

Augustine's two treatises on teaching, *De Doctrina Christiana* and the delightful but less well known *De Catechizandis Rudibus*, showing how they function precisely as traditional philosophical therapy but now mediated through the new community, and under the guidance of the new Master and Doctor, Christ himself. The focus is the unpretentious textbook of this new and universal school of humility: 'The skills one develops to read scripture properly are the very ones needed to act morally' (p. 150). But the old methods are still valuable; *De Catechizandis Rudibus*, for example, provides concrete examples of advice on adapting instruction to the needs of the souls of different groups of individuals, for example those with different levels of education.

As in his treatises, so in his sermons: once again we find the classical tradition of rhetorical philosophy replayed in a different key. Kolbet's detailed exploration of specific sermons shows Augustine using all his classical skills first to awaken his congregation to their need of conversion and moral healing and then to guide them towards health. He invites his hearers to attend to their own reactions to a text, and see from these the true state of their own hearts: 'Humble yourself under the flood of grace ... trusting not in yourself, stripping yourself of Goliath and putting on David' (*Sermon 32*). This process of moral-cum-intellectual formation, as the final chapter emphasises, always took place in the context of the Christian community, and in full awareness of the way in which that community shared its life with a wider, and unbaptised, society. 'Not unlike his Stoic predecessors ... Augustine sought to further a Christianity that could account for such cultural intermingling without so diminishing the critical edge of Christianity that it became merely "cultural"' (p. 209).

T.S. Eliot once remarked that 'the most individual parts of a poet's work' may be those in which his predecessors 'assert their immortality most vigorously'. Kolbet's combination of detailed attention to texts and familiarity with the wide context has enabled him to move an old debate beyond the question: how far is Augustine dependent on his classical past and how far is he original? It is precisely in his reshaping of a very traditional ideal, using adapted version of very traditional tools that the originality of the early Christian tradition and of Augustine himself, as he gradually develops its new approach, are revealed.

MARGARET ATKINS OSA

CHRIST, SOCIETY AND THE STATE by Brian T. Trainor, *ATF Press, Adelaide, 2010, pp. vii + 606, £31.50*

Offered as a response to the challenges that arose out of the public debate between Jürgen Habermas and Joseph Ratzinger at the Catholic Academy of Bavaria in 2004, Brian T. Trainor sets himself the formidable challenge of arguing, most broadly, that the sacred and the secular are 'integral aspects of a single dynamic totality' (p. 3). Fashionably beginning as an intervention into the dialectics of secularization, Trainor attempts to substantiate this claim by plunging headlong into dialogue with a host of diverse voices ranging from Barth, Rahner and the Niebuhr brothers to Hobbes, Bosanquet, Foucault and Derrida. What emerges throughout the book, however, is the pursuit of a certain kind of rehabilitation of universal liberalism and theological metaphysics in the face of contemporary discourses that celebrate the endless proliferation of difference and the overcoming of onto-theology.

Divided into four parts, Trainor begins by taking issue with what he calls 'our curious and over-inflated fondness for the particular' (p. 36), which he claims reveals a misplaced hostility toward the universal. Trainor's bold argument here attempts to show that H. Richard Niebuhr and Michael Walzer

produce an illuminating synthesis of the particularist insights of what he terms the 'Ressourcement/culture school' and the universalist insights of what he calls the 'Rahnerian/instrumentalist school'. Predictably enough, the quarrel in the background here is with John Milbank, whose account Trainor seeks to complicate by introducing a conception of the relative or, as he puts it, 'penultimate' autonomy of the secular and by questioning whether Milbank's reliance on Blondel is as revolutionary as he claims.

Trainor continues his rehabilitation of the universal in part two by setting his account against the backdrop of Foucault, whose 'withering critique of experts certainly helps us to become humble servants of Truth' (p. 197). This productive use of Foucault is by no means a wholesale endorsement, however, since Trainor claims that he is 'the leading theorist who has contributed to the current anti-Truth cultural climate' (p. 199) and goes on to suggest that the way forward is helpfully illuminated by Bosanquet, who represents an advance on Walzer's communitarianism. Trainor's recourse to this largely neglected English political philosopher is certainly one of the more interesting turns in the book. In Trainor's hands, Bosanquet offers the resources to resist the postmodern severing of the particular from the universal with his account of how the universal 'descend[s] upon its differences without de-naturing or destroying them' (p. 221). This leads on to a spirited defence of a kind of universal liberalism with a built in openness to criticism against the kind of political liberalism espoused by Rawls.

