William H. Marshner, ed.

Defending the Faith: An Anti-Modernist Anthology. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2017. Pp. x + 368. Pb, \$34.95.

Despite the silencing of important theologians for fifty years, despite the destruction of reputations, despite the excommunications of dissenters, the Modernists prevailed. Consider, in the light of one's understanding of Vatican II, this description of the agenda of George Tyrrell by a recent commentator, Fr. Oliver Rafferty, S.J., quoted in the Introduction (17): "a move away from the idea that faith was grounded on unchanging exterior propositions about God which were guaranteed by hierarchical authority [to] a view that faith was best seen as an interior response to God predicated on human experience." Contrast this to the Oath Against Modernism, <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius10/piomoth.htm>, which was required of every Catholic priest and bishop and religious superior from 1910 until 1967. It is clear, is it not, that despite *Pascendi* and *Lamentabili*, from *Divino afflante Spiritu* to the documents of Vatican II, the arc of history has bent towards the Modernists, such that to read the encyclicals is to enter a foreign and alien place, whereas to read the Modernists, even at their most radical, is to think oneself among the pages of *Theological Studies*.

One result of this victory is that almost all of the scholarship on the Modernist crisis has been about the Modernists themselves. Search your library's catalogue or database to confirm this: Alfred Loisy, Tyrrell, Maude Petre, Ernesto Buonaiuti; even some of the less public Modernists like Louis Duchesne, Henri Bremond, and Friedrich von Hugel have an extensive literature and books devoted to them, and their own work is still read. The anti-Modernist side is typically represented by the two encyclicals and the oath, with their condemnations, such that the issue between Modernists and anti-Modernists is seen as one between deep and often eloquent writers and the assertion of naked ecclesiastical power. The fact that the Modernists were persecuted, silenced, and excommunicated, and the unsavory ecclesiastical politics surrounding their condemnation, has somewhat mythologized them and demonized their opponents: heroic and, in some cases, saintly advocates of true scholarship within the church versus obscurantist and reactionary ecclesiastical careerists, whose evil machinations have been the other focus of Modernist scholarship.

What is missing from this picture, or course, is a whole literature of response to the Modernists by a very diverse cadre of Catholic scholars, whom we can call anti-Modernist for convenience, but whose responses range from sympathetic criticism to full-throated denunciation. Some of these critics, like Pierre Batiffol, for example, who wrote critically about Loisy's *L'Évangile et l'Église* (Paris: Picard, 1902) in 1903, would himself come under suspicion and have a

book on the Eucharist placed on the Index in 1905; and the Dominican M.J. Lagrange was silenced in 1912. But all of these critics took the Modernists seriously, and believed the issues they raised were important, indeed, critical to the church's identity and survival; they engaged them, by and large and often at length, from a scholarly point of view, and in scholarly journals. And it is significant from the point of view of this journal that one of the chief Modernists, George Tyrrell, and one of the anti-Modernist critics in this volume, Léonce de Grandmaison, were both members of the Society of Jesus, although Tyrrell was expelled from the Society in 1906 for his refusal to renounce his heterodox views, and was subsequently excommunicated. However, all of the contributions under survey in the present volume were published before the condemnations, so while they may be viewed as a lead up to the condemnations, they were also part of an engaged debate that was more about the issues than it was an argument simply from authority.

The editor groups the responses in four parts: (1) responses to Alfred Loisy's *L'Évangile et l'Église*; (2) responses to the same author's *Autour d'un petit livre* (Paris: Picard, 1903); (3) responses to various works of George Tyrrell; and (4) responses to Eduard Le Roy's "*Qu'est-ce qu'un dogme?*" (in *La Quinzaine* [April 16, 1905], 495–527). The respondents are all French: the aforementioned Pierre Batiffol, M.-J. Lagrange, Eugène Portalié, Eugène Franon, Léonce de Grandmaison, and J. Wehrlé, reflecting the fact, as C.J.T. Talar points out in the introduction, that France was the center of some of the most important and prominent Modernist writings. The matters at issue between the Modernists and the anti-Modernists were, in the first instance, over historical criticism and how far it could go in calling into question received interpretations of the Bible, as well as traditional accounts of the church's origins. Second, to what extent was the immanentist philosophy of Maurice Blondel an approach to understanding the importance of religious experience as foundational to belief versus the attestation of tradition and authority? Finally, could insights into the subjectivity of human knowing from Kant onwards be reconciled with the objective character of truth as demonstrated by Thomistic philosophy then dominant in the church?

The translation and editing of the texts by William H. Marshner is excellent, with thorough footnotes, often with commentary from the translator. The introduction by Rev. C.J.T. Talar, the distinguished scholar of Modernism, situates the texts and offers a helpful introduction to those who might not be familiar with the controversies. There is an extensive bibliography and an index of biblical texts as well as a general index. I think the volume would have benefitted from an introduction from the translator to each of the selections and its author, but, perhaps this was not within his remit.

Historiography is always well-served when the losing side gets the opportunity to present its case. This reduces the temptation to think of outcomes in history as inevitable. It makes it more difficult to caricature the opposition or to oversimplify what was, after all, an extraordinarily complex and fraught period in the church's history. To have the anti-Modernist position so well represented makes us more present to the controversy in all its complexity, and so better able to judge its significance and its outcome. It helps us to understand the church as a living community, to which its members are passionately committed even when they disagree.

Jeffrey von Arx, S.J.

John LaFarge House, Cambridge, MA

jvonarx@jesuits.org

DOI 10.1163/22141332-00501008-21