et Spes* §§12 and 22. *Humanae Vitae* is mentioned *en passant*, *Evangelium Vitae* is not discussed at all. These would have been more constructive for the argument. In presenting Tracey Rowland's critique of *Gaudium et Spes* Nichols leaves some gaps. Rowland argues that the Council failed to understand what it really meant by 'modern,' and did not develop a theology of culture that could dialogue with this 'modern,' rather than merely stating that certain sorts of integralism with modern culture were problematic. Nichols points the finger at the autonomous spheres of culture and science, but the theologians who promoted this attenuated existentialism are not examined.

'*For the Erotically absorbed: The nature of Lust*' is a needed balance to the previous chapter in understanding the human person in all its dimensions. Nichols borrows Roger Scruton's idea of well-directed sexual desire, and leads us to the concept of *delectatio* (delight) in the sexual act, not merely with another body but with another person. It is within marriage that well-directed sexual desire flourishes as self-giving procreative love. Yet this can mutate into sexual lust when contraception is introduced, separating the unitive and procreative aspects. Further discussion of the search for happiness could have added to this chapter a pastoral grammar, hinted at in the personal accounts with converts and married couples which Nichols gives.

Lastly, *'For Critics of Christendom: Secularization: A Catholic Response'* argues that liberal secularism has been introduced via communitarianism, and is distinguished by romantic expressiveness in the moral sphere. Secular liberalism requires a politics without memory – Nietzsche's living unhistorically – which does away with an English common narrative from which to derive a shared identity and a definition of the common good. Nichols calls for a re-confessionalisation culturally and doctrinally by returning to Scripture, the Fathers, and the spiritual doctors and teachers. Nichols' project is slightly monolithic without reference to the significant contribution of Irish Catholicism in England – particularly Irish spirituality, religious life, and ministry amongst the working classes during the 20<sup>th</sup> century – and more recently Eastern European and African Catholic migrants. Each of these in unique ways has contributed, and is contributing, to English Catholic culture.

This small volume lacks a concluding chapter to draw together the whole work. There is no index of names or topics, but considering the size of the book, it is hardly necessary. It is an engaging read, worth purchasing for its useful content and as a stimulus to further study.

DANIEL BLACKMAN

**THE SCHOOL OF COMPASSION: A ROMAN CATHOLIC THEOLOGY OF ANIMALS** by Deborah M. Jones, *Gracewing*, Leominster, 2009, pp. 328, £14.99

Deborah Jones plainly has a cause to promote. She is general secretary of the first Catholic society dedicated to animal welfare founded anywhere in the world – 'Catholic Concern for Animals', set up in 1935 in Britain when it was known as the 'Catholic Study Circle for Animal Welfare'. *The School of Compassion* must be one of the first full-length studies on animal welfare in Catholic theology. It is engaging, thoroughly informative, rigorous in its analysis of Church texts and imaginative in pushing forward the debate towards a proper theology of animals. This contrasts with much writing that merely highlights some aspects of human behaviour towards animals.

Jones is an idealist but also a practical realist – on the one hand she asks us to imagine the impact of one billion Catholics if the Church officially adopted a 'pro-animal' theology; on the other she recognizes the huge practical, economic and cultural impact this would have, a '*metanoia* on a grand scale', she says, 'perhaps more than the Church dares to risk'. These two qualities pervade the whole book: it remains thoroughly visionary while at the same time never straying far from the 'art of the possible'. Thus it remains possible to discuss the issues at a profound level without them being reduced to a polarized war between carnivores and vegetarians.

*The School of Compassion* is divided into three sections. First, she gives an overview of literature and comments about animals from an ethical, philosophical or theological perspective, from the ancient Greeks, through the early and medieval Church, to the present, and including more recent official church documents. This is of necessity rather a romp through two thousand years of history in 127 pages (including footnotes). Granted her commitment to animal welfare, it also proves a bit of a gallery of rogues and saints. But it is incredibly informative, with few stones left unturned. It also includes a brief overview of the British scene.

Her second section is devoted to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, in particular to §§2415–18 of it. Here very word is thoroughly analysed, criticized and evaluated, positive things noted and contradictions exposed.

The third part covers modern theological developments regarding animals: the justice of human behaviour towards animals deriving from God's relationship