

Book Reviews

Aquinas and His Role in Theology by Marie-Dominique Chenu, OP, trans. Paul Philibert, OP (*Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier/Liturgical Press, 2002*) pp. viii + 149.

IN THE PREFACE to his magisterial study of St. Thomas's life and work, Jean-Pierre Torrell affirms that Marie-Dominique Chenu's work will long remain the primary witness of the renewal in Thomist studies that blossomed in the twentieth century. Torrell contends that Chenu's great achievement was to reinsert Aquinas "into the concrete milieu in which he lived." In his many studies, Chenu not only sketched Aquinas's life within its historical and theological background, he vividly colored his sketch with the spiritual and evangelical principles that animated Aquinas's life and times. Moreover, Chenu inspired a younger generation of scholars to follow his lead. He invited them to fill in the features of the historical portrait he had begun. Torrell, for example, readily admits that his own work "would not even have been thinkable without Chenu."

But the paradox of the inspiring teacher is that the charismatic force of his insights is often the very thing that leads a younger generation to surpass those insights. This fact raises a challenging question for anyone tempted to translate and publish for the first time in English a work written by Chenu in 1959: Why bother? The simple reason is that although his other more technical studies have aged, Chenu's slender volume, *Aquinas and His Role in Theology* remains fresh and valuable. The book is perhaps Chenu's most personal statement of his insights into Aquinas's life and method. With remarkable simplicity, Chenu conveys to the reader the perennial importance of the Thomistic perspective in theology. Perhaps this is why Chenu regarded it as "possibly the best thing I have written."

That forty years passed before anyone ventured an English translation was due to an accident of history to which Chenu himself was so attuned: The book appeared several months before Pope John XXIII surprised everyone by calling an ecumenical council. Chenu rightly

regarded the Council as promoting the very form of theological and spiritual renewal for which he had so long labored. The Spirit who had inspired him and many others to work for renewal during the difficult and often lonely years of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s was bringing their labors to fruition during the heady years of the Second Vatican Council. Yet, paradoxically, the saint who had inspired much of this work of renewal was now regarded by many as outmoded. In the effervescent aftermath of the Council, a younger generation saw Aquinas as hopelessly linked to a passed era. Chenu understood this, but regretted it. He understood it, because he knew that a rigid and deformed version of Thomism had often been taught in the seminaries. Chenu regretted it, however, because he recognized in Aquinas a balanced method whose point of departure was revelation and reason. The book embodies this other form of Thomism, a Thomism that is courageously innovative while retaining a faith-filled attachment to the Magisterium. For Chenu, Aquinas's life and method offer us the ideal model for a theology that both respects reason and remains faithful to revelation.

To convey these insights, Chenu divides his work into eight brief chapters. At the end of each chapter, he appends a well-chosen selection of texts from Aquinas that illustrate the ideas covered in the chapter. The first chapter situates Aquinas in his historical context: At a time of cultural foment, Aquinas chose not to join an established monastic order, but to enter one of the new mendicant orders that were responding innovatively to the changed cultural context of Europe. He became a friar preacher, a Dominican. In chapters two through four, Chenu sketches the theological method that Aquinas both taught and lived. In chapters five and six, Chenu looks more closely at aspects of Aquinas's dogmatic and moral teachings. Chapter seven very briefly outlines the "fate of St. Thomas" and his theology after his death, noting that while his teachings were at first rejected, even being caught in the net of ecclesiastical censure, his theology later received broad support and official Church approval. In his concluding chapter, Chenu describes for the reader the types of Scholastic works Aquinas wrote and the methods that were proper to them.

Chenu emphasizes that Aquinas was a theologian. The focus of his labors was an intellectual reflection on the content of faith as expressed in Scripture and Tradition. It was a reflection animated by the profound confidence that, although the mysteries of faith transcend reason's ability to grasp, they are not inherently irrational. It is here that Chenu notes the ecclesial role of the theologian. In cooperation with the ecclesial Magisterium, "theologians undertake research that is necessary for the spiritual refreshment of believers living in the world" (30). The theologian enjoys an audacious

freedom to express the truths of faith in new ways. Yet, “this is a freedom which is very delicate and which the Church always oversees from its own perspectives of the moment” (ibid.). The theologian, therefore, needs to develop a “religious docility” that is a sure mark of holiness (ibid.).

The issue of holiness leads Chenu to address Aquinas’s spirituality. It is a Dominican spirituality, a spirituality rooted in the insight that the intellectual life can be a way to holiness. “At the very heart of the spirituality of Thomas Aquinas rests this conviction: human understanding is a place for holiness, because the Truth is holy” (31). Significantly, Chenu devotes an entire chapter to the role of contemplation in Aquinas’s method. Distinguishing contemplation from the public virtue of religion (a virtue Aquinas annexes to justice), Chenu highlights that for St. Thomas contemplation is a loving colloquy with God. To be fruitful, theology must be animated by this divine intimacy. Chenu is careful to note that the theologian’s contemplation is oriented toward evangelization. The theologian lovingly converses with the Truth in order to proclaim that Truth.

A refreshing aspect of Chenu’s study is his concern to distinguish Aquinas’s theology from modern perspectives that claim to be Thomistic. First, Chenu underlines the centrality of the Trinity and Incarnation in Aquinas’s teaching. The God of Aquinas is not the rationalist God of the early Enlightenment. Aquinas’s God is the God of Scripture who reveals himself in Christ and leads us to himself through the gift of the Spirit who unites us to Christ. “It would be a deadly misunderstanding (particularly in the Second Part of the *Summa*) to concentrate exclusively on the details of the Aristotelian structure of the work in a rigid and systematic way, while forgetting or skipping over the life-giving sap that comes from the Gospels and the Fathers. . . . The Systematic spirit of Thomas’s work is made to respect at all cost the strange logic of the kingdom of God” (138). Second, Chenu points to the internal unity of theology: “[T]he modern distinction between dogma and morality finds no support within the spirituality and methodology of the *Summa*. Likewise, the distinction between the ascetical (action) and the mystical (contemplation) breaks down before the unity of the grace of Christ” (45). Thus, in the final analysis, “As a son of Dominic, the *vir evangelicus* (‘man of the gospel’) Thomas Aquinas is a spiritual master even in laboring scientifically at his theological work” (127).

One last feature of this new edition deserves note. The original French edition appeared at a time when the spirit of Bauhaus architecture seems to have influenced publishing. As a result, instead of being published in conformity with the natural needs of the human mind and eye, the book was set to difficult print in paragraphs that careen through graphics.

While this format was a new and exciting challenge at the time, it soon became old. Happily, while the new edition retains the best of the illustrations, it disentangles them from the text and mercifully places the text in clear roman serif type. In all, the book is a pleasure to read and can easily serve as a Thomistic introduction for students on both the undergraduate and graduate levels. N V

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Erich Przywara, sj: His Theology and His World by Thomas F. O'Meara, OP (*Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002*) 254 pp.

ERICH PRZYWARA (1889–1972) was a German Jesuit philosopher–theologian who published more than fifty books and many hundreds of essays from the early 1920s to the late 1960s. In the German-speaking world he was known and admired by many of the greatest theologians and philosophers of his time. The roster of his acquaintances included Edmund Husserl, Edith Stein, Max Scheler, Martin Heidegger, Karl Barth, Karl Rahner, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Paul Tillich. Most of these people thought well of his work and his character; and the admiring, occasionally hyperbolically reverential tone used by some of them in their comments on his work or their remembrances of his life has led to Przywara's name and literary corpus being rumored in the English-speaking world as the next big thing, something always on the edge of being discovered.

Discussions of Przywara in the English-speaking world, however, have remained mostly at the level of rumor. This is largely because little of his oeuvre has been translated, and English and American theologians and philosophers are notorious for their unwillingness to read anything but English. The only works under Przywara's name easily available in English are his anthologies of texts by Augustine and Newman, and these give little idea of Przywara's mode of thought (though their arrangement of topics does give some sense of the purposes with which he read figures from the past). But there is a deeper reason behind the lack of translations. Przywara's German is difficult and his thought more so: He writes allusively, in non-linear fashion, and with abundant allusions to (but without explanations of) the thought of myriad now-forgotten German thinkers. Reading him in German, for those (like this reviewer) without a wide and deep knowledge of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century German philosophy and theology, is too often like reading a hermetic treatise without an interpretive key.

Przywara's range of knowledge and reference is, however, constantly astonishing. He had read especially deeply in Augustine and Newman, who were his two principal inspirations and guides (he often calls Newman "der Augustinus unserer Neuzeit," which I suppose Newman would have taken as a compliment), and to whom he constantly returns. But he also knew Aquinas and the history of the Thomistic schools well; he wrote books on figures as diverse as Kant, Kierkegaard, and Ignatius Loyola; he was an early enthusiast for and frequent commentator upon Husserl's work; and he wrote large works on topics in philosophical theology, most famously one on the *analogia entis* (rumors of an imminent English version of this work grow increasingly loud, so perhaps the dearth of translations is about to end). He was part of that flowering of Germanic philosophical and theological letters that occurred at the hands of those born between 1870 and 1900: Przywara's generation includes Wittgenstein, Barth, Heidegger, Stein, Tillich, von Balthasar, and Rahner. This was also the world of thought that produced, not quite a generation later, Karol Wojtyła. Like so many of that time and place, beneficiaries of an education no longer available in Germany (or anywhere else), Przywara's linguistic and textual knowledge was wide and deep in a way now vanishingly rare.

In most of his work, however, Przywara shows little interest in serious historical engagement with the thought of his many interlocutors. He treats them, mostly, as catalysts for his own thought: prompts for flights of speculation rather than occasions for painstaking attempts to understand and restate. Whether this is a criticism depends, I suppose, on what you read him for. He should not be read as a guide to (for example) what Newman thought, and this in spite of the quantity he wrote about Newman. I can see no evidence, for instance, that he understood even approximately what Newman was trying to do in the *Grammar of Assent*. Przywara must be read as a primary rather than a secondary source, and as such he is constantly suggestive, always frustrating, and often almost impossibly difficult to decipher.

What I have just said is approximately in accord with (though rather more blunt than) the way in which Thomas O'Meara presents Przywara in the book under review here. The book breaks new ground principally in that it is the first real attempt in English at a synthetic guide to Przywara's thought and life. O'Meara seems to have read widely in Przywara's work, and (as his own previous work shows) has a thorough knowledge of German theology and philosophy in Przywara's period. He begins with a sketch of Przywara's life and work, depicting his central challenge as that of explaining how Catholic thought would exist in the twentieth century—how, that is, it would respond to and make use of the philosophical

developments of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially those following upon Kant's critical philosophy, those begun by Husserl's phenomenology, and those suggested by the new movements in interpretation of Aquinas in the first half of the twentieth century. O'Meara then turns to an exposition of Przywara's use of and relations to his important contemporaries, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish, and concludes with a sketch of Przywara's understanding of Christian existence, and of his ecclesiology. Those for whom Przywara is only a name will learn much from all this.

