

rhetoric theory with modern argument theory. Above all, he clarifies the necessity of rhetoric analysis in order to cross the chasm between public speech (the text) and actual authorial thinking (this chasm is often ignored in pre- and non-rhetorical exegesis). For lying between text and thinking is a cultural ideology common to audience and author, from which the latter must draw means of persuasion. This ideology intersects with the author's thinking but is not identical to it. Chapter 6 in particular is a valuable contribution to its description.

On the other hand, the study raises questions about the boundaries of rhetorical analysis as a contributing discipline to New Testament exegesis. For although it sets out to describe the "thinking" of the author (13), the final result of the study would be better described as an investigation of a document's strategy of persuasion. In the end it only hesitantly skims the author's thinking. In the concluding sections, Thuren seems to shy away from opening the window onto the actual theology of the author.

Perhaps this limitation is part and parcel of the vocation of rhetorical and argumentative analysis. This type of study can be viewed as one step in the quest for the origins of Christian paraenesis, which must be complemented by other steps provided by historical analysis and biblical theology. Provided that these boundaries are kept in perspective, I certainly recommend this careful study.

Marc Debanné

McGill University

Philosophical Works of Peter Martyr Vermigli: On the Relation of Philosophy to Theology. The Peter Martyr Library, volume 4. Translated and edited by Joseph C. McLelland. Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, volume 39, 1996. ISBN 0-9404-7423-8.

To mark the Quincentenary of Vermigli's birth, an International Symposium was held in Kappel, Switzerland in July 1999. Several dozen scholars from all over North America and Europe delivered papers. The current marked vitality of Vermigli studies has been building up for a considerable period. The last generation has witnessed nothing less than a renaissance of critical interest in the life and thought of this great Italian reformer. One of the early, influential contributors to this renewal is Joseph C. McLelland, Professor Emeritus and formerly Dean of the Faculty of Religious Studies at McGill University. McLelland's own doctoral dissertation (written at Edinburgh under the supervision of Thomas F. Torrance and published in 1957 under the title *The Visible Words of God: An Exposition of the Sacramental Theology of Peter Martyr Vermigli*) marks the beginning of the modern resurgence of interest in the reformer. Through his dedicated contribution to the organization of a series of conferences and to spear-heading the publication of the *Peter Martyr Newsletter*,

McLelland has helped to galvanize the critical study of Vermigli's thought. Without doubt the most significant and lasting benefaction is the Peter Martyr Library (PML) itself. The launching of the PML by Thomas Jefferson University Press under the general editorship of McLelland and John Patrick Donnelly of Marquette University represents a remarkably ambitious scholarly undertaking. The purpose of the Library is to make available a substantial portion of the reformer's works in modern critical English translation together with extensive scholarly notes and critical introductions. Vermigli was a very prolific writer. Two complete series of twelve substantial volumes apiece are projected by the general editors, who now include Frank James III of Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida. Five volumes of the first series have been published of which the volume under review is the fourth. In his Preface McLelland offers some important observations on the general assumptions and practice of translation employed in the PML project. In general, the editors have sought "the mean between literalism and paraphrase, or 'stencil' and 'aureate' forms of speech."

In this collection of philosophical writings of Vermigli, McLelland has drawn from a variety of his works. Included are Peter Martyr's preface to a *Commentary on the First, Second and Third Books of Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics*, scholia from the voluminous biblical commentaries of the reformer, as well as a lecture on the freedom of the will. The thread linking the selected topics are questions regarding the relation between Nature and Grace, between the natural and the revealed knowledge of God, and between philosophy and theology.

Vermigli is now well recognized as a principal representative of the humanist tradition of Protestant or Reformed Scholasticism. His embrace of evangelical doctrine did not lead him to abandon his Aristotelian-Thomist theological roots. On the contrary, quite late in his career as a reformer, after his departure from Oxford and return to Strasbourg (1553), Vermigli commenced his series of lectures on Aristotle's *Ethics* with a view to comparing "the Philosopher's" teaching with the Gospel. The *Commentary on the Ethics* furnishes insight into his dialectical treatment of the relation between the authorities of human reason and divine revelation. While philosophy is honoured by him as a God-given capacity of the human mind, Vermigli seeks to distinguish the respective orders of cognition and practical action: "in philosophy action precedes contemplation because we can contemplate neither God nor nature by human powers unless our emotions are first at rest. But in Scripture speculation comes first, since we must first believe and be justified through faith" (15). This brief extract from the *Commentary* provides an important preliminary insight into Vermigli's scholastic methodology and is well situated at the outset of the volume.

