

insists on genuine equality between the sexes and emancipation in all professional spheres'. Regarding women and the priesthood, '[Stein] says that while it cannot be forbidden by dogma, tradition and the example of Christ both speak against it' (p. 81).

The saint's spiritual writings are the subject of Chapter 9 and, belonging largely to the nine years of her life spent in Carmel, were unpublished until long after her death, when many of her writings were lovingly reconstructed from notes found in the destroyed convent of Echt. Disappointingly, Borden does not supply the dates of original publications in German, only of English translations now issuing fast from the Institute of Carmelite Studies in Washington DC – bringing riches to the intellectual and spiritual life of the Church.

A pedantic caveat: It is hard to believe Stein herself would have approved the silly convention current in American academia of substituting feminine for common pronominals: 'her' for 'his' etc. Some of this blemish derives from the translations – despite the very different way pronominals are used in German – but a good deal is Borden's own, and applied with often incongruous effect: thus we have, 'If one were a Thomist, one read Latin; if one were not, she did not read Thomas' (p. 104, cf also p. 141). Once or twice Borden lapses with a 'his' or a 'his or her' (pp. 50 and 96), or – as if in desperation – a 'you', as on p. 39, where, too, the perverse 'she' actually becomes confused with the female subject, Stein herself.

In general, though, this book, described on its jacket as 'an overview', is to be recommended as steering a course between the less and the more initiate in philosophy.

Stein overcame a wilfulness in early childhood and a later blackness of mood not uncommon in doctoral students, to become, despite the terrors of the time she lived and died amid, an apostle of joy. A favourite 'phenomenon' already in her first philosophical work, joy reappears as a 'substantial form' in *Finite and Eternal Being*. In the *Commentary on St John of the Cross* written at the behest of her superiors, she writes, 'the joy in creatures is increased by renouncing them'. May she pray for us!

ANNA RIST

**COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY: ESSAYS FOR KEITH WARD**  
 edited by T.W. Bartel, *SPCK Press, London, 2003, Pp. xv + 208,*  
**£19.99 pbk.**

Last year Professor Keith Ward retired after a highly distinguished academic career of over 30 years. The volume and variety of Ward's publications are themselves impressive, and in them he has dealt

with ethics, the meeting of science and religion, the philosophical justification for religious beliefs, especially Christian, and the relationship between different religious traditions. In his own estimation, Ward's 'life-work' has been in this last area. He has been a leading exponent of the discipline of comparative theology, and his principal contribution to it has been the four volumes of what he describes as 'a systematic Christian theology, undertaken in a comparative context': *Religion and Revelation* (1994), *Religion and Creation* (1996), *Religion and Human Nature* (1998) and *Religion and Community* (2000).

The last book Keith Ward produced before his retirement was *God: A Guide for the Perplexed* (2002), in which he examines the reasons for the decline in theistic belief and critically surveys the various concepts of God held in the west and elsewhere in the hope of giving anyone genuinely perplexed about God much food for thought and even positive incentive to believe.

At the end of *Religion and Community* Ward defines what he means by comparative theology. It is a co-operative enterprise, a way of doing theology in which 'scholars holding different world-views share together in the investigation of concepts of reality, the final human goal, and the way to achieve it. Naturally, each scholar will have a particular perspective. One might expect it to develop and deepen in the many conversations of comparative theology, but it will probably remain the same in its fundamental elements, especially if the scholar is a member of a religious community' (p. 339).

In Ward's understanding, the comparative theologian does not eschew his own religious commitment, but allows it to be enriched or challenged by other perspectives. Every theologian is, moreover, called upon to account for and, if necessary, modify his or her religious beliefs in the light of developments in scientific knowledge and philosophical thinking. These are criteria which Ward brilliantly exemplifies in his own writings. He sums up his contribution in the tetralogy: 'The first result of the investigations in these volumes has been to provide an interpretation of Christian faith that remains recognizably mainstream, while being modified by its response to both critical and complementary insights from non-Christian traditions. The second result is, I hope, to provide a comparative investigation of the concepts of revelation, God, human nature and destiny, and of the nature of a religious community. It is precisely because the comparative study is undertaken from a Christian viewpoint (and all such study must be taken from some viewpoint, acknowledged or not) that it comes to constitute a positive Christian theology' (pp. 340–1).

The outline of Ward's work and concept of comparative theology serves as the basis both for the structure and the content of

*Comparative Theology*. The volume under review comprises a preface, followed by 20 articles grouped together according to themes of Ward's tetralogy. The articles are by leading figures in the western theological, philosophical and scientific communities with whom Ward has engaged, and address the concerns of the tetralogy. Finally, Keith Ward gives a short resume of his own life and career, the title of which, 'Keith Ward: A Guide for the Perplexed' in true Wardian spirit playfully echoes the title of his most recent work. There is also a comprehensive bibliography of Ward's publications.

Some of the articles deal in fair detail with the arguments put forward by Ward and are often quite vigorously critical of them, especially those related to *Religion and Revelation*. Byrne, for instance, argues that instead of what he terms Ward's 'confessional inclusivist' stance Ward should acknowledge a more thoroughgoing pluralism (pp. 12–23), while D'Costa argues, on the other hand, that Ward's approach should be more clearly Christological and Trinitarian in character (pp. 33–43). Others work in general and critical continuity with Ward's own approach. Among these, Brown argues the case for a better understanding of the subtlety of emanationist and other cosmologies and of their positive parallels with the traditional doctrine of creation (pp. 56–65). The spread of the articles is somewhat uneven, with the bulk relating to *Religion and Creation*. Yet there are very interesting and important articles even in the smaller sections relating to *Religion and Human Nature* and to *Religion and Community*. Harries, for example, discusses the issue of the moral status of the early embryo in the light of both the theological tradition and contemporary legal rulings (pp. 152–162).

The articles' strengths are to manifest Ward's own concern for theology carried out rigorously in the light of modern philosophical and scientific concerns, and to show an openness to understanding and exploring viewpoints which have arguably been misunderstood in much Christian or philosophical discussion. The weaknesses of the collection are that there is very little about other religious traditions and that no contribution is by a thinker from another tradition in response to what Ward has written. To be fair, both these shortcomings are acknowledged in the preface. Yet it has to be said that it is integral to Ward's understanding of comparative theology that theology engages with other traditions and invites a theological exchange between the theologians of those traditions. This is, however, a fine set of essays which can and should serve as a kind of critical companion to Ward's works, although the majority could also be read in isolation. It would be a fitting tribute to Ward's work if there were a second volume in which the contributors were thinkers from other traditions.

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