Recourse to Bosanquet continues in part three, in which Trainor aims to 'show that the kind of ethical-metaphysical theory of the state that we broadly associate with idealist political philosophy provides us with a theoretical account of the state that... remains the most profound and powerful account of the state available' (p. 295). Central here is an account of the state that maintains that in addition to its existence as a network of political and juridical institutions, the state is also an 'ethical community' or a 'living ethical reality'. Drawing attention to Barth's later work, particularly his *Community, State and Church*, and explicitly pushing his analysis much farther than Barth ever imagined, Trainor audaciously argues that 'the state, conceived of as an angelic presence of the Spirit, bearing and mediating the will to justice... is beyond corruption' (p. 369). As outlandish as this claim may seem, Trainor is careful to qualify what he means and explicitly suggests that the Third Reich should not be regarded as a state at all, which of course raises further questions about the criteria by which statehood can be judged to be legitimate that are left largely unanswered apart from a rather vague notion of conformity to Christ. Of the utmost importance for Trainor is that the shared ethical-metaphysical kernel of the state both Barth and Bosanquet articulate 'stands firmly against and roundly condemns totalitarian political ideologies' (p. 401).

The final part of the book is dominated by a discussion of Hobbes, who Trainor suggests is useful because he exhibits a 'subtle understanding of the ennobling and constructive role of law' (p. 426) and 'ecumenically valuable because he is associated both with the (Catholic) natural law tradition and yet also with the (Protestant) Occamite, nominalist tendencies of the Reformation tradition, so that his work serves... as a bridge between the two' (p. 473). Here again, Trainor launches into a highly polemic argument that seeks to resituate Barth with respect to the Catholic tradition by suggesting that 'whilst Barth, in his earlier work, is clearly out of sympathy with natural law both rhetorically and substantively, yet in his later work, it appears that he is out of sympathy rhetorically *rather than* substantively with the natural law tradition' (p. 488). Ending where he began, the final chapter tackles the difficult relationship between justice and violence by reading Derrida against himself.

The overall impression the book leaves is more of a collection of essays cobbled together rather than a coherent monograph. Indeed, seven of the eleven chapters

are based on previously published articles and there is much additional overlap with an earlier book on justice and the state. The text itself is also overburdened with parenthetical remarks, which at times would have been better consigned to footnotes since they too often interrupt the flow of the narrative, and chapter references throughout the text are incorrect. Editorial idiosyncrasies including the sporadic omission of author names from footnotes, a complete lack of page numbers in the contents, only a very brief index of names, no subject index whatsoever and other miscellaneous *errata* inhibit the usefulness of such a large and wide-ranging volume.

More substantively, however, Trainor's mode of analysis moves very quickly. Readers are bombarded with a veritable cacophony of names that are parachuted into the text and, while frequently relevant and interesting, often disappear as quickly as they arrive and thus have the effect of distracting from rather than deepening the analysis. Alongside this, Trainor's arguments suffer from a marked tendency to overreach what they are actually able to show and at times would benefit from a more discerning contextual approach. His attempt to resituate Barth, for example, fails to mention Przywara and touches on Balthasar only tangentially. Likewise, his discussion of Bosanquet, which is surely where the uniqueness of Trainor's contribution lies, makes no mention of the significant influence of Hegel, whose absence is doubly curious given his subsequent advocacy of a kind of *Sittlichkeit*. Despite these weaknesses, or indeed perhaps because of them, Trainor's contribution raises a host of valuable questions and his provocations invite further constructive dialogue of precisely the sort he displays throughout this weighty volume.

KYLE GINGERICH HIEBERT

SCIENCE VS. RELIGION: WHAT SCIENTISTS REALLY THINK by Elaine Howard Ecklund, *Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010, pp. xi + 228, £16.99 hbk*

The enormous expansion of information outlets on Internet websites might make large-scale sociological surveys seem redundant. These investigations are labour intensive, time consuming and are often nugatory in terms of the insights yielded. Such a charge cannot be laid against this highly significant, thoughtful and timely study by Ecklund, which is the first serious sociological investigation into attitudes of scientists to religion. Based on a survey of nearly 1,700 scientists, and interviews with 275 of them, all at 21 top universities in the U.S.A., the study is well organised and written and is exemplary in its use of endnotes, with three appendices on methodological issues. Additionally, it contains a highly useful bibliography.

Overall, this study represents sociology at its best, in uncovering hidden connections, unexpected insights and layers of insight which sectarian debates in the English mass media on the topic have well obscured. By a sociologist of religion, a landscape of ideas is laid out much in the manner of Bourdieu's celebrated study, *Homo Academicus*. English universities, being so irredeemably secular, might miss the point of the study, which is to generate a dialogue between those with religious sensitivities directed to understanding and those in science, for whom reason, facts and objectivity are articles of faith in their discipline.

As with other academic disciplines, sociology is subject to periods of intense interest in topics that come and go without much reference to public debates. The sociology of science is a case in point. It gained a period of fashion in the 1980s, largely in response to the memoirs of Watson and Crick in *The Double Helix*, which demolished the notion that scientists were cold clinicians operating without