However, O'Meara is much less successful at conveying the content of Przywara's thought. He repeatedly mentions the dialectical nature of that thought, its use of images of polar tension and oscillation (between nature and grace, creation and redemption, being and knowing, and so on), and its interest in typology, comparison, and schematizations of various kinds. Przywara is forever comparing such things as the inner meaning of the Kantian dialectic with the essence of the Augustinian *ordo amoris*—without, usually, saying just what these are; he likes to set forth the three main ways of thinking about the order of knowing, the seven trends in contemporary European thought, and so on. And O'Meara is forced to write this way himself in explaining Przywara, with the result that page after page is filled with airy profundities upon which it is difficult to get a grip sufficient for clear restatement.

For example, while discussing Przywara's views on the presence of grace in life (pp. 83–86), O'Meara provides several quotations from Przywara on the topic, and offers his own commentary upon them. Try as I might, however, I cannot extract anything at all from these paragraphs except that nature and grace are not the same, and that no too-sharp distinction between them should be made. This is no doubt true; but, somehow, it fails to excite. There are many such examples. This is not altogether O'Meara's fault, I think: It is at least as much the fault of his source. But O'Meara could, perhaps, have said more by way of explanation. I would have liked him to say that reading Przywara is better understood as a meditatively transformative exercise than an analytically illuminating one.

O'Meara's own theological prejudices do come through clearly. "Sectarian narrowness" (p. 40 & *passim*) is always bad, and something that Przywara is praised for escaping—it is not, though, altogether clear what it is, other than that von Balthasar seems to have suffered from it; curial interventions in and attempts to constrain Catholic philosophical and theological thought are generally inept and always bad; Przywara is good to the extent that he anticipates and approves O'Meara's interpretation of Vatican II, and the apparent fact that he did not fully do so is attributed to the frail-

ties of age and ill-health; and O'Meara shows himself a deep-dyed American exceptionalist by the fact that almost the only thing he roundly criticizes Przywara for without qualification is being insufficiently alive to the glories of the American experiment. But these are the usual prejudices of O'Meara's generation and location, and they by no means vitiate the book.

O'Meara does throw into relief the intellectual ferment of the Germanic world in the period between the two great wars. It highlights, too, the most intellectually interesting challenge of that period (one that largely remains with us), which was to bring together in mutually illuminating fashion Husserl's phenomenology with the new Thomisms. To this enterprise Edith Stein was of central significance, and behind her, Max Scheler; to it, too, John Paul II has been a contributor. It is at least possible that the retrieval of Przywara's thought will help to move it forward, and O'Meara's book may in turn aid that goal.

If, then, you are curious about and innocent of Erich Przywara's life and thought, this book is the best place to begin. Indeed, it is about the only resource in English. But I doubt that you will come away from it much enlightened about why, or indeed whether, Przywara is important. Perhaps it is still too soon to make a good judgment about that: O'Meara's book may perform its greatest service by encouraging more people to turn to Przywara himself, and thus to further the enterprise of assessing his importance for the future of the Church's thought. **N.V.**

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Christ's Fulfillment of Torah and Temple: Salvation According to Thomas Aquinas by Matthew Levering (*Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002*) viii + 254 pp.*

THE AMBITIONS of this book are vast and varied, and might be listed as theological, historical, exegetical, and broadly ecumenical. Theologically, Levering wants to explain how it is that the actions of Jesus of Nazareth some 2000 years ago can be said to save men and women today. He finds this explanation in St. Thomas, and so, historically, he wants to present the very explanation of Thomas Aquinas as to how Jesus saves. This presentation consists especially in showing that Thomas's explanation is deeply rooted in what Christians know as the Old Testament. Third, he wants to show us the abiding utility of Thomas's reading of Scripture, and he does

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this by a sustained attention to contemporary exegesis relevant to Thomas's reading of the Bible. Some of the contemporary exegesis he uses is Jewish, and this partially fulfills his last aim, which is to bring Jews and Christians to a closer dialogue on the relation of Jesus and the Church to Israel.

Sometimes the prosecution of several goals at one time makes for confusion and ensures that none will be reached in a wholly satisfactory way; sometimes, such a joint prosecution adds strength to strength, and serves to a possession all the more secure of each end. It is the second scenario that is to be found in this book. Levering addresses the last named goal directly at the beginning of each half of his book. He opens with an evocation of the Modern Theology symposium on Michael Wyschogrod's contention that Jewish Christians are obliged on both Jewish and Christian grounds to keep the whole of the Mosaic Law. The second half of the book begins with a brief discussion of Jon Levenson's *Sinai and Zion*. Together, these introductions, one to Thomas on Torah and the other to Thomas on Temple, make a handsome welcome of Jewish readers to the breadth of the Thomist theology of salvation. At the same time, they are part of Levering's orientation of more biblically informed readers to Aquinas's work.

There remains the second goal, bringing forward the substantial breadth of Thomist theology, for the execution of which Levering marshals a remarkable reading of contemporary Thomist scholarship and theology. The expository point of departure of the first half of the book—centered on Torah—is Thomas's threefold division of the Old (Mosaic) Law into precepts moral, ceremonial, and judicial. The key to the first part of the book is a reply to an objection within Thomas's treatise on the Passion, wherein is explained how it is that Christ fulfills all three kinds of precept on the cross. He fulfills the moral precepts by dying out of perfect charity for both God and humankind. He accomplishes the ceremonial precepts by offering himself as a perfect sacrifice. And he discharges the judicial precepts in that his death is satisfaction for sin, a sort of just and more than just compensation for humanity's sin because a death instinct with charity.

All the other material of the first part is ordered to prepare for, expound, and state the consequences of this reply. So, since the Torah is an expression of divine wisdom, it is fitting to consider Christ as Wisdom incarnate. The *convenientia* that St. Thomas perceives in the eternal choice that it be the Word—and not the Father or the Holy Spirit—who takes flesh, is noted. The mysteries of the life of Christ as St. Thomas explores them are presented in their aspect of fulfilling the promises and types of the Law. Especially welcome is the treatment of Christ as Prophet, Priest,

and King—the executor of moral, ceremonial, and judicial precept—which will enable the modern reader to link up with St. Thomas the standard division of the “offices” of Christ, apostle, and bishop so prominent since *Lumen Gentium*.

Levering has a nice sense of just how tightly woven St. Thomas’s Christological cloth is—without seam and to be taken whole. For instance, the charity of Christ, something easily admitted, demands his human knowledge in immediate vision of the divine reality, more difficult for many to admit today, for the very cogent reason that perfection of love depends on perfection of knowledge. Again, the prophetic office of Christ leads to the same point, namely, St. Thomas’s today largely abandoned if not very well understood views on the knowledge and self-consciousness of Christ. It is not just that Levering expounds this topic well and defends it against some of the more common misunderstandings but, as I say, the point is also that he has a very welcome sense of how tightly integrated this element is in Thomas’s theology as a whole.

Levering recognizes that his order of presentation of Thomas’s soteriology is not that of Thomas himself. Yet, all the material fits into this different wineskin. The point of so fitting it might be said to consist simply in seeing whether it can be done—for if it can it means that Thomas’s soteriology really is more intimately and directly connected than we might realize with the Old (Mosaic) Law, and so with the self-understanding of Israel contained therein. This is one thing with saying that, if it can be done, then Levering’s main thesis as to St. Thomas is won. Beyond this question of Thomist scholarship, moreover, the point of doing it is to show, notwithstanding the differences, the real continuity of New Testament Wisdom and Mosaic Torah, of Temple and Church.

The second part of the book centers on the Temple. The holiness of life accomplished in obedience to Torah flowers in the worship of God where He makes Himself present in the Temple. In the new and everlasting covenant, the fulfillment of the written Law of Moses by the interior law of charity written on tablets of hearts by the Holy Spirit is at the same time for Aquinas the fulfillment of the Temple worship of God. Christ, his Mother, the Church, and the individual Christian can each be taken as a renewed Temple, although, evidently, there is a certain ordering to be observed here: The anointing with and indwelling of the Holy Spirit that befits Christ according to his person, and which is granted to Mary before the first exercise of her freedom, follows for us from Christ only after a cleansing. There is, furthermore, a progress to be observed in us unto the true and perfected worship of God. For Aquinas, this is accomplished according as our praise and thanksgiving are enfolded into the Trinitarian

relations: Our love is increasingly empowered by the grace of the Spirit within the course of our sanctification; our words are borrowed from the lips of the Word Incarnate as we are ever more conformed to his image.

The terminus of our passage into God is not accomplished until the last day, and this goal, as it receives attention from Thomas, so it receives a very needed and today little given attention from Levering. This book devotes considerable and very welcome space to the details of Aquinas's eschatology—the resurrection of the body, the vision of God, and the new heavens and new earth.

In relation both to Torah and to Temple, “fulfillment” and not “revocation” are the operative words for describing the Christian dispensation for Thomas, who is no supersessionist. The promises of God are for St. Thomas as for St. Paul irrevocable, and Israel remains in her covenant relation with God an object of his especial predilection. At the same time, Levering presents a careful explanation of why according to Thomas Christ's fulfillment requires old sacrifices and ceremonies to pass into new sacraments where they find their true reality. Just because Christ's cross so perfectly fulfills the precepts of the Old Law, for that very reason there must be new signs of this perfection. The moral precepts are summed up in the double law of charity; the judicial precepts dividing Jew and gentile are overcome. So also for the cult, it is renewed in the Passover of the temple sacrifices to Eucharist, a better expiation and a fuller communion. The sacraments of the Old Law, protestations of faith in a coming savior, are changed into new sacraments, protestations of faith in a savior who has come, and worked, and so are now efficacious for grace.

Even so, the abiding value of the Old Covenant both for Jews and as having passed into the substance of the New is maintained. The difference between this view and supersessionism might be put as follows. The supersessionist says to the modern people of Israel: We value you because you—more exactly, your ancestors—prepared the way for us. But on St. Thomas's position we can say: We value you now because God's covenant is irrevocable; and just because we think it perfected and come over into the new, we value you because we think you are in us, and we in you.

My one criticism is that I miss the use that might have been made of the late Ben F. Meyer's work on the Temple and theology of the Temple in the New Testament. The book is nicely indexed and has a great bibliography.

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La Giustizia Politica in Tommaso d'Aquino. Un'Interpretazione del Bene Comune Politico by Gabriel Chalmeta (*Roma: Armando Editore, 2000*) 155 pp.

SHOULD CONTEMPORARY political theorists show any interest at all in Aquinas's political thought? At a first glance, the most reasonable answer to this question is: "No!" Aquinas's political ideas depend too much on a theological and metaphysical view of the world that people today do not share; this is not a feasible view in our pluralistic societies. Aquinas could not even have imagined our "modern state"; he never saw the revolutions which gave birth to (negative and positive) human rights. Contemporary political philosophy does not have anything to do with Aquinas, but, rather, with utilitarian and (new) social contract theories that cannot be traced back earlier than Locke, Rousseau, Kant, Bentham, or Mill. Yet, Gabriel Chalmeta—who has studied in depth the current debate between utilitarianism and neo-contractualism—tells us that he has recently changed his mind; that he now believes in the "great value of Aquinas's political philosophy" (20), both for approaching the crisis of the welfare state, and for developing sound principles to overcome the defects in contemporary theories.

