

English summaries

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ENGLISH SUMMARIES

O. DEKENS, Reducing God. Kant, Levinas and the possibility of metaphysical atheism, RThPh 2000/IV, p. 309-324.

This article evaluates the fecundity of a confrontation between the reduction of the divine, to which we are led by certain elements in the thinking of Levinas, when he brings God down to the idea of God, and what Kant does, particularly in the posthumous works, when he puts God forth as Idea, while putting aside all ontological notions of divinity. In other words, the writer reflects upon the pertinence of the name of God in the framework of the morality of law, sustained by Levinas and Kant, and upon the possibility of a metaphysical atheism – a term from Levinas – which would still let the word God mean something like empty transcendence. And thus to understand this God which comes into idea as a God which comes into Idea, which becomes Idea.

J-M. FERRY, Ethics and religion, RThPh 2000/IV, p. 325-344.

The pessimistic diagnosis of contemporary times may feed a discourse commending religious reactivation, indeed, a programme of “re-enchantment with the world”, whether one looks at sacred texts as the cryptic archiving of the deepest human ethical intuitions or seeks something of the sacred in the most intimate profane experiences, at the heart of private life. The religious element can also be detected, however, as an adjacent perspective of the different levels discourse gives to re-constructive ethics, in which idealisations rise up against the reductionism characteristic of cynical reasoning. What “promises” are there?

J. ZUMSTEIN, The foot washing (John 13,1-20): an example of the Johannine conception of power, RThPh 2000/IV, p. 345-360.

The episode of the foot washing in John 13 is unique to the Gospel of John. By retelling this gesture of Christ and the two successive interpretations it gives to it, the Johannine school introduces the reader to a reflection on power and authority. This reflection is not in one piece, but is built on two re-readings of the initial tradition. While in the oldest interpretation the accent is placed on the paradoxical use of power exercised by Christ, the most recent interpretation sees in this surprising gesture a metaphor of the cross.

M. GRANDJEAN, The Priscillian era, or the great fault of Christianity?, RThPh 2000/IV, p. 361-376.

This article proposes to symbolically name, according to its first official victim, the Spanish bishop Priscillian, the process by which ecclesiastic powers hand over a heretic to the secular arm for execution. The Priscillian era would thus stretch from about the 4th to the 18th century. During this period, victims and executioners share the same mentality, since both admit – with notable exceptions, however – the need to eliminate heretics. This article concludes with the question of our relation to the memory of Christianity: should we today ask pardon for the persecution of heretics?