

from scientists and artists; the current reviewer, however, is unsure that 'pneumatic knowledge' need be considered an operation of the mind really distinct from simple apprehension and judgement.

The theory of 'pneumatism' is explained at greater length in chapter II, where it is argued that it has 'beauty' for its proper object. 'The efficacious means of [scientific] discovery', the author writes, 'is a certain sensibility to intelligible beauty' (p. 106). This leads to an original investigation of the place of beauty among the other transcendentals, with the suggestion that it is best defined as 'the actual shining forth of the communicability of being', or *ens ut communicans*.

This dense and meditative book concludes with three important appendices which reveal the depth of the author's knowledge of the *corpus* of St Thomas. The first and third are statistical analyses of 'the vocabulary of being' in the writings of the angelic doctor. Among other things, they reveal the presence in Aquinas' work of phrases that might have been attributed to a later scholasticism such as *natura entitatis*. The second appendix, which occupies 97 pages, contains translation of all the passages in St Thomas's writings which contain the phrase *ratio entis*, or cognate expressions.

The author enjoys a wide command not only of the actual texts of St Thomas but also of the relevant contemporary literature, in English, French and Italian. A concern for scientific precision is dominant throughout, but the book is also marked by an awareness that a well-founded, realist metaphysics must prevail in a society for the sake of the moral and cultural good of its members. Finally, this book is written in a rhetorical style proper to the French philosophical tradition that the English reader may well find daunting, at times; but if he perseveres, he will have received a thorough induction into 'the mystery of being'.

THOMAS CREAN OP

CHESTERTON AND THE ROMANCE OF ORTHODOXY – THE MAKING OF GKC 1874–1908 by William Oddie, *Oxford University Press*, 2008, pp. 416, £25 hbk

William Oddie's *Chesterton and the Romance of Orthodoxy* is a new biography of G.K.Chesterton covering the first thirty-four years of his life (he died in 1936). Oddie chooses 1908 as his end date because it saw the appearance of two of GKC's major works, *Orthodoxy* and *The Man who Was Thursday*. For Oddie, the former in particular was also a key moment in Chesterton's intellectual and spiritual formation: 'The publication of *Orthodoxy* was the end of a journey. It was both the conclusion of a process of self-discovery and the key document . . . in which he assessed not only where he now stood but how it was that his journey had followed the course that it did.'

Indeed, the idea that Chesterton's 'intellectual discovery comes to a fairly clear *terminus ad quem* in 1908 with *Orthodoxy*' is the central theme of this book. This is a new and important claim in Chesterton studies; others might disagree. Chesterton himself stated that the major turning point in his life was the Marconi Scandal of 1913, which ended his faith in the Liberal Party and which nearly destroyed his brother Cecil. Another key date was of course his reception into the Catholic Church in 1922, which inspired a sonnet that is one of his greatest poems. Indeed, *Chesterton and the Romance of Orthodoxy* is more a monograph on its author's key subject rather than a traditional biography as is explained in the introduction: 'My study is inevitably organised and written in biographical form, but there are differences to be noted from the biographies which have so far appeared. A general biography must inevitably be a kind of catch-all, organising

chronologically any material which comes to hand... its cornucopian assembly inevitably brings, to a greater or lesser extent, a certain loss of focus on the one part of a writer which is of lasting importance: his writings.'

Oddie's reductionist methodology leads him to ignore much of Chesterton's output, the fiction, the poetry, most of the essays, and to concentrate on a relatively small number of works that he sees as key to his thesis. He also has little time for others who have surveyed Chesterton's life before him: 'with one exception, I have found existing biographies of little help in my own study'. As Oddie states, 'the one exception' is in fact the *two* books by Maisie Ward written relatively soon after GKC's death, which have been subsequently used as the primary source by all successive biographers. She had the huge advantage of not only knowing the Chestertons personally, but also of being able to write to their friends and helpers on matters which were not clear, while she also had access to material that seems to have been destroyed during the War.

However, Oddie seems more dismissive of other biographers than he needs to be. For example, he rightly stresses the great importance of the poem at the beginning of *The Man who Was Thursday* dedicated to GKC's old friend and former schoolmate E.C Bentley. In the poem Chesterton looks back to his own troubled youth (1892–1895) when his mind had almost given way under the weight of evil he saw underlying the decadence of Oscar Wilde, but goes on to mark his path to sanity by the rejection of the Green Carnation (Wilde's symbol). In 1926 he wrote a foreword to a dramatic version of the book: "*I was not then considering whether anything is really evil, but whether everything is really evil*". Curiously Oddie then adds: 'though most of his biographers ignore it'. Looking at the Chesterton biographies on my shelves I cannot see the justification for this remark as at least part of the poem is quoted in all of them: Barker (1973); Dale (1982); Finch (1986); Coren (1989), and Pearce (1996). Tellingly, it is absent from Ward.