There are several reasons why Chalmeta's book should be praised. First, it is a welcome exception, as we do not have much to read today on the concept of political justice in Aquinas. Second, it is a *real* book on political philosophy. Let me explain this better. Political philosophy cannot be just "history"; not even history of philosophy. In Aristotle's terminology, it is a "practical" science. We study it in order to solve problems, and make decisions, about the *contingent* and complex structures of our own societies. A political philosopher cannot bury his head in the sand of either history or exegesis. He must face all the difficulties and problems of the world in which he lives. Chalmeta does not want just to be aware of what people of the past believed. He wants to "Rethink the Past in order to Build the Future," as the title of the introduction of the book reads. His starting point is the welfare state and its current crisis; and in the central part of the book (the Second Part), he tries to establish a constructive dialogue between Aquinas, on the one hand, and contemporary utilitarian and contractualist thinkers, on the other.

Every political theory, if it is well done, depends to a great extent on the historical and cultural environment in which it has been conceived. To do justice to a political thinker it is necessary to understand his environment from an internal viewpoint: that is, from his own viewpoint. This leads to a third reason why Chalmeta's book must be praised. Even

if his ultimate goal is the above-mentioned dialogue between Aquinas and contemporary philosophy, he does not neglect to locate historically Aquinas's own thought. The First Part of the book ("Historical and Doctrinal Presuppositions") is meant to be an introduction to the world, life, and sources of the medieval champion of the Catholic Church. It is only in the Third (and the last) part of the book ("The Thomistic Synthesis: Political Common Good") that the author undertakes his own "deductive" interpretation of Aquinas.

But what is Chalmeta's viewpoint? What is he looking at and looking for as a political philosopher? As far as I can tell, there are three things he is really concerned with: freedom, friendship, and subsidiarity. (1) The human good cannot be achieved but *humanly*, that is, freely. A just political society, therefore, must be built up on the freedom of its citizens, and must have a "minimalist" approach to "the role of authority and law" (126–27). (2) The meaning of human freedom is the "intentional identification (sympathetic or, more precisely, friendly) with the good of the others" (133). The human good, therefore, is intrinsically the "common good," and *autonomy* cannot be the only grounding value of political society. (3) Political authority should not suffocate human freedom by passing too many laws and rules, and by taking onto itself ends and achievements that people can attain (even better) at lower levels of human interaction (families, schools, non-profit organizations, etc.): "the State and Law come second" (134). Chalmeta thinks that the main problems of contemporary welfare states are caused by the exaltation of an individualistic concept of freedom, which, ironically, leads governments to multiply laws and constrain ever more individual freedom and initiative. This consideration gives us a secondary, but yet important, interpretative key for reading his book; namely, that he tries always to find, and highlight, energies and forces that act effectively in society, but whose existence does not depend primarily on law and political authority.

The First Part of the book consists of three chapters; respectively, on the culture in which Aquinas lived, on Aquinas's life and political writings, and on the sources of his political philosophy. Chalmeta wants to undermine the commonplaces that those years of the Middle Ages were not culturally and socially rich, that they were characterized by a strong contrast between Aristotelianism and Augustinianism, and that Aquinas, due to his *isolated* religious life (unaware of the facts of the world), could not develop any viable and realistic political philosophy. The first chapter is provocatively titled "The Medieval Renaissance: The Luminosity of Legal and Political Culture in the XII and XIII Centuries." We are still too familiar with the image of the *dark* Middle Ages to focus reasonably

on how vital, rich, and impetuous Aquinas's century had been: The establishment of the cities as cultural and economical centers; the fast development of commerce and industry; the birth of vulgar languages and of the universities; the rebirth of Roman law and legal studies; the clear distinction between research grounded on theology and research grounded on unaided (natural) reason. Many recent historical studies point to that age as to the real ground of our modern culture; in this respect, Chalmeta's approach is certainly correct. And it is also true (see Chapter 2: "Thomas Aquinas: The Public Figure and the Political Writings") that Aquinas lived fully immersed in the European culture of his time, much more so than most of his contemporaries. He traveled all around Europe after he left Naples at the age of about 21, and he personally faced even the most pragmatical political problems of his society.

Aquinas did not write a systematic treatise on political philosophy. His relevant writings, says Chalmeta, are to be found in the third book of the *Summa contra Gentiles*, in the *De regno ad regem Cypri*, the *Commentaries to Aristotle's Politics and Nicomachean Ethics*, the *Secunda pars* of the *Summa theologiae*, and, maybe, even in "the very short *Epistula ad Ducissam Brabantiae*" (46–48). Aquinas had a very busy life and always had to write in a hurry, sometimes dictating and without even rereading the original. It is essential, in his case, to carefully apply the principle of interpreting every particular text "in the light of the whole" (48).

As for "The Sources of [his] Political Philosophy" (Chapter 3), Chalmeta, quoting the prologue of the *De regno*, divides them by three: the "authority of Holy Writ," the "teachings of the philosophers" (particularly Aristotle and Augustine), and the "practice [*exempla*] of worthy princes." I think this classification is too hasty, and it is certainly wrong to the extent that Chalmeta identifies "the examples of the princes" with Roman law (59–61). Law, according to the (Aristotelian) Aquinas, speaks *in universale*, and this is why it sometimes needs to be corrected through equity in order to be *justly* applied to particular cases. Examples, on the other hand, are an essential source for practical philosophy because they show the *universal* precept as applied by virtuous men to *particular* actions. The practical character of moral knowledge explains the constant use, in the Middle Ages and in Roman law tradition, of *auctoritates* (the opinions of the wise men and the laws of wise legislators) by both philosophers and jurists. To quote the *auctoritates* was not just a habit, or a fashion—as Chalmeta suggests (59)—but the only path to the moral and legal truth known and explained by prudent men. Roman law belongs to the *doctrinal* sources of Aquinas's political philosophy, and (I have to disagree again with Chalmeta) Aquinas had an in-depth knowledge of it, as is evident

in his detailed analysis of issues of right and justice. His canon law background must be seen as the other side of the same legal expertise because, at that time, canon law and Roman law belonged to the same legal system, and developed together by using and applying the same legal principles and sources.

As a kind of rhetorical exaggeration, Chalmeta draws the "Conclusion" that Aquinas's political philosophy originates, at the same time, from Aristotle's utilitarianism and Augustine's contractualism; but he adds immediately that, "strictly speaking," "neither Aristotle's proposal can be taken as utilitarian, nor Augustine's as contractualist" (62). Definitely! There comes to my mind, for instance, the third book of the *Politics*, in which Aristotle explains that the "city-state" is "a community of citizens sharing a constitution" (1276b1), and that "citizen" is, properly, "the one who participates in the offices" (1278a35). These statements remind one very much of the contractualist language used in the grounding documents of America's democracy (especially the Bills of Rights of the first colonies). The truth is that contemporary terminology like "deontology vs. teleology," or "utilitarianism vs. contractualism," cannot do justice to Aristotle or Augustine or Aquinas.

The Second Part of the book ("Dialectical Determination of the Thomistic Concept of Political Justice") consists of two chapters: respectively, the fourth, on "Aquinas and Utilitarianism," and the fifth, on "Aquinas and Contractualism." Here Chalmeta seems to me at his best. The structure of the argument is simple and clear. Chalmeta points to the "good reasons" and to the main "limits" of both utilitarianism and contractualism, and tries to show how Aquinas shares those good reasons and overcomes those limits. It is worth noticing his critique of utilitarianism's "arithmetical approach to political justice" (72–74).

On one point utilitarianism is certainly right: Political society is just if it aims at a sort of maximization of the good of the citizens. Aquinas would agree with this teleology: The end of political community must coincide with the end of each individual, that is, happiness (70). However, utilitarianism, (a) by putting the *common good* prior to the *individual good*, denies the absolute rights of the persons; and (b) by putting the good prior to the just, denies the freedom of the person. A utilitarian government would try to enforce its conception of the "good life" up to the "most insignificant details." Chalmeta recalls Mill's thesis that even marriage can be prohibited if the partners do not have enough economical means for running a family (73). Aquinas, according to Chalmeta, overcomes both defects by affirming (a) the inviolable dignity of the human person, and (b) the "free character" of the human good (man

cannot be forced to be good). Granted! But the second point seems misdirected. Chalmeta does not mention either the liberal tradition, to which utilitarianism belongs, or Mill's "harm-principle," supposedly, the standard of justice for political problems. It is true that for Aquinas nobody can be forced to be virtuous; but every act of justice can be enforced due to the extrinsic character of the right (*ius*); and it should be enforced precisely in order to impede (or prevent, or correct) *unjust* harm to (the freedom of) other people. This is something on which Aquinas and Mill would not need to disagree.

Contractualism too builds upon a conception (even if "thin") of the good life, namely, "good life as free, or autonomous, life." Aquinas "would have appreciated, not only the teleological structure" of contractualism, but also its emphasis on "freedom, or autonomy." Above all, he would have agreed that "the freedom of others, generally speaking, constitutes a limit to the exercise of freedom by each man" (79–82). However, autonomy alone (neutrality) cannot solve the conflicts between incompatible freedoms. Moreover, contractualism does not give sufficient reasons to respect other people's autonomy when doing so requires a sacrifice of one's own good. In order to enforce the objective (transcendental) requirement of justice, a contractualist government will have an ever stronger recourse to legal coercion. In Aquinas, there is a deep reason to be concerned about the good of the others, namely, that the agent's freedom is fulfilled precisely in doing so. Sometimes, it is true, Aquinas seems to propose an "organic view" of political community (the whole as more important than the part) that anticipates the worse outcomes of utilitarianism. However, says Chalmeta, there are ways to interpret differently his relevant statements (88–90). Chalmeta's explanation of Rawls's contractualism is very well done. However, the key-concept of Chapter 5 is "freedom of others" as both limit (contractualism) and fulfillment (Aquinas) of the agent's freedom, and, as I already mentioned, the idea of "freedom of others as limit" belongs also to the utilitarian tradition. I wonder whether Chalmeta should have better framed both utilitarianism and contractualism in the same (liberal) tradition to which they belong.

The *Third Part* of the book includes two chapters: the sixth, on "The Political Common Good as an Ideal," and the seventh, on "Bringing About" that ideal. Chalmeta explains that the common good, due to the social nature of the human person, cannot be just a means. He draws a parallel between three forms of "friendship, or justice"—political, particular or commutative, and domestic—and three forms of common good—of political relationships, of economical relationships, and of personal relationships (family). Human happiness depends on a specific

and ordered commitment to each type of common good. I think the stress on friendship and the social nature of human good is something for which we should be very grateful to Chalmeta (even though I miss a clear conceptual distinction between friendship and justice). However, Chalmeta ultimately wants to show that the political common good has a subsidiary and secondary importance (105). This thesis resembles the other one—expressed in Chapter 5 (see pp. 87–90)—that Aquinas’s idea that the individual is “part” of the political community means just that every individual fulfills himself by means of a free commitment to the common good.

