

Book Reviews

The Sacred Monster of Thomism. An Introduction to the Life and Legacy of Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. by Richard Peddicord, O.P. (*South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2005*), x + 250 pp.

DURING the first half of the twentieth century, Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange was perhaps the best-known theologian of the Catholic Church, the defender of orthodoxy, and the founder of a school of spirituality. His influence was pervasive, and he educated several generations of students at the Angelicum in Rome and beyond. His numerous books and articles found a wide public and he directed the dissertation of the future pope John Paul II. However, about the middle of the century, a new generation of theologians came to the fore, such as Hans Urs von Balthasar, Henri de Lubac, and Karl Rahner, who rejected scholastic theology as practiced at most Catholic institutions and tried to introduce a new way of theologizing, centered on man and his problems, using the texts of the Church Fathers instead of the scholastic manuals, and moving away from St. Thomas, at first hesitatingly, but after Vatican II in a more outspoken way. It was sometimes said that if St. Thomas were alive today, he would use contemporary philosophies to reflect on the Christian faith, instead of Aristotle. Obviously this new attitude and the greater freedom to criticize faithfulness to Aquinas, which, ever since Leo XIII, the popes had so strongly recommended, led many to disregard or to write off openly the work of Garrigou-Lagrange, who was often depicted as a narrow-minded rigorous author who totally failed to see the importance of history in the theological studies, and who professed a Wolffian type of metaphysics.

Fr. Peddicord's book is an attempt at an evaluation, some fifty years after the upheaval in theology of the middle of the twentieth century. He mentions the teachers who shaped Garrigou-Lagrange's thinking, such as Ambroise Gardeil and V. Bernadot, and discusses his debate with the philosophy of Henri Bergson (now a dead classic but quite prominent in the first decades of the last century). Against Bergson, Garrigou-Lagrange stressed the place of being over becoming, of the intellect over the senses

and feelings. During several years Garrigou-Lagrange was associated with the Circle of Friends of St. Thomas in Paris, animated by Jacques Maritain. But their mutual understanding was marred somewhat by the fact that Garrigou-Lagrange strongly approved of General Franco during the Spanish Civil War, and also saw many positive aspects in the government of Pétain after the defeat of France.

In the field of theology, a central conviction of Garrigou-Lagrange was that our Lord taught a body of doctrines applicable to all times, and so he elaborated the theology of divine Revelation. In his theological work Garrigou-Lagrange was convinced of the correctness of the basic principles of Aristotle's philosophy, and of the possibility of the human mind to express the basic facts of reality in concepts of lasting value, concepts that are used in the unchangeable formulas of the doctrine of the faith. Precisely on this point, he strongly criticized the new theology as advocated by some Jesuit theologians, such as Henri Bouillard and Henri de Lubac, who argued that in the dogmas of the faith, not the terms, but the trend of the propositions are important. Garrigou-Lagrange said that this theology, if thought through, would end in modernism. Later events appear to confirm his view. According to Peddicord, Garrigou-Lagrange's critical evaluation still holds in our day and is an important corrective. After this rather timid evaluation of the lasting value of Garrigou-Lagrange's theological writings, the author points out that Vatican II (although perhaps not taking over Garrigou-Lagrange's view of theology) did incorporate his theology of spirituality, insofar as it proclaimed the universal calling of all Christians to holiness and insisted on the mystery of the indwelling of the divine persons.

Garrigou-Lagrange's *The Ages of the Interior Life* has remained a classic. This reviewer would have liked to see an in-depth study of Garrigou-Lagrange's theology of divine revelation and that of *Dei Verbum*, and some references to postconciliar documents of the Holy See that seem to recuperate much of the heritage of the great Dominican scholar. But Peddicord deserves praise for his carefully written, well documented, and irenic book, which ends with a quotation of a great theologian of the postconciliar years, Jean-Hervé Nicolas: "Garrigou-Lagrange led a life completely consecrated to research and the teaching of truth, and his work, despite some defects, will certainly be hallowed by history. It will be useful for the defense of the faith in the twenty-first century." N V

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The Comforter by Sergius Bulgakov, translated by Boris Jakim (*Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004*), 398 pp.

THE NAME of Sergius Bulgakov evokes mesmerizing reverberations among those even casually interested in modern Eastern Orthodox theology. To those who do not know his work directly, his name is primarily associated with the mysterious and controversial doctrine of Sophiology and the public criticisms of such esteemed modern Orthodox theologians as Georges Florovsky and Vladimir Lossky. With the recent translations of his work into English by Boris Jakim, English readers can see for themselves why Bulgakov is such an important as well as controversial figure in Orthodox theology, and are likely to conclude that his voice has an enduring place in modern theology in general.

