

HOLINESS: PAST AND PRESENT edited with an introduction by Stephen C. Barton, *T&T Clark/Continuum, London, 2003*, Pp. xvii+511, £25.00, pbk.

The appeal of this collection of 23 essays must inevitably be varied. Part I: *Holiness in Theory*, opens with a comprehensive survey by John Rogerson of the difficulties of coordinating such concepts as purity, separation, transcendence, intuitions of sacredness and taboo, into a single definition, followed by a renewed critique of Rudolf Otto's *The Idea of the Holy*, by Colin Crowder. Douglas J. Davies offers useful discussion of such topics as initiation, rites of passage and merit but ultimately concludes that holiness is essentially connected with the establishment of enhancement of self-identity. David Martin's 'Ecology of Holiness' provides an interesting tour of famous and less famous holy places, together with consideration of the intrinsic significance of frontier zones, peripheries and liminality well illustrated by shifts and changes in contemporary Europe and elsewhere, and the inevitable effects of these on the adherents of all religions.

Part II: *Holiness and Scripture*, offers a detailed treatment of the Old Testament 'Holiness code' by Philip Jenson, asserting both the importance and the inherent difficulties of the priestly writings, but concluding that the distinctive perspective on holiness found there is of abiding value. Walter Moberly considers the vision and mission of Isaiah, relating it to the 'Yahwistic' revelation to Moses and the threatening challenge of Joshua before the final crossing of the Jordan. His sobering conclusion is that God's majesty and holiness are here revealed so that his people, now as then, may become what they have already been called to be. Robert Hayward presents a fascinating description of how the emphatic biblical injunction to celebrate the seasonal festivals is further developed, in completely diverse ways, by the *LXX Pentateuch* and the *Book of Jubilees*. J.D.G. Dunn emphasises Jesus's rejection of pharisaic priorities in preferring purity of heart, and Stephen C. Barton demonstrates that the New Testament call to Christians is to be *both* a 'kingdom of priests' *and* a 'holy nation'. The belief that God was 'in Christ' signifies a development 'of momentous proportions', which he finds expounded at length in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*.

In Part III: *Holiness and Christian Tradition*, Andrew Louth attractively portrays the relation between *theosis*/deification and the vision of God presented by the Greek Fathers, and Carol Harrison delineates vividly the 4th-century conflict between seemingly Manichaean extremes of Christian asceticism and normal married life, finding the wise response developed in the writings of St Augustine where 'original sin proved to be the final leveller'. For Henry Mayr-Harting, Benedictine holiness is synonymous with

Benedictine 'spirituality', expounded from the *Rule of St Benedict* and Augustine Baker's 17th-century English classic, *Holy Wisdom*. Gordon Mursell explores English post-reformation developments from the Calvinist stance through concepts of the 'godly life' in the family to the various perceptions, Anglican and Non-conformist, of union with God. D.W.Bebbington presents four aspects of Evangelical holiness (Reformed, Wesleyan, 'Keswickian' and charismatic) in relation to their social and cultural contexts of Reformation, Enlightenment, Romanticism and Postmodernism. Sheridan Gilley very misleadingly limits his presentation of 'Holiness in the Roman Catholic Tradition' to the examples of Saints Therese of Lisieux, Pius X and Maria Goretti, followed by a lengthy description of the cult of the saints and the process of canonisation. In sharp contrast, Vigen Guroian offers a profound and lucid view of 'Mother of God, Mother of Holiness', making clear how Mary's holiness is a synergy of the overshadowing Spirit and her freely-willed response, with the consequence that ecclesial holiness is accessible to all who exercise the same virtues of intelligent faith and self-emptying love.

Part IV faces the challenge of *Holiness and Contemporary Issues*, with David Ford's attempt to draw from Bonhoeffer's works, especially the *Ethics* and *Act and Being*, concepts helpful for the 21st century, by unfolding the implications of the key aphorism, 'the reality of Jesus Christ being realised through the Holy Spirit'. From an avowedly feminist standpoint Melissa Raphael argues that those Jewish women who strove to maintain even a token remnant of cleanliness, decency and sisterly compassion in Auschwitz 'continued the ancient Jewish work of making the world *gottwirklich*', while Susan F. Parsons claims the support of St Paul in a very dense and complex presentation of 'Holiness Ungendered'. In finding some analogy between the 'atoning' deaths of Edith Stein and the Hindu *suti* bride Roop Kanwaar, Gavin D'Costa ponders a concept of holiness discernible in some non-christian religions. Happily balancing an earlier essay, Denys Turner's witty exhibition of a more representatively Catholic attitude diagnoses holiness as the joyful recognition of the need for, and the acceptance of, forgiveness, which makes possible the real encounter with God in utter nakedness and poverty of spirit, and displaces human possessiveness with a more contemplative reverence for creation and the obligations this entails. In examining standard arguments for and against abortion, Robert Song finds grounding for the unqualified assertion of the sanctity of human life only in the dignity bestowed on it by a holy God, and Daniel W. Hardy finally considers what conditions are requisite if worship – 'facing the holiness of God and performing it in human life' – is to create and sustain a 'holy society' in contrast to our increasingly secularised society.

Extensive suggestions for further reading, and an index of modern authors, are included.

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IDENTITY by Vernon White, *SCM-Canterbury Press Ltd*, Norwich, 2003, Pp. x+176, £9.99 pbk.

When Alasdair McIntyre wrote *After Virtue* he had in mind two books, one concerned with ethics, the other with social theory. Vernon White in his book *Identity* seems to have in mind at least three projects, one philosophical, another sociological and a third theological. One of the merits of this work is White's attempt to combine these projects to provide a coherent argument showing how Christian theology can provide 'unique resources' to tackle the social problems of our times. Such a task requires considerable skill and knowledge to perform, yet, as White declares, the thesis of the book is straightforward. Modern life with its rapid pace of change brings fragmentation. Christian theology, specifically through the notion of faithfulness, can offer modern people a resource that creatively enables us to form our identities within our changing world.

White begins with the philosophical project, briefly examining Josiah Royce's writings on the concept of loyalty. Royce was responding to what he saw as social disintegration at the beginning of the twentieth century, and saw loyalty as the pre-eminent moral good, the practice of which would bring about social integration. The weakness in Royce's moral theory, as White acknowledges, is that in itself a principle of loyalty cannot distinguish between commitments to good causes and those to evil causes. In order to provide content for the concept of loyalty White briefly examines the works of Gabriel Marcel and H. Richard Niebuhr, both of whom see God as the principle and ultimate object of loyalty. Despite the work of these two authors, White points out that loyalty's value for theology has been little developed.

His preliminary philosophical investigations of the notion of loyalty have led White in the direction of theology, and chapters two and three will now take up the theological project. White begins with some brief and general discussions concerning the difficulties of God-talk, and the dangers of identifying God with a reductive theory of ultimate reality. Here he mentions the classical problem of avoiding the opposed views of Heraclitean flux and Parmenidean static unity when attempting to describe reality. His own solution to the difficulty of God talk is to derive divine identity from divine action. Here is where the notion of loyalty comes in, expressed as God's loving faithfulness to his people through time and change. White