I do not think Aquinas would agree with either of these interpretations. At each level of creation, the “whole” is for Aquinas more important than the “part” because it is more similar to God—whose perfection is better reflected by the multitude of creatures—and because, in the agent’s intentionality, the whole is always and necessarily prior to its parts. For Aquinas, there is no contradiction in affirming at the same time the dignity of the human person and its being less important than the whole. *“Pertinet quidem enim ad amorem qui debet esse inter homines quod homo quaerat et conservet bonum etiam uni soli homini, sed multo melius est et divinius quod hoc exhibeatur toti genti et civitatibus. Vel aliter: amabile quidem est quod hoc exhibeatur uni soli civitati, sed multo divinius est quod hoc exhibeatur toti genti, in qua multae civitates continentur. Dicit autem hoc esse divinius, eo quod magis pertinet ad dei similitudinem, qui est universalis causa omnium bonorum”* (*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, I, 2, no. 12. See *De regno*, ch. 9, no. 70; and *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, ch. 45).

Let me raise also a little doubt on Chalmeta’s identification between particular justice and commutative justice. For Aquinas, the virtue of justice is a general virtue (legal justice) insofar as it “directs man immediately to the common good,” and a particular virtue, insofar as it directs “man immediately to the good of another individual” (*ST*, I–II, q. 58, a. 7). Legal justice is the key concept because it is always what directs man to the common good, either immediately or mediately (through the acts of particular justice), and without direction to the common good there is no justice at all (see *ST*, I–II, q. 58, a. 5). Particular justice, in turn, is commutative when it regulates “the order of one part to another,” and distributive when it regulates “the order of the whole toward the parts” (*ST*, I–II, q. 61, a. 1). My point is not just that for Aquinas there are *two* forms of particular justice but, especially, that his analogical talk about the virtue directing man to the common good cannot be predicated of different kinds of communities, or social relationships, as if there were a different virtue of justice for each different community (or common

good). I detect this little ambiguity in Chalmeta's references, not only to the commutative, but also to the legal and the distributive justice (See pp. 71, 101, 105, 107, and 113).

The main element (or ultimate end) of the political common good, explains Chalmeta, is the "good/virtuous life" of the citizens, and the immediate, although instrumental, elements are "peace" and "material goods." Chalmeta sees in Aquinas's talk about "unity of peace" and "good life," the ancestors of our negative and positive rights and a useful guide for political action. So far so good, but who should pursue the *political* common good? Chalmeta puts in charge of the political good, not the political authority, but the "political society," which is formed, primarily, by "families" and "customs" and, secondarily, by the "law" (or other acts passed by the authority). "Society," as opposed to "law," has a primary role in the pursuit of the common good (113–15). And "political society" as a whole does have two "legal instruments" at its disposal: first, "custom" and, second, "law." Chalmeta suggests that in the Middle Ages the legal system used to be spontaneously regulated by custom; and that, in Aquinas's time, the "law" made its appearance as a "new legal tool." It is probably for this reason, he concludes, that Aquinas dwelled so much on the concept of law (118): In order to legitimate the use of it by the authority. Chalmeta also suggests that customs have legal validity independently on any sanction, or ratification, by the authority (117); and that the "first principle of legal justice, according to Aquinas, is the one giving to the same subjects the power [or authority] to pass all the public norms by which public life is (partly) regulated" (124). In the seventh (and last) chapter of the book, Chalmeta's main concerns seem to be (a) to dethrone the law, and (b) to defend both the democratic system and the crucial role of intermediate social agents. I am mostly sympathetic with these concerns, but I think that he is here overstressing the concept of "society" at the expense of the concept of "authority."

It is true that everybody can contribute to the political common good, but nobody can regulate, or order, public life in view of the common good without having the authority to do so. The need for authority (and for the law) comes precisely from the need for a principle of unity (or coordination) in the public action *that is not already in the subjects*, in the multitude, *as such* (if not in the sense that the subjects have to recognize it). This is why, for Aquinas, the concept of law requires somebody who is in charge of the community. The idea of law as a "new legal tool" is something I do not really understand. Rather, "customs" cannot obtain legal validity without becoming *authoritarian* norms, and without an *authority* able to enforce them. The concept of "legal custom" means not

only that people *usually* act this way, but that they *have always* to act this way; in other words, it involves not only “praise” and “blame” but also “constraint” and “punishment.” This is why the formation-process of a customary rule requires a subjective belief (by the subjects) that the rule must actually be taken as a *legal* (obligatory and enforceable) rule, and a sort of recognition of it by an established political authority called to enforce it. This doctrine is much older than Aquinas and it still grounds our national and international legal systems.

These criticisms of Chalmers's excellent book should be taken as reflections stimulated by him, in the same spirit as the beautiful passage from *De perfectione spiritualis vitae* that he quotes at page 67: “*Si quidam vero contra haec rescribere voluerint, mihi acceptissimum erit. Nullo enim modo melius quam contradicentibus resistendo, aperuit veritas et falsitas confutatur.*” N V

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The Future of Catholic Biblical Exegesis: A Constructive

Conversation by Luke Timothy Johnson and William S. Kurz, SJ
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CATHOLIC biblical exegesis takes one of its prime methodological precedents from the risen Lord's teaching to the disciples on the road to Emmaus: “Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures” (Luke 24:27). While they did not recognize Jesus at the time, the disciples realize afterwards that their hearts were burning while Jesus interpreted the Scriptures. Jesus' teaching on the road to Emmaus thus also indicates the flame that exegesis should ignite in the heart of the believer, conveyed in turn to the community. The patristic and medieval interpreters well understood this twofold character of exegesis, that is, conducted from the perspective of faith and rendered in service to the Church. The road has not always been a smooth one since that time.

Luke Timothy Johnson and William Kurz, SJ, discuss the compelling need to restore the character of Catholic biblical exegesis in their vital study *The Future of Catholic Biblical Exegesis: A Constructive Conversation*. As the title indicates, the work is in the form of a conversation between Johnson and Kurz, a conversation they hope others will join. Their goal is reflected by the format of the work, which consists of two major sections, each comprised of five chapters by one author and followed with a response from the other. The brief final section poses ten ques-

tions, to which each author responds, designed to stimulate an ongoing conversation. Johnson and Kurz make fine dialogue partners, based on their common academic experience (both are New Testament scholars with Ph.D.s from Yale) and their common exegetical vision.

The nature of each author's contribution differs, though. Johnson's chapters introduce the work with a brief history of twentieth-century Catholic exegesis and a critique of the current state of affairs in biblical scholarship, followed by a discussion of two patristic models for emulation, Origen and Augustine, and finally an appeal for scholars to enter into the world of Scripture. Kurz's chapters are largely exegetical theory put into practice, with four chapters devoted to discussions of passages from John's gospel to exemplify specific interpretive principles. His other chapter reflects the aim of both authors to prioritize the needs of the Catholic Church while also remaining attentive to ecumenical concerns, particularly with respect to Protestant biblical interpretation. While each major section differs in form, they are unified in outlook and goals, for both authors want to appreciate what is positive about the present state of exegesis and seek to change what is less so. It should also be noted that about half of the chapters represent revisions of lectures or articles that have appeared elsewhere. Furthermore, as Kurz notes (143), while the topics of the book were agreed upon beforehand, the main portions were written independently. In actuality, then, the element of conversation is restricted to the responses and final chapter, although this restriction does not detract from the work. The combining of previous material, however, occasionally surfaces in slight repetitiveness and awkward transitions, but not to a detrimental degree.

Johnson begins with a rather dense, foundational chapter (which merits its extensive treatment here) titled, "What is Catholic about Catholic Biblical Scholarship?" that defines "Catholic" biblical scholarship and traces the extent to which that identity has been maintained from the early twentieth century to the present. He defines that identity as a predilection for the conjunctive, the inclusive, the "both/and," which manifests itself in the dialectic between Scripture and Tradition. Historically, that dialectic was maintained by Catholic exegetes, but over time Tradition eclipsed Scripture, so that Scripture lost its "otherness," its ability to challenge (7). To demonstrate the response to this loss, Johnson then chronicles the past century of Catholic biblical exegesis divided into three periods: (1) before the 1943 publication of the encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, which sanctioned the use of the historical-critical method, (2) the hopeful employment of this method for the next fifty years, and (3) the consequences of the method that have become discernible in the past ten years or so. The

historical-critical method, practiced by Protestant scholars for some two centuries previously, was supposed to provide Catholic scholars with a neutral tool whereby they could recover the “otherness” of Scripture by “using the methods of history to locate the specific circumstances of each biblical voice” (8) through the study of the biblical languages, cultures, literary forms, and so on. In this way, they could retrieve and better appreciate the “literal sense” of Scripture, understood exclusively as the intentional meaning of the human authors apart from how that meaning has been construed by almost 2000 years of interpretation, toward the ultimate goal of restoring the balance between Scripture and Tradition.

Johnson explains that that goal has not been met, however, as he cogently exposes the inherent flaws of the historical-critical method in terms of four realizations that refute its initial claims: (1) rather than a “method,” this approach is a model that seeks historical reconstruction, (2) it has led to less rather than more agreement and has made no positive contributions to the faith, (3) it privileges the literal sense and rejects more figurative senses of Scripture, and (4) it is not theologically neutral but rather embodies Protestant suppositions. This last point is particularly relevant, since those presuppositions may be expressed in terms of the disjunctive, the “either/or,” which thus leads to the inevitable position of *sola scriptura*. The Catholic scholarly enterprise restoring the balance between Scripture and Tradition in this manner, therefore, was rather precarious, if not doomed, from the start. Nevertheless, Johnson emphatically affirms what can be gained from this approach, including an increased knowledge of the biblical world, but he cautions that the Catholic “both/and” must be maintained, and in fact only by maintaining it can there be true ecumenism between Protestant and Catholic scholars whose work reflects the authentic identities of their respective traditions. To the end of maintaining Catholic identity, Johnson issues two main challenges to the Catholic exegete that should intersect in their work: Affirm loyalty to Tradition and rediscover other forms of criticism than historical (e.g., philosophical, moral, aesthetic). Johnson also offers some practical suggestions for Catholic biblical scholars, articulated mainly as a return to what formerly was presumed by exegetes in the patristic and medieval periods, namely appreciation of the history of interpretation, the literary integrity of Scripture, and the polyvalence of Scripture. Once Catholic scholars embark again on this road, they can more ably turn their work toward the life of the Church and help the laity read Scripture fruitfully and responsibly, as well as articulate the role of Scripture in theology.

