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Editorial for Theological Studies (September 2011)

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A CHANGE OF BOOK REVIEW EDITORS

This past summer, J. Leon Hooper, S.J., stepped down from the position of Book Review Editor, which he held with distinction since the fall of 2005. The journal's Board of Directors and I express our sincere gratitude to Father Hooper for his dedicated service and wish him well as he now has more time to devote to his duties at Georgetown University and the Woodstock Theological Center.

At the same time, the Board and I announce the appointment of R. Daniel Kendall, S.J., as the new Book Review Editor. Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of San Francisco, Father Kendall brings to his editorship a long and distinguished career in publishing and editing. The Board and I are grateful to him for accepting this appointment. The December 2011 issue of the journal will be his first as Book Review Editor.

David G. Schultenover, S.J.

From the Editor's Desk

"All the Saints" was the theme of this year's meeting of the Catholic Theological Society of America in San Jose, California. An exceptionally fertile and evocative convention, it prompted me, during the flight home, to muse on the paper I would like to have given at it—and now, gentle reader, I inflict my musings on you.

Two years ago, a group of scholars of the Modernist period published *Modernists and Mystics*, a ground-breaking collection highlighting the importance of the mystical element of religion and holiness as essential ingredients in the church's doctrinal development. In reflecting on "All the Saints," I recall that George Tyrrell (1861–1909) had written some seminal works on "the communion of saints," his favorite dogma. His whole theology, though not systematic in today's sense but rather essayistic, thematically probed the mystery of holy personhood—divine, human, and ecclesial.

While most readers know that Tyrrell (in 1907) received minor excommunication (exclusion from the sacraments, not from the church), many might not know that he was excommunicated not for doctrinal but for disciplinary reasons—for having published in the London *Times* a two-part critique of Pope Pius X's encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis* condemning Modernism. Nevertheless, his writings, apart from his early devotional works, were regarded as suspect. In this, he was far from alone. Indeed, many theologians throughout the church's history have found their work suspect, some deservedly so, others not—Thomas Aquinas, for example, suffered at least collateral damage from the famous condemnations of 1277 issued by the bishop of Paris; they did not target Aquinas *nominatim*, but an Aristotelian movement with which he was associated.

Since the Counter Reformation and, even more so, since the antimodernist measures of Pius X, many Catholic theologians have been concerned about how their explorations may be received in the church. The possibility seems almost perennial that the process of writing theology today necessarily includes testing the boundary between what the church firmly holds and how—

because of historical and cultural changes—it needs to rethink and reexpress that for new times and circumstances. Indeed, the magisterium, while exercising its authentic oversight, expects theologians to carry out this task.

In reconsidering how Tyrrell found himself in such circumstances at the turn of the 20th century, a time of heightened church-state turmoil, I am struck by how his theology morphed from primarily a spiritual theology for priests and religious to a theology aimed at helping not only priests and religious but also the laity—especially the better educated whose faith-reason problems worried the simple faith of their childhood. In prosecuting his approach, Tyrrell enjoyed considerable help from the erudite and spiritually profound Baron Friedrich von Hügel (1852–1925), who authored some of the church's most sophisticated treatments of holiness—most importantly the magisterial, two-volume work, *The Mystical Element of Religion as Studied in Saint Catherine of Genoa and Her Friends*, published in 1909, the year of Tyrrell's death. Tyrrell had labored hard with the baron on this work, and much of his thought rubbed off on Tyrrell, particularly the baron's thesis that true holiness requires the integration of three elements: the intellectual, the mystical, and the institutional—the mind, heart, and hands.

The decidedly orthodox von Hügel observed that the exaggeration of one of the three elements over the others leads to an unhealthy narrowing of religion. He and Tyrrell saw precisely this development in the Roman Catholicism of their day: the "constriction and hyper-intellectualization of the tradition [that] culminated in the established neoscholasticism of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century manuals of theology" (*Modernism and Mystics* 4). They saw that Counter-Reformation and counter-Enlightenment fears (particularly of Kantianism and Romantic subjectivism) led church authorities to overlay the mystical element of religion with the intellectual and institutional elements. Yet it is the mystical element that provides the church its vital impetus toward healthy historical evolution. The church's best theologians are so because they function out of a healthy dose of mystical insight and intuition, gained not infrequently in prayer, liturgical and private. No one can probe divine mysteries without the mystical element; and without bringing mystical, intuitional insight to the exploration, the intellectual and institutional elements of religion can easily constrict religion's practitioners into resolute conformists.

Tyrrell first got into trouble over his article "A Perverted Devotion" (1899), which criticized the exaggerated "devotion" to hell practiced by pulpit orators of the day (like the Jesuit retreat master portrayed in James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*), who tried to scare people into holiness by lurid depictions of the eternal punishment awaiting those whom death catches in sin. Hot on the heels of this article came the seminal "The Relation of Theology to Devotion," which also got Tyrrell into trouble for prioritizing "devotion" (the mystical element) over Scholastic theology. He argued that devotion, not theology, is more germane to one's salvation; after all, theology, however important, is reflection on religious experience, which is available even to the unlettered. Karl Rahner in *The Dynamic Element in the Church* (1964) concurs.

A few years later Tyrrell published two collectiona of essays, the first entitled *Lex Orandi*, the second *Lex Credendi*. The titles and their order are in themselves instructive. The first prioritizes prayer: the lead article, "The Sacramental Principle," and the rest of the volume develops a

foundational theology of ecclesial spirituality based on the church's sacraments. The companion volume develops a theology of belief that, for Tyrrell, arises conspicuously out of "mysticality" (part 1 is entitled "The Spirit of Christ"; part 2, "The Prayer of Christ"). He concludes the volume by tying *lex credendi* back into *lex orandi*—a relationship explored by contemporary theologians of spirituality such as Sandra Schneiders.

Shortly before he died, Tyrrell published another collection entitled *Through Scylla and Charybdis or the Old Theology and the New*, attempting to show how he had tried to avoid the errors of both "Scylla" (the confusion of theology with revelation) and "Charybdis" ("the whirlpool of progress" that had sucked into its vortex so much of the Liberal theology of the 19th century). Significantly, chapter 3 republishes "The Relation of Theology to Devotion," but retitled "Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi." Its prefatory note reads:

> I reprint it here . . . because it is fundamental to all the essays that follow, and to the whole point of view developed in . . . *Lex Orandi* and *Lex Credendi*. On re-reading it carefully I am amazed to see how little I have really advanced since I wrote it; how I have simply eddied round and round the same point. It is all here—all that follows—not in germ but in explicit statement—as it were in a brief compendium or analytical index.

Throughout his professional life, Tyrrell contended that the church's real teachers are the saints, primarily because they retain the order of the ancient dictum, *lex orandi, lex credendi*. Some theologians are also saints, but their magisterial power and truth come first of all from their mystical experience, secondly from their reflection on that experience. We humans incline to tame religious experience by reversing the dictum's order, making *lex orandi* subservient to *lex credendi*. But Tyrrell encouraged the head to take its lead from the heart and only thus, by reflection, blend the mystical with the intellectual and institutional elements, thereby making the heart practically available to church and world.

David G. Schultenover, S.J.

Editor in Chief