In the second section of the volume McLelland has chosen to translate two interesting exegetical pieces that serve to illuminate the reformer's theological anthropology. The first selection from his *Commentary on Genesis* addresses the relationship between soul and body by drawing simultaneously on the psychology of Augustine and Aristotle. The longest single extract in the fourth vol-

ume, and the companion piece in this second section, is an extended essay on the resurrection taken from Vermigli's *Commentary on the Second Book of Kings*. It is noteworthy that much of the evidence adduced in this discussion of the mystery of resurrection is taken from the Old Testament. Vermigli's Renaissance eclecticism is manifest in his appeal to the medieval rabbis (Kimhi, Gersonides, Rashi), to Targum, as well as to the Greek and Latin Fathers of the Church. Throughout the discourse he resorts to various scholastic devices of syllogism or "rational proof." He writes, for example: "something imperfect is incapable of eternal happiness; the soul separated from the body is imperfect; therefore it must be reunited with the body." Such argumentation is presented as cogent for believers on the premise of scriptural evidence concerning the union of soul and body—*fides quaerens intellectum*.

Three more sections of the volume are devoted to various topics of philosophical theology. The third includes two scholia from Vermigli's *Commentary on the Book of Judges* in which he addresses visions and dreams as possible instruments of divine revelation. McLelland points out that his epistemological assumptions are substantially Thomist-realist: "The divine transcends every attribution which posits a compound or complex reality. While we may contact God through the signs and symbols he chooses to use in accommodation to our creaturely capacity and weakness, his essence escapes us: objects of belief are not at the same time objects of reason" (136). Once again Vermigli seeks out a middle course between Aristotle and Augustine; that is, between dismissal and elevation of the revelatory significance of visions. Included in the fourth and fifth sections of the volume are discussions of providence, miracles, and theodicy as well as free-will and predestination. In a lecture delivered on the occasion of the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul toward the end of his career, Vermigli summarizes his mature position on the nature of human freedom in the context of divine judgment. While he quotes extensively from the anti-Pelagian writings of Augustine and Prosper of Aquitaine here again his hermeneutical approach turns upon the philosophical issues that surround the question of causality, and these he handles, not unexpectedly, in a thoroughly Aristotelian fashion.

This beautifully produced volume, replete with illustrations from first editions of Vermigli's works, is remarkable for the breadth and variety of the philosophico-theological issues included. Even more remarkable is the continuity of the discourse given the diversity of the original sources. Vermigli's massive corpus of scholia was gathered together posthumously by Robert Masson in the widely circulated four-volume *Loci Communes* of 1576. In somewhat Procrustean fashion, Masson attempted to apply a systematic matrix modeled on Calvin's *Institutio* as a means of bringing order to the diverse subject matter of the scholia scattered throughout Vermigli's biblical commentaries. The result was inevitably uneven. The new Peter Martyr Library, as exemplified by this volume, has taken a less systematic but ultimately more satisfactory approach to the ordering of the texts. The current volume seeks to follow through on one of the major thematic unities in the reformer's thought. The final result is of great hermeneutical value. The elegance of the translation ensures the accessi-

bility of the author. This volume, however, will not disclose its riches upon any casual reading. It demands close and careful study. Such labour, however, can only yield pleasure, for, as the philosopher himself remarks in his discussion of the highest actuality of thought, "the act of contemplation is what is most pleasant and best" (*Metaph.* XII. 7).

Torrance Kirby

McGill University

Faith Beyond Reason: A Kierkegaardian Account. By C. Stephen Evans. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1998. ISBN 0-8028-4555-X. Pp. 167.

This modest contribution explores the Dane's and other versions of what has been called fideism. Several species of such are found to provide insights on the nature of reason's limitations as a vehicle of religious knowledge. Evans's focus is on Christian faith as primarily trust in God, involving certain beliefs concerning God (as a spiritual, personal, transcendent Being) and a willingness to relate obediently to God. Rationalistic approaches regard such faith as only appropriate when supported by sufficient propositional evidence. Fideism in all forms rejects the need for faith to be governed by the human faculty evaluating such evidence, since this capacity is at best limited and at worst adversely affected by sin. Reason is unqualified to preside as an autonomous, authoritative arbiter of all truth. It has, however, not been rendered utterly unfit, and so may be employed in critically exposing its own boundaries in regard to understanding God.

Before taking up various potentially constructive critiques of reason's role, Evans treats and counters three contentions to the effect that religious faith and the beliefs it involves should be appreciated as off-limits to rational questioning. One line, that reason is incompetent to pass any judgments, is too extreme on several counts. Reason is at work in distinguishing, grasping the sense of an affirmed truth, even if it cannot see that assertion to be truth. To consider and to contest whether a concrete particular pattern of thinking is as useful as alleged toward attaining truth is a legitimate exercise. It honors normative reason, the notion of an ideal or preferable way worth pursuing to arrive at some accurate answers.

A second, Wittgensteinian line, holds that standards for evaluating the concerns of a given faith are strictly internal to a religious community's life and language. This approach is helpful in highlighting the distinctiveness of that religious outlook and the advantage of an inside vantage point, but takes these too far. A related, more pointed third line argues that Christian claims are based on subjective experience rather than objective realities. For Evans, this emphasis on expressive versus descriptive faith greatly overstates the