Building on this practical suggestion, Johnson’s second chapter lays the theoretical groundwork for the third and fourth with his claim that

Catholic scholars can move forward precisely by an engagement with the past. While there is much that is good in the academy, the surge in both doctorates and publications in biblical studies has engendered an increase in specializations in ever-narrowing fields and a disengagement with anything outside of one's narrow field. Furthermore, the shifts from a largely clerical to lay constituency of professors and from the seminary to the university have reoriented the study of the Bible away from the Church toward the secular academy. For these reasons, Johnson speaks of a "crisis" situation in biblical studies today (37), one that has led to an exclusive privileging of what he helpfully terms *scientia* (science, the historical-critical method) over *sapientia* (wisdom, a deeper reading of Scripture), whereas they should be in a mutually beneficial relationship. Johnson sees one resolution to this crisis in a return to premodern (he rightly dismisses the common but pejorative and fallacious term "precritical" exegesis) biblical scholarship with its sound premises about Scripture: divine authorship, harmony in matters of faith and morals, authority as the Word of God, levels of meaning, and hermeneutics of charity. As Johnson points out, every one of these premises is either questioned or rejected in mainstream biblical scholarship today. Johnson thus hearkens back to the *Ressourcement* movement of De Lubac and others to return to the past in order to renew the Church today.

In order to illustrate what we can learn from premodern exegesis, Johnson discusses two of the most influential patristic scholars, Origen and Augustine. Given the typical dichotomy between New Testament and patristic studies, it is refreshing to see a New Testament scholar embrace the early Christian Fathers. (Kurz, by the way, particularly lauds Johnson's work in these chapters.) Origen provides an exemplar of someone who, perhaps more successfully than anyone before or since, synthesized a sophisticated hermeneutics with a zeal for the Church, *fides et ratio*. Origen's prodigious and original exegesis is, contrary to some modern claims, deeply critical, utilizing elements of text criticism, linguistics, social history, literary criticism, and so on; but he always allows Scripture to challenge him, not to challenge Scripture. Johnson also significantly defends Origen's use of allegory as a necessary mode of spiritual interpretation to elicit the polyvalent meanings of a text divinely authored. Through his work, Origen amply demonstrates the ultimate goal of Scripture to transform the mind of the believer. Augustine, whose approach to Scripture was influenced by Ambrose, was always guided by pastoral needs in his exegesis. As a result, Augustine gives us a model of what Johnson terms the hermeneutics of charity, which builds up the truth, love, and moral life of the Church. Finally, as Johnson elaborates in his concluding chapter, we

postmoderns need to regain the imagination of our predecessors to live in the world that Scripture produces rather than, as too often happens, in “the world that produced the Scripture” (119).

Kurz’s chapters continue the conversation on Catholic biblical scholarship, but now in the forms of both theory and practical exegesis. While Johnson explains what Catholic scholars should be doing and why, Kurz shows us how. In four of the five chapters, Kurz provides some continuity in his interpretations by selecting passages entirely from the Gospel of John, yet approaching them in diverse ways. Thus, embedded within this study one finds an intriguing mini-commentary on several crucial Johannine passages. Throughout, Kurz well demonstrates the mandate of *Dei Verbum* that he explicitly follows to employ modern methods of interpretation in order “to actualize and apply Scripture to the church’s contemporary needs” (159). To this end, the inclusion of the actual exegesis is especially significant as a model that is both critical and in service to the Church.

One of the most notable and worthwhile elements of Kurz’s contribution is the sheer variety of ways in which he interprets the biblical text, most of which incorporate forms of literary criticism. In fact, Kurz adds to Johnson’s analysis of the historical-critical method a discussion of the contributions of literary criticism to biblical studies, including a return to the integrity of the Bible, an awareness of levels of meaning, and a focus on the role of the reader in interpretation. Since forms of literary criticism originally develop in secular literary studies, though, Kurz emphasizes that such criticism must always be guided by Catholic beliefs. (Origen and other early Christians said the same thing about allegory, since it first developed among the ancient Greeks.) That is to say, literary criticism can help us to appreciate Scripture as the Word of God when conducted from the perspective of faith.

Kurz begins with a close reading of the Prologue of John’s gospel based on the presumption that Scripture continues to speak to believers today in a very personal way, a presumption shared by patristic commentators. He includes a quite interesting section that studies the main phrases of the Prologue in relation to the Nicene Creed, with which it shares many terms. In this way, he keenly stresses the eternal relevance of Scripture to the beliefs of the Church. Kurz does something similar in another enticing chapter where he discusses John 20:19–23 and forgiveness of sins in relation to the discussion of the sacrament of reconciliation in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. These two chapters reflect a guiding principle of Kurz’s exegesis, intertextuality, as he demonstrates how Scripture and authoritative texts of Tradition can and need to mutu-

ally inform and guide one another. The other two chapters that deal with John both concern elements of Chapter 6, the Bread of Life discourse and the Feeding of the 5000, with a particular focus on the Eucharistic imagery. Kurz makes use of interpretive models and terms of diverse contemporary theorists (Boyarín, Ricoeur, Riffaterre, and Gadamer among others) as well as another form of intertextuality, this time an exploration of key Old Testament passages that shed light on portions of John 6. It would be helpful for the reader to already have some familiarity with these authors and interpretive techniques, as Kurz moves through them somewhat quickly. Kurz's other chapter takes a different tack as he engages the Protestant scholar Richard Hays on the use of Scripture in the debate on abortion. This informative section illustrates, as Kurz himself remarks, the difference between the Catholic "both/and" and Protestant "either/or" approaches to Scripture, the former of which reads Scripture as an organic unity, the latter as a kind of prooftexting.

Finally, it is worth noting one of Kurz's continually evident exegetical principles, the hermeneutics of understanding. In his last chapter, Kurz provides a key, albeit too brief, discussion of the hermeneutics of suspicion versus the hermeneutics of understanding or consent. Kurz reminds us that biblical scholars, unlike their secular literary critical counterparts, have been delinquent in acknowledging that there is not only no presuppositionless text, but no presuppositionless reader. Those who employ the hermeneutics of suspicion to expose a bias of the biblical text tend to fault the text itself, rather than themselves, for the meaning they claim to discover. While Kurz endorses the legitimate role of the hermeneutics of suspicion in the areas of historical and sociological reconstructions of the world of the biblical authors, he raises the crucial question, how can a believer approach the Word of God with suspicion? Those who do subvert the role of the biblical text to judge us.

One hopes that many Catholic scholars enter into Johnson and Kurz's conversation. While their approaches to the topic differ somewhat (Johnson's more analytic discussion, Kurz's exegetical thrust), and they disagree on certain details, Johnson and Kurz strongly concur on the dire need to strengthen Catholic biblical scholarship in order to serve both the academy and, more importantly, the Church. They are not the first to voice such concerns. Indeed, De Lubac, Balthasar, and, more recently, Cardinal Ratzinger have all pondered how best to use modern critical methods and remain faithful to the Church's Tradition. Still, Johnson and Kurz have made an immense contribution to today's consideration of these issues. While they do not shy away from controversy in their critique of the present state of affairs, as the subtitle comments they seek to be constructive.

Thus, the ten questions they pose together in the final chapter articulate specific questions and call for others to respond. In this way, perhaps they will help Catholic biblical scholars to see the road more clearly. **N V**

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The Metaphysics of the Incarnation: Thomas Aquinas to Duns Scotus by Richard Cross (*Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 2002*) 388 pp.

ONE OF THE difficulties presented to those who study medieval theology and philosophy is the sheer number of impressive figures, whose works are often voluminous and technical, which merit serious attention. It is understandable, then, that scholars often deal with this problem by restricting their focus to key figures such as Aquinas, Scotus, or Ockham. Happily, Cross eschews this strategy and while giving due consideration to Aquinas and Scotus, does not hesitate to provide detailed accounts of an impressive array of fascinating, though less familiar, medieval theologians. This inclusive approach makes *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation* an indispensable work for those interested in medieval Christology and metaphysics.

The central problem for medieval Christology was to provide an adequate account of the relation between Christ as an individual substance (a.k.a. hypostasis, person, supposit) and his human nature. Cross provides an introduction that offers a summary of this problem in light of the concerns of contemporary metaphysicians such as C. J. F. Williams and Peter Geach. In the first chapter Cross offers a more detailed and technical account of the historical and philosophical background that provides an analytical account of the different ways of characterizing the human nature; that is, as an accidental property, an accidental whole, a concrete part or as a form. The various principles discussed are conveniently summarized at the beginning of the book, and Cross refers back to them throughout his discussion. Taken together, the introduction and chapter one offer a useful introduction to some important aspects of medieval metaphysics and the approach is rigorous and charitable throughout.

The weakest part of Cross's work, in my view, is his treatment of Aquinas. While Cross accurately emphasizes the uniqueness of Aquinas's attempt to explain the hypostatic union by developing an analogy between Christ's human nature and a concrete part, his interpretation, and as a consequence his evaluation, of Aquinas is mistaken on several points. Although, I cannot provide a full account here, a few problems should be briefly mentioned. (1) Cross seems to attribute a modal version

of essentialism to Aquinas (cf. the discussion of essential and non-essential parts at 53–57), whereas Aquinas clearly adopts Aristotle’s definitional essentialism (cf. *Topics*, 101b20; *ST* I, q. 77, a. 1 ad 5; *In III Sent.*, d. 35, q. 2, a. 3 qc. 1c. and many other texts); (2) Cross asserts that Aquinas is inconsistent since he adopts the concrete part model at times and rejects it at others (59), while neglecting to note that this model is used almost entirely in the context of the communication of idioms and limited, not rejected, in the context of arguing that the Word was a composite person after the Incarnation (*ST*, III, q. 2, a. 4 ad 2); (3) Cross claims that Aquinas’s view that the human nature enters “into communion with the *esse*” of the Word is unique to the *Summa* and devoid of meaning (58), but the idea, though expressed in different terms, is clearly present throughout his corpus in a developed form from the *Sentences Commentary* onward (for a detailed discussion of this point and references, see my article “Aquinas on the Metaphysics of *Esse* in Christ,” *The Thomist* 66 [2002]: 241–48); and (4) Cross argues that Aquinas’s comparison of the relation between the divine person and the human nature to the relation between the body and the soul entails a monophysite Christology (57–58, 60, 67–69, and 80–81), while neglecting to note that this idea was not created by Aquinas but was taken from the Athanasian Creed (which is hardly a monophysite text!), and further that Aquinas uses this analogy only with clear qualifications which rule out monophysitism (*Q.D. De Union Verbi*, a.1c.).

Aquinas, however, is only a small part of the story Cross has to tell, and one should not let the shortcomings noted above distract one from the main purpose of the book. In fact, the bulk of this book is devoted to explanations of the remarkably diverse ways in which medieval theologians attempted to: (1) develop a substance-accident model to explain the relation between the Word and the human nature; (2) explain how contradictory predicates could be true of the divine person in virtue of the fact that he has two natures; and (3) explain how Christ, *qua* man, could be individual through appealing to different theories of subsistence. A wide range of authors are treated with admirable historical scholarship and analytical rigor on each of these problems (e.g., Bonaventure, Matthew of Aquasparta, Peter Olivi, William of Ware, Giles of Rome, Henry of Ghent, Godfrey of Fontaines, Duns Scotus, etc.).