The Comforter is the middle volume of Bulgakov's great dogmatic trilogy, *On Divine Humanity*. The first volume, *The Lamb of God*, focuses on Christology; while the third, *The Bride of the Lamb*, published after his death, treats ecclesiology and eschatology. *The Comforter* both looks back to central themes in the first volume and gives overtures to the subject matter of the third. More than merely a treatise on the Holy Spirit, it recapitulates the central themes of Bulgakov's vision, consistently centered on his sophiological Trinitarian doctrine.

There are three main tasks attempted and, for the most part, ably accomplished in this work. First, Bulgakov retraces the main lines of Patristic Trinitarian theology, with special attention to the question of the Holy Spirit. Second, he analyzes and evaluates the *filioque* controversy. Third, he presents his own interpretation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. With regard to the first task, readers will perhaps be surprised at the historical consciousness with which Bulgakov treats Patristic texts. This is not to say that he shows any great command of the precise historical details of the various pertinent controversies. But he is careful not to stretch a given theologian's thought to artificially accommodate later problematics. This hermeneutical caution serves him particularly well in his avoidance of proof-texts that were anachronistically forced into East-West polemics over the *filioque*. A central and controversial theme that emerges in this section is Bulgakov's rejection of the conception of the Trinitarian relations as relations of origination or causation. Bulgakov's argumentation for this position is testimony to his audacious and independent theological spirit and will give considerable explanation for the irritation and hostility that he drew from some of his peers. His central point is the simple, some would say simplistic, contention that notions of causality and origination are rationally applicable only to created phenomena; it is a contradiction in terms to speak of

the origination of the eternal. Bulgakov sidesteps the complex epistemological maneuvers of some of the Fathers, such as Athanasius and the Cappadocians, to render the comprehensibility in faith of conceptions of eternal causality and origination. One can indeed say that this issue was at the heart of the Trinitarian controversies of the fourth century. But, for Bulgakov, these notions are simply evidence of the immaturity of theological reflection in the Patristic era.

At this point of Bulgakov's argument, a reader sympathetic to the Patristic tradition might well become irritated by his approach and ready to enlist in the ranks of his critics. The consequent unfolding of Bulgakov's presentation might not totally eradicate that irritation but it will certainly counterbalance it with much rewarding material. For one thing, Bulgakov does not jettison the notion of ordered relations (*taxis*) within the Trinity, and he fully endorses the doctrine of the Father's monarchy. Indeed, his dismissal of the language of originality and causation seems merely petty and presumptuous, until one comes to appreciate both his sense of the dangers of misunderstanding this notion and his recommendation for its replacement. With regard to the first point, while Bulgakov's dismissal of causality language raises complex questions about the hermeneutics of tradition, it can be readily conceded at least that he problematizes a simplistic understanding of such language. While he himself seems to have fallen prey to this simplistic understanding in rejecting this language, the rejection of such an understanding is not itself misguided. But the more significant issue has to do with the positive motivations behind Bulgakov's rejection of this language, and these have to do with his own proposal for its replacement. This proposal seeks to replace what he considers to be an impersonalism and empiricism embedded in causality and origination language with a personalistic framework. To this end, Bulgakov borrows strands of Hegelian and idealist vocabulary to depict God as Absolute Spirit, Absolute Subject, and Absolute Self-Revelation. The Trinity is a tri-hypostatic Subjectivity in which the Father, as primordial Subject, reveals himself in Son and Spirit. Thus, the notion of origination is replaced by self-revelation. This self-revelation is eternal, and in that sense, "independent" of creation. It is this self-revelation, the eternal dyadic self-predication of the Father in Son and Spirit, that is named the divine "Sophia" by Bulgakov. The divine Sophia is also the eternal Divine-Humanity, inasmuch as it is the immanent intra-divine ground for God's revelatory *kenosis* toward humanity. This *kenosis* begins with the act of creation itself, in which God ordains into being the creaturely *sophia*. The latter is the "proto-creation," creation as ordained to participation in God and deification. The Incarnation draws into the

personal unity of the Son the union of the divine *Sophia* and the creaturely *sophia*. This union is enabled and accomplished by the Holy Spirit; its "ideal" content is the indwelling of the *Logos* through the Incarnation, while the dynamics of its reception and actualization, and the energy that binds together "Worded" content and human receptivity is provided through the gift of the Spirit in Pentecost.

