

Jesuit Polymath of Madrid: The Literary Enterprise of Juan Eusebio Nieremberg (1595–1658). By D. Scott Hendrickson. *Jesuit Studies: Modernity through the Prism of Jesuit History*, 4. Boston: Brill, 2015. Pp. ix + 243. \$142.

Nieremberg was a preeminent writer of the Spanish Golden Age. His 75 works ranged from theology and philosophy to botany and biographies, and were widely read in Europe and the Americas. Now largely forgotten, Hendrickson seeks to raise awareness of Nieremberg's legacy and to illustrate how his works exemplify characteristic themes of Jesuit spirituality as found in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola and the early "way of proceeding" of the order, especially with regard to discernment of God's will.

H. uses Nieremberg's more prominent works as linchpins to illustrate recurring themes. Jesuit principles of inculturation and dedication to the more universal good, for example, are evident in Nieremberg's well-received catechism. Here he explicitly critiqued previous catechisms as neither accessible nor useful, in favor of a warm style that appealed to heart as well as mind, meant to be read aloud in communal settings, and containing engaging stories for the purpose of getting readers to contemplate and apply them to their own lives.

Similar themes reappear in Nieremberg's works on botany and natural philosophy. As Europeans were enchanted with discoveries of unusual plant and animal life and human cultures from around the world, Nieremberg wrote in Spanish rather than Latin in order to reach them. The marvels of God stir *admiratio* (117), a key affect to be cultivated in the Exercises. With practice and right knowledge, readers can learn to discern God's presence in all created things in order to extract the hidden meaning and relevance for themselves.

Nieremberg's most renowned work, *On the Difference between the Temporal and the Eternal* (1640), resonates strongly with the "First Principle and Foundation" and "Contemplation to Attain Love" in the Exercises; Jesuits often used it as a companion text for the retreat. At first Nieremberg appears to provide a classically negative portrayal of the created order and human life (such as his lurid meditations on death and bodily decomposition), but upon closer examination, he exhorts readers to recognize the inherent goodness of all creatures and to eliminate their own *engaños* (cf. Ignatius's *afecciones desordenadas*) that impede them from recognizing the true knowledge of creatures and their relative worth and prioritizing them in light of the ultimate end of human existence.

In *Causa y remedio de los males públicos* (1642), Nieremberg serves the more universal good by addressing the body politic. The Spanish Empire was in decline, and like other *arbitristas* (writers offering projects of reform), Nieremberg addressed himself to a diverse citizenry and its leaders. He urged readers to discern the crisis in religious and moral terms and thereby uncover its only true remedy, namely, personal and social amendment and public displays of penance, the cultivation of "prudence" (cf. Ignatius's *caritas discreta*), and a willingness to contemplate the past in order to better understand the present and to improve the future (meditations upon past, present, and future considerations are a prominent theme in the Exercises).

Considering the centrality of discernment to H.'s thesis, there is a certain ambiguity surrounding references to "God's will." Was Nieremberg concerned primarily with helping readers recognize God's presence in creation and his general will for human salvation so that they may reorder their lives correctly, or does he mean to communicate a more refined discernment on how God speaks to individuals in specific, unique circumstances, "according to his or her capacities, commitments, and desires" (25)? H.'s citations of Nieremberg usually seem to suggest the first, in which case positing Ignatius as an immediate inspiration becomes more tenuous.

This volume is an excellent introduction to Spanish literary and spiritual motifs of the seventeenth century. H. ably succeeds in his case for Nieremberg's continued place in the pantheon of Jesuit writers; indeed one is left wondering why Nieremberg has been all but forgotten today (a question that H. does not address). *Jesuit Polymath* is also edifying in its own right. One could not ask for a richer illustration of the Jesuit principle of finding God in all things.

Barton T. Geger, SJ
Regis University, Denver

Establishing Religious Freedom: Jefferson's Statute in Virginia. By Thomas E. Buckley. Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 2013. Pp. xii + 359. \$39.50.

A central source of meaning for the Supreme Court's religious liberty jurisprudence has been the successful campaign in 1785–86 to defeat the general assessment—a proposed tax for the evenhanded support of all Christian churches in Virginia—and to enact instead Thomas Jefferson's Statute for Religious Freedom. But this was only one episode in a much longer story. And while the Court attributed the victory to James Madison and Jefferson, the political muscle came from Virginia's evangelical Christians. Thomas Buckley told the story of this battle in his definitive 1973 book, *Separation of Church and State in Revolutionary Virginia, 1776–1787*.

After an interval of forty years, B. has given us a far more sweeping history of church and state in Virginia, from the mid-seventeenth century to the turn of the millennium. More detailed accounts end with the 1928 presidential campaign, when Herbert Hoover carried the state for Republicans for the first time since Reconstruction, running against the Roman Catholic, Al Smith.

Those who revere what Madison and Jefferson accomplished in the 1780s, and thus think of Virginia as a leader in the cause of religious liberty, tend to forget the reason that battle had to be fought: Virginia had long fought a rearguard action *against* religious liberty. The Anglican Church was established, and dissenting preachers were first banned, then permitted with unacceptable conditions, harassed, and sometimes jailed up to the eve of the Revolution. Patrick Henry, the "bad guy" of the general-assessment fight, was one of the "good guys" in the earlier fights for freedom to preach. B. reviews this history and the critical role of the evangelicals in the battles first for free exercise of religion, largely achieved by 1776, and then for disestablishment.