Cross does not, however, intend to offer a merely historical study. Rather, he hopes to present a history which can inform current theological discourse. To this end, he concludes his book with a chapter outlining the lessons which medieval Christology has to offer theologians today. Much of the discussion is devoted to the contemporary concern

to explain the claim that Christ is one person in view of the fact that he is traditionally held to have a human and a divine intellect and will. This is a rather unusual theme for Cross to conclude with, since the majority of his book is given over to discussing metaphysical issues related to simplicity, immutability, the communication of idioms, and so on. Of course, most of the medieval theologians Cross discusses had developed sophisticated philosophical and theological explanations of Christ's psychological and volitional duality. However, while I agree with Cross that the medievals have much to say that is of value to contemporary theology in this respect, one wonders why he did not write a history of medieval discussions regarding Christ's intellect and will, if that is the contemporary dispute to which he hopes to contribute. Consequently, I find the connections between Cross's impressive history of the metaphysics of the Incarnation and his contemporary "programme for Christology" somewhat unclear.

Nevertheless, one can only admire the erudition and clarity of argument that *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation* offers. It is by far the most thorough and engaging treatment of the subject to date and will surely remain so for years to come. N V

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On Creation, Conservation & Concurrence: Metaphysical Disputations 20–22 by Francisco Suárez, SJ. Translation and

introduction by Alfred J. Freddoso (*South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2002*) 267 pp.

WITH THE present volume, Professor Alfred J. Freddoso of the University of Notre Dame brings to completion an eight-year project. The goal was to supply an English translation of the extensive treatment of efficient causality found in Francisco Suárez's *Disputationes Metaphysicae* (first published in 1597). In 1994, Freddoso produced a much-praised English rendering of *Disputations* 17, 18, and 19 dealing with efficient causality in general. This present work provides translations of *Disputations* 20, 21, and 22 on creation, conservation, and concurrence wherein the divine actions of causality are more specifically considered.

In his 1994 work, Freddoso supplied a brief seven-page introduction touching on the significance of Francisco Suárez (1548–1617) as a metaphysician and the importance of the *Disputationes Metaphysicae*. The present volume provides a much more extensive scholarly commentary to comple-

ment the very fine translations. Freddoso begins with a four-page Preface followed by an introduction of 110 pages. There is also a three-page appendix that outlines the topics covered in all 54 *Metaphysical Disputations*.

Prior to his work on Suárez, Freddoso had already distinguished himself as a translator of William of Ockham and Luis de Molina. These present English renderings display the qualities of a skilled linguist. Freddoso is able to supply the word order in English that most clearly expresses the ideas and arguments of the Latin original. Appropriate use is also made of parentheses, a technique that helps to shorten some otherwise lengthy sentences. In a similar manner, Freddoso often breaks down long paragraphs into several brief ones, a method that allows for easier comprehension in translation.

A question, though, could be raised over Freddoso's decision (in the table of contents for *Disputation 22*, sections 1, 3, and 4) to render *Deum*, *Dei*, and *Deus* as "god" rather than "God." Since the uppercase is used in the Latin original of the 1856–1861 Vives/Berton *Opera Omnia*, the translation should follow suit. One may likewise wonder why the heading of section 2 which begins, *Utrum concursus causae primae . . .*, is translated as: "whether god's concurrence. . ." To be sure, God is the first cause, but Suárez could have chosen *Dei* rather than *causae primae* if he wanted God to be understood directly. Apart from these minor issues, Freddoso's translation is a remarkable achievement. The clarity and texture of Suárez's Latin prose is rendered into smooth and accurate philosophical English. Only an outstanding scholar, skilled in Latin as well as metaphysics, could achieve what Freddoso has done.

In addition to his laudable translation work, Freddoso deserves praise for his learned and detailed introduction. Three important purposes are achieved: (1) a clear case is made for the superiority of Scholastic metaphysics in opposition to the "hermeneutic of condescension" that prevails in Anglo-American circles toward classical, medieval, and Baroque philosophies of being; (2) the general scope of Suárez's entire *Disputationes Metaphysicae* is set forth with admirable clarity, with special attention given to the relationship of theology to metaphysics; and, (3) Suárez is presented as "a profound metaphysician" with "breadth of vision and analytic depth" (p. cxxi), especially in regard to efficient causality and divine action.

On the relation of theology to metaphysics, Freddoso takes issue with Jorge Gracia who argues that Suárez parts company with earlier Scholastic philosophers by his more "modern" separation of theology and philosophy. By quoting extensively from the preface to the *Disputationes*, as well as the introduction to the first *Disputation*, Freddoso makes a strong case

for Suárez's "repeated insistence on the intimate connection between metaphysics and theology" (p. xxi). In recognizing the distinction between revealed theology and metaphysics, Suárez was in continuity with the earlier Scholastic tradition. A distinction in method, though, in no way negates the common pursuit of wisdom shared by both theology and metaphysics. Moreover, Suárez makes clear that his "ultimate aim in writing the *Disputationes Metaphysicae* is theological" (p. xviii).

Freddoso, of course, is aware that in writing the *Metaphysical Disputations*, Suárez *did* part company with the earlier commentarial approach used by Scholastic theologians and philosophers. I am less inclined than Freddoso, however, to look upon the *Disputationes Metaphysicae* as Suárez's "own well-ordered, extensive and creative commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*" (xvii). As José Pereira has noted, the *Disputationes* represent "the first modern treatment of metaphysics not written as a commentary on Aristotle. . . . Suárez imposes his own order on the entire work, on the principal and subordinate themes, on their outlines and details" (cf. "John of St. Thomas and Suárez," *Acta Philosophica* 4 [1995]: 118). If Freddoso understands "commentary" in a very broad sense, then his analysis is acceptable—but certainly not in the strict sense.

Freddoso likewise claims that the first twenty-three volumes of Suárez's collected works were meant to be "an extensive and creative commentary on St. Thomas's *Summa theologiae*" (p. xvii). It is true that in his early writings Suárez follows the commentarial method. For example, *De Incarnatione* (1590–1592) is, in fact, a commentary on the third part of the *Summa theologiae*. After writing the *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, however, Suárez abandoned the commentarial method—even in his theological writings. In later and posthumously published works such as *De religione* (1608–1625), *De gratia* (1619), and *De angelis* (1620), Suárez becomes a monographer rather than a commentator, choosing to deal with specific topics in a treatise or monograph form.

Since Aristotle and Aquinas are well-known historical figures for students of philosophy, it is certainly useful to situate Suárez's thought in reference to them. A careful reading of *Disputations* 20–22, however, reveals Suárez to be his own thinker. Only in the most general sense can the great Jesuit be understood as a "commentator" on Aristotle and Aquinas. As Freddoso himself notes, Suárez found the arrangement of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* to be "disorderly" (p. xvii). And although Suárez cites Aquinas with respect, he does not hesitate to depart from the Angelic Doctor on specific points (such as the real distinction between essence and existence; cf. p. liii).

The actual contents of *Disputations* 20–22 deal with some of the most important topics of metaphysics. Efficient causality in creation is the

major theme in number 20. Suárez is not content with examining things only as they are; he also seeks to understand “whether it can be known by natural reason whether any being is possible or even necessary” (pp. 2ff.). Likewise, he inquires as to whether the power to create demands “an infinite power of acting” (pp. 25ff.) and “whether there can be an instrument of creation” (pp. 55ff.). Further investigations are made as to “whether creation is distinct from the creature” (pp. 65ff.) and “whether a newness of being belongs to the nature of creation” (pp. 93ff.).

In *Disputation 20*, Suárez manifests certain themes that will prove to be central to his metaphysics (especially in *Disputations 29–31*), viz., the distinction between created and uncreated being (*ens creatum et increatum*) and the distinction between dependent and independent being (*ens ab alio and ens a se*).

Disputation 21 investigates the nature of divine concurrence and whether “created beings always depend for their *esse* on the actual influence of the first cause” (pp. 108ff.). The distinction between conservation and creation is also pursued (pp. 121ff.) along with the question “whether things depend for their conservation on God alone” (pp. 130ff.).

Disputation 22 enters into the topic of divine cooperation or concurrence with secondary causes. Section 4 deals with one of the most subtle issues of philosophy and theology, namely, “how does God give His concurrence to secondary causes” (pp. 216ff.). The matter is most crucial with respect to free agents since the questions of divine foreknowledge, free will, and responsibility are all implicated. Freddoso, as a translator of Molina, is cognizant of the historical controversies surrounding these issues, and he judiciously refrains from any judgment as to the coherence of the respective Thomist and Jesuit systems. Nevertheless, he does describe Suárez’s proposal in *Disputation 22.4.13–39* as “ingenious” (p. cxviii). God’s concurrence is applied not only to the acts that the free creature chooses but also to other possible acts that are not chosen. The theological inference therefore follows: “God also wills to give sufficient grace to those He foreknows will not make good use of such grace, in order that they might be absolutely capable of making good use of such grace” (DM 22.4.39; p. 237).

With this present volume, a total of 16 of the 54 *Metaphysical Disputations* of Suárez have now been completely published in English translations going back to 1947 (i.e., 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 28, 29, 31, and 54; also part of 23). Freddoso notes that Suárez’s “stature among Catholic thinkers was recently enhanced by the explicit and laudatory mention of the *Disputationes Metaphysicae* in Pope John Paul II’s encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (1998), number 62. This is true, but Suárez has also been

cited as an authoritative source by previous popes, including Benedict XIV (Denz.-Hün, ★2567) and Pius XII (Denz.-Hün. ★3914). Moreover, Pope Paul V (r. 1605–1621) bestowed upon Suárez the title of *Doctor Eximius* (the Exceptional or Uncommon Doctor) as a sign of his esteem for the great Jesuit.

A number of factors can be offered to explain the eclipse of Suárez's thought during the latter half of the twentieth century. These need not concern us here. It is more important to highlight the significant contribution made by Professor Freddoso in this present volume, a contribution not only to historical research but also to Catholic philosophy in its most profound expression—the science of being known as metaphysics. N V

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Characters in Search of Their Author: The Gifford Lectures, Glasgow, 1999–2000 by Ralph McInerny (*Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000*) xii + 138 pp.

IN HIS WILL, Adam Lord Gifford of Scotland (d. 1887) provided for the founding of an annual lecture series at Scottish universities treating “the true knowledge of God.” The Gifford lectures rapidly became one of the foremost events in the field of natural theology and religion. Ralph McInerny recently joined the esteemed list of Gifford lecturers when, in Glasgow from October 26, 1999 to February 22, 2000, he delivered ten lectures exemplifying Lord Gifford's intention that they be “intelligible to an educated but non-professional audience.” Published under the title *Characters in Search of Their Author*, these lectures are a propaedeutic to natural theology rather than proofs of God's existence and pure perfections. Customarily, Gifford lecturers produce a more technical volume after the published lectures. McInerny's follow-up tome, *Praeambula Fidei*, will soon be issued by University of Notre Dame Press.