The preceding is a very terse account of important notions in Bulgakov's theology, which are scattered throughout the work. But it is helpful to see them in a synoptic view in the context of Bulgakov's rejection of causality language. Indeed, perhaps one way toward a critical appreciation of Bulgakov's project is to see it as a rejection of one analogical framework for the sake of another. He rejects the framework of causality, as if it were irreducibly impermeable to an analogical understanding, but he does this in order to clear the way for an analogical framework centered around notions of subjectivity and *kenotic* self-revelation. But, in the context of reflections on the Holy Spirit, Bulgakov also rejects causality language because he believes that the inescapably temporal and diastemic components of this notion have played a significant role in sterile debates about the procession of the Holy Spirit. According to Bulgakov, stubbornly exclusivistic understandings of the procession of the Spirit as either "from the Father alone" (in the East) or "from the Father and the Son" (in the West) involve unwarranted abstractions from the eternal givenness of the triadic relations in order to break them down into successive quasi-temporal moments. He utters a scathing "pox on both your houses" in his account of the *filioque* controversy, which he considers to be replete with doctrinal obfuscation and lack of charity and, above all, devoid precisely of the loving and unifying breath of the Spirit. More positively, Bulgakov insists that the *filioque* controversy, while based on misunderstandings and misguided rationalizations (i.e., of intra-divine "causality") does not constitute a real divergence in the substance of faith, as is evidenced by the equal veneration of the Spirit in East and West. In his own account, there is room for a tolerance that accommodates both formulations. The Spirit proceeds from the Father "alone," inasmuch as it is the unique property of the Father to be the primordially self-revealing *hypostasis*; and, in this particular sense, Bulgakov is even willing to speak of the Father as "Cause" (in his own quotation marks, 136): The Father is one who is revealed by the Son and Spirit and not vice-versa. On the other hand, the processions of both Son and Spirit as revelations of the Father are dyadically interrelated. The Son proceeds as the revelation of the Father (*thus, a patre*); this is the procession of generation, which cannot be abstracted from the Son's reception of the reposing of the Spirit. The

Son thus proceeds from the Father as the one upon whom the Spirit rests and therefore, his generation is *a Patre Spiritusque* (150). Likewise, the Spirit's procession of the Father as his self-revelation cannot be abstracted from his reposing upon the Son; the Spirit proceeds as the paternal love that rests upon the Son and binds together Father and Son; thus, *filioque*.

The third task that Bulgakov undertakes in this study, and the one most ably performed in my opinion, is a positive exposition of the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian understanding and life. As can be gleaned from the preceding, Bulgakov imports into his own framework of the Trinitarian life as tri-hypostatic self-revealing subjectivity the Augustinian understanding of the Holy Spirit as hypostatic love and unity. The Triune God, as immanently self-revealing subject, is, to coin a term not literally used by Bulgakov, a communion of *kenosis*. The Father empties himself in his self-revelation through Son and Spirit; the Son empties himself inasmuch as his identity is taken up by his revelation of the Father through the Spirit, while the Spirit also empties himself by his revelation of the Father through the Son. The procession of the Son represents a moment of kenotic self-depletion, while the procession of the Spirit represents "Life triumphant over the kenotic sacrifice, resurrection from the death of kenosis, the triumph of life-giving Love" (180). The *hypostases* of Son and Spirit are also differentiated, in analogical terms, as ideal content (i.e., "Word") and actualizing energy ("breath," "life"). On the basis of these insights and images, Bulgakov elaborates an inspiringly poetic account of the kenotic triumph of love being worked in the Church through the Spirit. The most striking insistence in this account is the reiteration of the inseparable mutuality of the presence and work of the Incarnate Word and the Spirit. Christian life has no content other than the Word and no reception or actualization of that content apart from the Spirit, though this content and actualization are not restricted to the visible confines of the historical Christian churches. Indeed, all of created reality and history are inwardly oriented toward the union of divine and creaturely *Sophias*. The working of Father, Son, and Spirit to bring about the fullness of this union despite the resistance of sin represents a further level of *kenosis*, the patience of the self-giving God in accommodating and overcoming humanity's rejection of this gift.

There is much more of nuance and poetry in this work than can be readily summarized in this forum. But, hopefully, enough has been said to persuade readers that Bulgakov's vision has much to contribute to modern conversations on Trinitarian theology. Certain aspects of Bulgakov's theology might be vulnerable to critique but none of it should be dismissed without at least careful consideration. English speakers should be very grate-

ful to Boris Jakim for this clear and elegant translation of an important milestone in modern Orthodox theology. N.V

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Theodore Abū Qurrah translated by John C. Lamoreaux (*Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005*), xxxv + 278 pp.

