

Leibniz, Hobbes and Locke, and Wolff and Kant to shape all of modern metaphysics and politics.

Intellectual historians may well take issue with particular details of this genealogy, and certainly the transition from metaphysical to political accounts of individuation could have benefited from more illustration. More fundamentally it seems likely that many will resist the more substantive theological critique and proposal of an 'alternative modernity that is far more theologically orthodox and politically radical' (p. 384), although one hopes they might at least admire the ambition, lucidity and control of the argument. For Pabst, like Benedict XVI, these are not simply historical questions; they concern living traditions and their relation to truth, so that he is unafraid of making critical judgements and constructive proposals. His subsequent tendency to look for patterns and trajectories of thinking does not lead him to ignore those moments when an author's work seems contradictory or not quite to fit his placing in the genealogy. Those theologians who are inclined to dismiss this as 'just another Radically Orthodox genealogy' seriously underestimate both the depth and subtlety of Pabst's scholarship and the unavoidability of genealogies, whether explicit or implicit, to constructive proposals. It is significant in this respect that Pabst resists epochalism by pointing to many figures in 'modernity' which continue the earlier tradition (the Neapolitan Enlightenment, Hamann and Jacobi, Kierkegaard, the Russian sophiologists, the French Nouvelle Théologie, amongst others).

Finally some will be anxious about the attempt to rehabilitate the language of 'hierarchy' as imagining a return to 'the rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate'. Why did Pabst not choose instead a more fluffy subtitle such as 'The Recovery of Relationality'? Pabst might have said more here to explain his language of 'station' and 'virtuous guiding elite' (p. 441), but it is clear that his primary sense of hierarchy is the Dionysian one: 'a state of understanding and an activity approximating as closely as possible to the divine' (p. 142) and secondarily meritocratic (p. 442). Likewise there are enough hints here to guide the reader to his work elsewhere which indicates that Pabst's theo-political vision is not theocratic or autocratic but mutualist, democratic, and distributivist, an economy of gift exchange and the common good not unlike that pictured in Catholic Social Teaching, including 'universal education and healthcare' and 'a wider distribution of assets' (p. 455). This book establishes Pabst as one of the most significant contemporary political theologians and deserves to change debates in the history of political thought.

JOHN HUGHES

THEOLOGICAL METHOD : A GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED by Paul L. Allen, T & T Clark, London , 2012, pp. ix + 262, £14.99, pbk

The title of this book is reminiscent of Bernard Lonergan's *Method in Theology*. Its purpose is to look at the methods in theology used by writers from St Paul to Cardinal Ratzinger, with Bernard Lonergan's method as presented in his book constantly in the background. Method means for Lonergan and Allen, and for everyone else now, a sort of system. That is not what Aristotle meant. For Aristotle, method is the pursuit of something. It is the road after something and as such is governed by the end which is desired. The modern idea of method suggests that we should follow the path of least resistance, and go where we can, not where we would like to go. Aristotle followed Plato in seeing philosophy as being a pursuit of the good, driven by love. The *Nicomachean Ethics* begins. 'Every skill and every investigation (method), every action and every choice seems to aim at some good'.

This is the problem with method in the modern sense in theology. There are subjects whose practitioners can happily follow some system, without concern for where it will lead. The good they seek will be the good of regular employment, or the good of having solved a particularly difficult problem. Then again they might believe that their subject is of crucial importance to the betterment of the human race. People like that in Britain often end up making documentaries for the BBC.

Theology can never be like that. Anyone who thinks they can study theology as a mere system of thought will fail. The theologian, like Aristotle, is concerned first with where they want to go, and secondly with how to get there.

Allen's book is not a handbook of method but a study of how method works in Christian theologians from St Paul up to Cardinal Ratzinger. Looking for method in many of these writers is frustrating. He begins with St Paul, whom he freely admits, many writers would deny was a systematic writer at all, though he does himself accept this. Cardinal Newman too is someone who has 'an implied systematic theology' but does not write 'what we would call a systematic theology'. It is not that theologians tend not to have systems of thought but that they are never governed by these systems. One sign of this is that for the great theologians who find their place in this book, or any book that attempts to draw up a brief history of theology, the place in which they wrote their works is of great importance. Augustine's writings were nearly all composed in Hippo, where as bishop he mostly wrote to help his fellow Christians in their perplexities. Augustine was the most charitable of theologians in the sense that most of his writing was motivated by charity for his fellow Christians, and their needs. Newman had to move from Oxford University to Birmingham Oratory, because that is where his thought led him. Luther was not just German but his work was to have a convulsive effect on German history. Karl Barth was Swiss in origin, but he returned to Switzerland in 1935 from Germany because of his opposition to Nazism, an opposition based on his conviction that the true nation of any Christian was the Kingdom of God.

Allen does not suggest that we could have a system of theology which we could follow impersonally. He follows Bernard Lonergan in saying that conversion is fundamental, that theology is a discipline that flows from God's love 'flooding our hearts', (*Romans* 5:5). Yet he also thinks with Lonergan that there is a separation between religious, moral and intellectual conversion. To this I would say that there is a difference between someone who is not articulate and someone who articulates wrongly. The first may not be capable of adding much to theological thought but this is not a failure at the moral and intellectual level. They understand what they need to understand and live a Christian life. The one who uses intellect badly, who confuses what should not be confused, will fail on all three levels.

Even the most systematic theologians are, on examination, not quite as systematic as they appear. Origen in the *Contra Celsum* allows the pagan Celsus to dictate the questions put to Christianity. Thomas Aquinas in writing the *Summa Theologiae* was acting as a theological armoured for his fellow Dominicans, who themselves were responding to the opponents whom God had provided for them. The incomplete nature of this *Summa* seems to me to be part of its essence and not an accident. The *Summa* did not reach to the end of creation, to what redemption really is to be. His earlier thoughts on the matter, available in the supplement seem strangely unconvincing. The end we seek is always beyond us. 'You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free'. That sentence is in the future tense for a reason.

EUAN MARLEY OP