In his lectures McInerny sets out to remove the obstacles currently impeding natural theology. He admits that his is a modest task, but it is one of fundamental importance and superbly executed. He provides a sound response to recent arguments leveled against natural theology—perhaps the most impressive of which issue from the pervasive atheism and nihilistic relativism currently dominating the philosophical scene. Representatives of this camp include Nicholas Everitt, Michael Martin, and Wallace A. Murphee among others. But McInerny also counters arguments against natural theology proposed by believers in God, such as

Kierkegaard, who think it impossible or unseemly to prove God's existence. With these lectures, Dr. McNerny takes pride of place among the other recent defenders of the human capacity to know truth and to prove the existence of God such as Alvin Plantinga and R. Douglas Geivett (author of *Contemporary Perspectives on Religious Epistemology*).

The first five lectures, "Whatever Happened to Natural Theology," address several weighty objections to natural theology. Against those who would invalidate the efforts of believers to prove the existence of God on the grounds that they presuppose the conclusion of their inquiry, McNerny observes that everyone—believer or not—has some antecedent suppositions when approaching the question of God's existence. He shows that convictions of faith in God not only fail to impede natural theology, but give the believer a tremendous advantage over the non-believer in philosophical inquiry. Religious belief does indeed influence philosophizing, but the truth known by the light of faith illumines and perfects the natural reasoning of the Christian philosopher since both supernatural and natural truth have the same source in God, the First Truth. This is McNerny's understanding of "Christian philosophy." In any event, all arguments—regardless of the antecedent convictions of their proponents—are able to be assessed by criteria independent of these antecedent attitudes, and McNerny promises to demonstrate this assertion in his forthcoming *Praeambula Fidei*.

McNerny traces the progressive degeneration of philosophy from Descartes to the present. He notes that both Cornelius Fabro and Kierkegaard, for different reasons, perceived a latent atheism in the Cartesian turn. Since the modern epistemological turn, "our mind's contribution becomes increasingly dominant and defining of reality" (20). Things as they are independent of our thinking them are considered, eventually, non-existent. Ultimately no assertion is true or false. "As Fabro has argued . . . something begins with Descartes that has atheism as its logical consequence. That consequence has now been drawn. It should be obvious that theists would be unwise to seek to state their case in terms of philosophies that are essentially atheistic. But theologians, alas, irrepressibly attempt this, as witness their odd fondness for Heidegger" (28). McNerny joins Kierkegaard in refuting modern theology "root and branch."

McNerny responds to the assumptions of the "regnant nihilism" and its attendant relativizing of truth in classical form by reproducing Aristotle's *reductio* against sophists who would deny the principle of non-contradiction. He asserts that our knowledge and language "are of reality" and that language is ordered to knowledge and knowledge to the real. "Whether or no contemporary nihilists accept consistency . . . it is

by reflection on the basis of consistency, the principle of contradiction, that one regains a correct understanding of the relation between words and thought and things in themselves. Once that has been reestablished, natural theology becomes a possibility" (56).

In the last five lectures, "The Recovery of Natural Theology," McNerny both addresses the subjectivity of Kierkegaard and Newman and re-establishes the conditions for natural theology. Kierkegaard rejects purely theoretical knowing and reduces all understanding to practical, subjective, existential knowing. For him, then, the existence of God cannot be proven. One must live as though God exists in order to arrive at a subjective, inward knowledge of his existence. McNerny upholds Kierkegaard's denial that the *mysteria fidei*, such as the Trinity or the Incarnation, are susceptible to proof. But he counters Kierkegaard's denial of the proofs for God's existence and the other *praeambula fidei*. While both are revealed, the *praeambula* are also knowable by unaided reason, whereas the *mysteria* are not.

Newman, in his *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, predicates the illative sense of all reasoning, practical or theoretical. He identifies this sense with Aristotelian "phronesis" or prudence: the . . . virtue that guides judgment in matters of conduct. McNerny argues that Newman's universal extension of practical judgment over the whole range of thought fails to account adequately for theoretical truth: the conformity of mind to the real. Only practical reasoning, as the conformity of the mind to rectified appetite, has production as its end.

Though he may initially seem to reprove Kierkegaard and Newman for baldly asserting God's existence, McNerny interprets these great Christian thinkers more benignly, claiming that neither are discussing, strictly speaking, natural theology. Kierkegaard, in fact, denies the very possibility of natural theology and his subsequent reflections occur under a different rubric: the leap of faith. For Kierkegaard, only a subjective assertion of personal faith in God is possible. And Newman, in his *Apologia*, is recounting and defending his conversion from Anglicanism to Catholicism, not the beginning of his belief in God.

In lecture nine, "That God Exists," McNerny laudably sails against the stream of a good deal of neo-Thomist thought on the *prima via*. He contends: "Obviously the proof from motion has to be understood in its own terms and, I suggest, when it is, the proof clearly works" (115). With St. Thomas, McNerny understands the proof of the Prime Mover as the capstone of physics. In this proof, "motion" is to be understood physically instead of metaphysically or existentially. Instead of a detailed exegesis and defense of this proof, this lecture responds to the common objection that Aristotle's physics is obsolete by upholding Aristotle's analysis of

change and his definition of motion.

In his final lecture, "Faith and Reason," McNerny portrays his project as a deliberate response to Pope John Paul II's request in *Fides et Ratio* for Catholic philosophers once again to "verify the human capacity to know the truth, to come to a knowledge which can reach objective truth by means of that *adaequatio rei et intellectus* to which the Scholastic doctors referred." (*Fides et Ratio*, no. 82). In response to the current philosophical malaise, it now ironically falls to believing philosophers to defend reason's ability to know the truth in order to defend the faith. McNerny's survey of the movement of modern and contemporary philosophy away from God and Christian revelation complements that of the Holy Father in *Fides et Ratio*, nos. 45–48: "The Drama of the Separation of Faith and Reason." With the Holy Father, McNerny confronts the pervasive contemporary crisis in philosophy (see *Fides et Ratio*, no. 83). But perhaps unlike the Holy Father, McNerny, following Fabro, sees idealism, rationalism, and nihilism as more or less a direct consequence of Descartes's untoward subjective turn and his undue rejection of his philosophical predecessors—a practice which has since become commonplace.

In his Gifford lectures, McNerny succeeds in removing obstacles impeding natural theology by redressing nihilistic relativism and the modern turn to the subject. This collection is highly recommended for the well educated non-expert as well as for natural and fundamental theologians and their students. The lectures are simple enough to be grasped by the astute undergraduate, yet profound in their penetration of first principles and their implications for thought and reality. **N V**

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Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary

by Luke Timothy Johnson (*New York: Crossroad, 1997*) xii + 224 pp.

THIS SERIES of literary commentaries, of which Charles Talbert has been general editor, has had a rather long life span compared to other similar efforts. It has provided students of the New Testament with helpful overviews of various New Testament books, guiding them to gain a sense of the narrative flow of a work and its overall scope and character. Luke Johnson's recent contribution to the series is a welcome addition, especially as it draws on the insights he has gained from many years of teaching Romans. But this brief work is not merely Johnson's lecture notes put into a palatable form. It is clear enough that he has done a good deal of

reading and interacting with other scholars on the many dimensions of Romans, a book that has produced more scholarly response than any other work from that period of antiquity.

One of the first things one notices about the book is that Johnson states very forthrightly in the preface that this study will reflect the impact made by both mentors and peers during his years at Yale. It is thus a work indebted at various points to Wayne Meeks, Abraham Malherbe, Nils Dahl, and peers like Richard Hays, Stanley Stowers, and Steven Kraftchick. Among other things this means that Johnson is full cognizant of the recent discussions about the social setting of Paul's letters, about the theology of Paul discussions that went on for many years in a Society of Biblical Literature seminar, and about "the faith of Jesus Christ," a phrase that Johnson takes to mean what Hays has suggested it meant—not faith in Christ, but rather the faithfulness of Christ. Thus one discovers that this reading of Romans by Johnson does indeed produce various fresh insights, eschewing some of the well-trodden paths of Catholic and Protestant exegesis. Johnson, however, admits that his penchant to choose a both/and solution to an exegetical dilemma to a notable crux (e.g., who is the "I" in Romans 7) probably does reflect his own Catholic heritage.

In a review of this scope it is only possible to list a few of Johnson's insights and conclusions. First, Johnson rejects the notion that Romans is some sort of dogmatic treatise or summary of Paul's greatest theological hits. He believes the book to be written for very practical reasons—Paul wants the support of the Roman Christians for his ensuing missionary work in the west and he also wants their prayer support for his current mission which involves taking the collection to the church in Jerusalem. To these ends Paul has sent Phoebe as his agent to Rome with the letter to organize and gather support for the further missionary work in the west. Underlying the letter is a concern that Jew and Gentile be united in Christ, which in the case of Rome means that Paul must address an overwhelmingly Gentile audience and convince them of, among other things, the fact that God has not replaced his Jewish people with a Gentile one, for God still has plans for his Jewish people in the future (see Rom 9–11). The good news is for the Jew first and also for the Gentile, and so Gentile Christian hubris must be curbed.

One of the most refreshing parts of this work is that Johnson brings to his reading of it an awareness that Romans has rhetorical dimensions which shape the way Paul argues throughout, but at the same time Johnson balances his interest in the literary aspects of Romans with a helpful discussion of its theological substance. Like many others, Johnson takes Rom 1:16–17 to be the thesis statement (or *propositio*) of the entire docu-

ment and as such it announces the theme of a salvation that is universal in scope in that it is for all peoples, but particularistic in that it comes to all through both faith in Christ and the faithfulness of Christ. Johnson takes a both/ and approach to the phrase *dikaiosune tou theou* as well—it refers to the righteous character of God but it also refers to the righteous and just work God intends to do in fulfilling his promises to redeem. Romans does indeed answer the questions. Is God impartial or is he unjust? Has he abandoned those he made promises to in the Old Testament era? Paul's answer is of course that God has not abandoned his first chosen people, but what he has done is that in Christ he has set up a new basis of relating to all—so that salvation for all is on the basis of mercy and grace on God's part and faith in Christ on our part.

Johnson handles well the intertextual dimensions of Romans, with its many echoes and allusions to the Old Testament. This proliferation of allusions in Romans reflects Paul's rhetorical strategy to integrate his Gentile audience into the storied world of God's people and make them recognize their indebtedness to their Jewish heritage.