JOHN LAMOREAUX'S book is the first volume in the *Library of the Christian East* series, which will supply introductions and annotated English translations of Eastern Christian literature for students of theology and history. The series focuses on authors who composed their writings in Arabic, Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopic, Georgian, and Syriac, on the basis that these theological writings are neither marginal nor peripheral to Christianity in the ancient or medieval world. Lamoreaux presents the first English translation of the Arabic and Greek works composed by the Melkite Church Father and bishop of Haran, Theodore Abū Qurrah (d. ca. 830).

The introduction provides a concise summary of what we know about Theodore's biography, theology, corpus of Arabic and Greek manuscripts, and published works. He notes that "Theodorus Abucara" was first introduced to the West by Counter-Reformation Jesuits who published translations of his Greek works in defense of Chalcedonian orthodoxy. Nonetheless, Theodore Abū Qurrah was particularly remembered as the bishop of Haran (in southeastern Turkey) and as one of the first Christian theologians and dialecticians (*mutakallimūn*) to compose in Arabic. He was a defender of Melkite "Arab Orthodoxy," a spokesman closely connected with the Jerusalem patriarchate and its monasteries, and a remarkable apologist in response to the challenge of Islam.

Lamoreaux separates Theodore's works into four parts according to their main theological concerns. The first section includes his Arabic works that seek to demonstrate that Christianity is the true religion. Lamoreaux has included pieces that attempt to demonstrate the characteristics of the true religion, the fact that Christianity is from God, and the verification of the Gospel. The second part includes Arabic and Greek works in defense of Chalcedonian Christology against Nestorian, Jacobite, Maronite, and Islamic objections. This section includes his composition "On the Councils," and treatises on the union, Incarnation, death, and salvific work of Jesus Christ. The third part, titled "Topics in Controversial Theology" encompasses a variety of Theodore's Arabic works on such subjects as epistemology, Trinitarian doctrine, and the defense of the

freedom of the will. The fourth section belongs to the Byzantine legacy of debates involving Theodore written by his disciple John the Deacon, and a number of Greek literary fragments, where Theodore argues with Muslims about Christian and Islamic doctrine.

Theodore Abū Qurrah's writings are especially relevant to our time in that the bishop articulated and protected Chalcedonian theology within an Islamic milieu that forced Christians to reevaluate and reinterpret their political, biblical, and theological reasons for the truth of Christianity. According to Lamoreaux, all of Theodore's compositions are based on the idea that humans can properly discern the true religion, and secondarily the true Church, in light of human reason and divine revelation (xxv). In *Theologus Autodidactus*, Theodore imagines himself having grown up alone on a mountain, and then descending to confront the claims of nine religions. Since each one claims the sole truth, and God would have sent only one authentic messenger and scripture, Theodore decides to analyze their claims through anthropological and historical means.

Based on human nature, Theodore reasons that humans can gain certain knowledge of God in light of inductive reasoning that moves from particulars to universals. Since God transcends human knowledge of the perceptible environment, he speaks of God cataphatically through the use of analogies that reflect God's essence and divine attributes, while confirming that the defects in the attributes are contrary to God. For Theodore, "it is in the virtues of his nature that Adam resembles God, and it is from these [virtues] that our minds see God and his attributes" (11). Since Adam's nature is characterized by headship (over mankind), procreation (Eve), and begetting (children), Theodore concludes that God resembles these three characteristics and must be Father, Son, and Holy Spirit! Secondly, since the virtue of selfless love is the ideal for humans, Theodore infers that "the summit of our nature's felicity is that we become gods and enjoy God" (17). For Theodore, Christianity is the only religion that is in accordance with human nature and his conclusion about divine love, commandments and prohibitions, and rewards and eternal punishment.

Theodore also evaluates the true religion through prophets. Prophets are verified by signs and miracles, but only Christian theological assertions could be true because Christianity was spread despite its demanding claims. While other religions were spread by the "taint of human power or tricks, permissiveness or ambition," only Jesus Christ's miracles and his apostles' signs guarantee that Christianity alone is God's religion. Theodore even assesses Judaism in terms of the Gospel: "We believe that they are prophets, first, because Christ called them prophets, and secondly, because we see his deeds described in their books" (24).