Where Oddie scores well is in the work he has done on the Chesterton manuscripts, which were not properly catalogued until as late as 2001 by a scholar at the British Library. This has enabled him to uncover some interesting material on Chesterton's early life that has not been published before. As befits a former clergyman in the Church of England, he also shows a clear understanding of the Anglo-Catholic world in which GKC moved under the influence of his future wife from the late 1890s onwards.

However, I must say that I am sceptical about Oddie's central thesis. If GKC's mind was made up by 1908, why did it take him another fourteen years to join the Roman Catholic Church? His nightmarish adolescence left Chesterton constantly wrestling with the interlocking questions of sanity and evil for the rest of his adult life. It also enabled him to write visions of despair with great power, such as those found in the Father Brown books, and which were admired as such by Kafka and Borges.

This hypersensitivity to evil also left him obsessed with the Book of Job, references to which crop up in all sorts of unexpected places in Chesterton's work, and it is surprising that Oddie does not discuss GKC's major 1907 essay on the subject. It would have been useful if he had studied Father Ian Boyd's book on Chesterton's novels, which describes *The Man who Was Thursday* as 'an extended commentary on the Book of Job'. Likewise, in a period when employees can be sacked for wearing a cross, it is also strange that Oddie does not mention the parable of the insane atheist obsessed with destroying crosses which begins *The Ball and the Cross* (1910), a piece which was greatly admired by Albino Luciani (Pope John Paul I).

To sum up: Dr Oddie has given us an interesting study concentrating on Chesterton's intellectual and spiritual development up to the year 1908, although not all lovers of Chesterton will agree with its key thesis. In any case, it should be

seen as a monograph rather than a major new biography which replaces Maisie Ward.

RUSSELL SPARKES

WEDDING FEAST OF THE LAMB: EUCHARISTIC THEOLOGY FROM A HISTORICAL, BIBLICAL AND SYSTEMATIC PERSPECTIVE by Roch A. Kereszty OCist, *Hildebrand Books*, Chicago/Mundelein, Illinois, 2004(?), pp. x + 274, \$35.00

SHEER GRACE: LIVING THE MYSTERY OF GOD by Draško Dizdar, *Paulist Press*, New York/Mahwah NJ, 2008, pp. vi + 218, \$24.95

There is a growing body of Catholic theology which might be termed 'creative orthodoxy'. It is solidly, but unselfconsciously, built on orthodox Catholic theology, and therefore (not 'but') is able to draw freely on a wide variety of schools of thought and theological and extra-theological traditions, the ensuing synthesis producing something new. These two books are good examples. Roch Kereszty's graduate text is a detailed historical survey of the Catholic Eucharistic tradition and the Mass, engaging critically but also eirenically with the Protestant tradition, with theories of transsignification and with contemporary pastoral concerns in the celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy. Draško Dizdar offers us 'a kind of lyrical liturgical catechesis and mystagogy' in which his basic framework is a 'creative dialogue' between the widely differing scapegoat theology of René Girard (via James Alison) and the Temple model of Margaret Barker. The results of both studies are interesting and often surprising. Stylistically they could not be more different. Kereszty maintains a sober (though not dry) tone; Dizdar's text is possibly the most unvaryingly enthusiastic book I have ever read, and simply *abounds* in italics and exclamation marks! Kereszty is aiming at a graduate audience (though not exclusively, as he says); Dizdar is addressing any Catholic who wants to (re-) connect faith and life, liturgy being, in his view, the connection between the two. He roots himself here firmly in the Eastern Christian principle of liturgy as *theologia prima*.

Kereszty begins his historical survey with an overview, rather too cursory, of pagan sacrifice, though he makes the interesting point that earth cults are from death to death, whereas sky cults lead from death to life. Dizdar discusses pagan sacrifice in detail, after Girard, but this is in order to show how radically different Christian sacrifice is – *God's gift to us*. Kereszty propounds a strongly Eucharistic *Sitz-im-Leben* for the New Testament. (This is also where we encounter his idiosyncratic Greek transcription, adding h to denote long vowels). He includes a useful parallel presentation of the Institution narratives, although he is a little inclined simply to favour scholars who advance his views and to be rather summary with those who don't. His treatment of John shows an engagement with modern 'eye-witness/community' schools of exegesis (p. 51).

After a liturgical reading of Revelation, Kereszty surveys the Fathers. St. John Damascene's emphasis on Eucharistic transformation as our transformation provides an entry for what Kereszty clearly sees as the high point of Latin Eucharistic theology in Augustinian Platonism, which enabled opinions to co-exist in the Church: 'Even the extreme symbolist believed that the symbol of bread and wine participates in the reality of the body and blood of Christ. On the other hand, even the extreme realist knew that Christ is present in and through sacramental signs so that one cannot literally touch, or even less chew on his body. Both were also aware that the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ causes the building up of the Church as the body of Christ' (p. 131).