The corollary to Theodore's argument for the true religion is the second overarching theme in his works: discerning the true Church. Theodore argues that the Melkites adhered to the *via media* of orthodoxy while the doctrines of the rival Monophysites (Jacobites) and Nestorians collapse into soteriological and historical problems. Theodore explains to his readers how falsehood surrounds the truth on either side and contradicts the opposite side as well as the truth itself. He employs this paradigm with Nestorius and Jacob. For Theodore, only the Chalcedonian orthodox teaching on the Incarnation satisfies our understanding of Christ's death on the cross, since it was neither the human nor the divine nature that are said to suffer and die, but only the incarnate hypostasis of the eternal Son, which possessed the fullness of both natures. Moreover, "the eternal Son receives both the name and the definition of 'God' and the name and the definition of 'man,' but God in no way receives the name or definition of 'man,' nor does man receive the name or definition of 'God'" (103–4). According to Theodore, only the death of the hypostasis of the incarnate eternal Son could save humanity and bring about our eternal salvation, since it alone could provide recompense for sin and reconcile mankind to God.

Theodore also sought to prove that the true Church was that of Chalcedonian orthodoxy on the basis of the Holy Spirit's guidance at the ecumenical councils. The Old Testament teaches that the Holy Spirit guided Moses to appoint a council of priestly judges to give rulings on the Law (Ex 18:25–6). Furthermore, in the New Testament the Holy Spirit referred the apostolic Church to a council about the status of the Gentiles (Acts 15), of which St. Peter was the head and leader. Scripture also teaches us, according to Theodore, that Christ appointed St. Peter as the foundation of the Church; and "there is no doubt that he meant by these words nothing other than the holders of the seat of St. Peter" (69). For Theodore, St. Peter and his successors at the see of Rome thus become guarantors of orthodoxy and the presence of the Holy Spirit at a council. In other words, only the bishop of Rome could authorize a council, and heretics who rejected one of the councils did not have any more merit than other heretics who rejected a different council. Therefore, Theodore believed it was possible to assess the authority of a council on the basis of its historical circumstances.

Some scholars have argued that Theodore's endorsement of papal authority was only part of his rhetoric for the discussion. However, we also read a similar commendation of St. Peter at the conclusion of his composition *On the Death of Christ*: "Whoever sits on that city's throne is authorized by Christ to have compassion on the people of the church, by

summoning the ecumenical council, and to strengthen them” (128). It would be worthwhile for theologians to examine this component of Melkite Chalcedonian theology in the patriarchates of Antioch and Jerusalem, for Theodore’s expressions amplify our understanding of Christian communion during the early ninth century in the world of Islam. Neither is Theodore alone in his theological view, for his disciple John the Deacon uses similar language in his introduction to the Greek theological debates by “the most blessed and most philosophical bishop” (211–12).

Theodore’s interests are not limited to the true religion and the true Church. On the contrary, Lamoreaux’s translations include his writings on theological epistemology, Christology, the question of free will, and many literary dialogues with Muslims. Many of Theodore’s arguments are remarkable because he takes Aristotelian dialectical reasoning and combines its method with biblical citations to debate Muslims, while using their own terminology as a point of departure. Theodore’s “scriptural reasoning” in the world of Islam could be characterized as apologetical and polemical, topical in application, instructive in teaching orthodox Christian doctrine, and innovative in defending Christianity and criticizing Islamic theological claims.

The book includes a comprehensive list of abbreviations for the manuscripts and published editions, as well as a helpful index of the published Greek *opuscula* and Arabic works in order to facilitate a quick check between the original language and his translations. Moreover, Lamoreaux provides copious notation in the footnotes of his English translations, including transliterated characters, clearly explained emendations, and scriptural citations. Following the translations, Lamoreaux has compiled a specialized bibliography related to Theodore Abū Qurrah, an index of biblical and qur’anic citations, and an index of topics and names.

Lamoreaux notes that Theodore’s compositions are difficult to translate, not because of his writing style, but because of the lack of proper critical editions for his works. Nevertheless, Lamoreaux has diligently assembled the available manuscripts for a reliable English translation that maintains a readable style of prose without undermining the technical aspects of Theodore’s language.

Lamoreaux classifies Theodore’s writings into four parts to give some theological coherence to a collection of works that were not meant to be systematic but occasional in their composition. However, not all of the works fit into his paradigm (Part III has a hodgepodge of themes); and since the audience for each work shifts from non-Chalcedonian to Jew to Muslim, Theodore’s language and method varies from work to work. This lack of a unified presentation detracts from the book to a certain extent.

Overall, the book makes a significant contribution to our knowledge of Melkite Christian theology in the late patristic/early medieval period under the hegemony of Islam. The texts will be beneficial for scholars who study comparative religion, Christian-Muslim relations, patristic theology, and the Eastern churches. Since the treatises in the book are brief and written in an entertaining yet lucid fashion, the translations (especially of the debates) are highly recommended for teachers to include as reading supplements in courses for Church History or Theology. John Lamoreaux's translation has provided the field with a valuable historical and theological resource. 

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