Johnson clearly distances himself from the older Lutheran and Augustinian approaches to the interpretation of Romans 7. He argues that this material in Rom. 7 is not autobiographical, either about Paul when he was a Jew or about Paul as a Christian. Rather it is the perspective of one who serves God freely in the Spirit, who adopts the persona of one who is struggling with sin and/or the law. Paul's point is that submission to the Law could not be an adequate basis for relating to God. One had to have faith in Christ. Indeed the effect of the Law on a fallen person can be death-dealing rather than life-giving. Paul believes that the Mosaic covenant has had its day and ceased to be. From henceforth, there is a new covenant, and it would be anachronistic to go back and submit to the Law in the eschatological age. In short, as Galatians already suggested, Paul takes a salvation historical view of the Law. It was and is a good thing, but it was intended to superintend God's people until Christ came (see Gal 4).

Johnson's treatment of Rom 9–11 makes clear that he is no Calvinist. He affirms of course that Paul is talking about election, but not, says Johnson the election of individuals to eternal salvation or damnation. There is a sort of corporate election in Christ, as previously there was in Israel, and there is also election language used to discuss God's use of particular individuals like Pharaoh in human history for various purposes. It is the latter that Johnson emphasizes: "the fate of these historical individuals is not the point. . . . God's loving Jacob is the election of the people of Israel to play a certain historical role without reference to the salvation or blessedness of Jacob the person" (p. 160).

There are many more worthwhile insights, but we must draw this review to a close. Perhaps the clearest endorsement I can give of this work is that I look forward to using it in my own classes on the exegesis of Romans. It should prove a good guide to this most famous of all Pauline letters for a long time to come. N.V.

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Your Word is Truth: A Project of Evangelicals and Catholics Together edited by Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus (*Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002*) 168 pp.

ROMAN CATHOLIC theologians who are aware of the trends in the popular Catholic literature and speaking circuits of the past decade might expect a work billed as “A Project of Evangelicals and Catholics Together” to be as uncomfortable as a seat between antagonists at a dinner party. Discovering that “the relationship between Scripture and tradition” is the only item on the menu might increase this discomfort sufficiently to prompt the faint of heart to decline the invitation (vii). For most of the ordinary devout, the new(est) apologetics have solved this issue one-sidedly in favor of the Catholic approach; for some Catholic theologians or students of theology, a personal commitment to that answer makes such a discussion seem irrelevant for any but the most uncritical and/or ecumenically sentimental. One can only imagine that such is the same on the Evangelical side of the fence.

Yet reading only a few pages of *Your Word is Truth* is enough to turn both disdain and discomfort into eager attention, and to stand ordinary theological prejudices on their heads. The depth of insight in the essays collected in this volume is distinguished by an all-too-rare pairing of virtues: theological astuteness and ecumenical charity. In regard to the first, the volume justifies the reputations of the distinguished Evangelical and Catholic theologians who dutifully and diligently entered the discussion. In regard to the second, every individual contribution justifies, from page to page, the frequent assertions of an earnest and common desire for unity *in the truth* which permeate the joint statement that begins it (1–8).

This statement (which shares the name of the volume) is itself an excellent summary of the individual essays which follow it, all of which are devoted to some aspect of the nature or the transmission of divine revelation. Therefore, in considering the individual papers I will follow the advice of the editors and read them in relation to the statement

(vii–viii), using the latter as a guide and an ordering principle for the evaluation of the former.

Regarding the nature of revelation, the statement proclaims a unity of faith in the fundamental nature of God's self-disclosure as being a unity of deeds and words—"a sequence of revelatory and redemptive acts that involved the uttering of verbal messages and the producing of written records" (2). It also professes a unity in belief in the fullness and finality of God's revelation through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit "in these last days" (Heb 1:1) (2). This is borne out in all the essays, which bear not the slightest taint of modern skepticism regarding God's Word. This common reverence seems to be the very medium which allows for the mutual openness demonstrated by the contributors, all of whom seem aware that this is not always to be presupposed in the contemporary scene of biblical scholarship.

The statement begins the list of differences between Catholics and Evangelicals with the distinction between the Evangelical and Catholic conceptions of the Church (2–3). It seems to this reader that this difference is the most pivotal in the essays to follow. In fact, the dilemma of Scripture and tradition discussed in *Your Word is Truth* could be presented as an ecclesiological dilemma: Is the Church a congregation of distinct receptors of the Word of God joined by this reception and the salvation it offers? Or is the Church one mystical receptor whose reception is primarily that of the living presence of Christ the Head in the Church his body?

Notions of the Christian community, both Evangelical and Catholic, are ubiquitous in *Your Word is Truth*. It could be argued that the greatest service the volume offers is to make Catholic notions of Evangelicalism more three-dimensional and vice versa. Interestingly, this is achieved more through the unself-conscious way in which the authors examine and describe the approach of their own communities to God's Word in life and worship than by any argumentation which occurs.

In this regard three papers stand out. The first, "The Bible in Use: Evangelicals Seeking Truth from Holy Scripture" by J.I. Packer, is an adept explanation of the historical development of the Evangelical heritage and its relationship to Scripture. While this paper includes the most vigorous defense of the Evangelical approach to Scripture, Packer does not fail to also include much courageous denominational self-correction, especially of "evangelical isolation from the mainstream Christian heritage of Bible-based theology and wisdom over two millennia" (77). It is in this article that the contrast between Catholicism and Evangelical life and congregational organization most stands out to the

Catholic reader, especially in references to things such as “missional strategies” formed through “the agency of parachurch institutions and networks which, with their international links, correspond more and more to the multinationals of the business world” (61). However daunting, this and other descriptions of Evangelicalism by Packer fit the work nicely, precisely because they help to frame the more doctrinal differences that are being investigated.

John Woodbridge’s “The Role of ‘Tradition’ in the Life and Thought of Twentieth-Century Evangelicals” goes even further toward helping Catholics understand the role of Church (and therefore, in some way, “tradition”) in the understanding of God’s Word in contemporary Evangelicalism. What Packer offers to a sociological understanding is inflected by Woodbridge’s explanation of the differences in how to conceive of the relationship of Scripture and tradition that exist among those various groups broadly identified as “Evangelical,” including non-confessional and confessional varieties, as well as Pentecostalism (129–143). He concludes that such differences exhibit that while remaining critical of “‘Tradition’ if it is defined as an unwritten revelation of God equal in authority to Holy Scripture,” “Evangelicals have been influenced by traditions or have created traditions themselves” (143).

Finally, the masterful concluding paper by Father Francis Martin titled “Reading Scripture in the Catholic Tradition” does for describing the lived experience of a Catholic approach to God’s Word what Packer and Woodbridge do for the same in the Evangelical experience. Describing the monastic approach to Scripture in chant and the common prayer of the Psalms almost as an icon of the Catholic understanding of the centrality of Scripture (148–150), Martin offers (it seems, at least, from the outside) a beautiful and compelling resonance with the devotional primacy of the Bible in Evangelicalism. On the basis of this, Martin then proceeds to reveal the philosophical issue that aggravates the separation between Catholics and Evangelicals on the issue—the absence of a “hermeneutics of trust” and “disclosure” characterized by a notion that Scripture read in faith “*makes present* that which it speaks about” (155–156). It seems to this reader that Martin connects the historical crisis of the beginning of Evangelicalism with the contemporary crisis of Catholic scholarly exegesis by showing them to be (a) cut from the same cloth of suspicion, and (b) contrary to the best instincts of *both* traditions.

The implicit ecclesiological dilemma mentioned above can be seen in the most striking section of the statement, which is a mutual admission of the misunderstandings of the relation of Scripture and tradition in the wider Evangelical and Catholic communities (4–5). The first, offered by

the Evangelical signers, is the rejection of the widespread interpretation of *sola scriptura as nuda scriptura*—"literally, Scripture unclothed, that is, denuded of and abstracted from its *churchly context*" (4)—in other words, the rejection of a notion of the Church that is thoroughly extrinsic to revelation. In the case of the Catholic signers, the misunderstanding of some Catholics that the centrality of the Church relativizes revelation is rejected through the rejection of a two-source conception of revelation that would make tradition "a parallel and independent source of authoritative teaching" (5).

This affirmation of the primacy of Scripture and "the coinherence of Scripture and tradition" (5) receives its finest expression in the paper of Father Thomas G. Guarino titled "Catholic Reflections on Discerning the Truth of Sacred Scripture." Through a careful historical analysis, Guarino explains the potentially misleading expression of the Council of Trent in which "unwritten traditions" seem to be placed on a par with "the written books" of the Bible (82–89). In fact, Catholics can (and, it seems, should) interpret passages in Trent and Vatican II by the term *sola scriptura* (93). And yet, as Guarino illustrates in a masterful way by comparing the Church's declaration of the divinity of the Holy Spirit to the papal definition of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, this does not mean that the primacy of Scripture should be enshrined in a rigidly abstract formulation that does not allow the development of doctrine (96–101).

Guarino's excellent analysis is amply substantiated in the paper offered by Avery Cardinal Dulles titled "Revelation, Scripture and Tradition," in which Cardinal Dulles, in his incomparable style, gives a revealing look at the *status quaestionis* in the light of *Dei Verbum* and in recent theology and ecumenical activity before and since the Council. Indeed, these two papers together could be amplified into an entire course in the development of the Catholic doctrine of revelation.

Yet the most compelling paper in this regard, and indeed the most significant paper in *Your Word is Truth*, is the opening paper by Timothy George, "An Evangelical Reflection on Scripture and Tradition." All of the contributions represent authors willing to thoroughly examine their own respective traditions, yet it is George who looks most searchingly and penetratingly at both notions of Scripture and tradition. Therefore, it is not surprising that his contribution offers the most promising insights for future engagement and authentic ecumenical development.

Of his own tradition, George concludes that Evangelicals can "speak meaningfully of the coinherence of Scripture and Tradition" (16) if they wish to continue to speak with the Reformers, who "saw themselves as

part of the ongoing Catholic tradition” in three particular ways: “their sense of continuity with the Church of the preceding centuries; their embrace of the ecumenical orthodoxy of the early Church; their desire to read the Bible in dialogue with the exegetical tradition of the Church” (16). Using the doctrine of justification by faith alone as his main example, George finds in the efforts of the Reformers to substantiate this belief a truly Catholic engagement of what Melchior Cano would later call the *loci theologici* (17–19). He therefore concludes that by *sola scriptura* Evangelicals should not mean trying to “open the New Testament as if mortal man had never seen it before,” which could only result in “raucous cacophony” rather than “exegetical polyphony” (20).

Of the Catholic tradition, George receives with remarkable trust (in a compelling example of what we have already seen Martin referring to as a “hermeneutics of trust”) the significant theological developments of the latter half of the twentieth century in the Church’s notion of Tradition as its very life and consciousness. Leaning heavily on George Tavard’s *Holy Writ or Holy Church*, he approaches *Dei Verbum* in a way strongly appreciative of the “more liberated understanding of Tradition” that it requires (25). He rounds out his consideration by exploring some related issues such as canonicity, inerrancy, proclamation, and doctrinal development, showing both points of contact and divergences with equal candor and balance (25–32). Finally, he exegetes certain passages from *Dei Verbum* that are troublesome to Evangelicals, and concludes that only one constitutes “an insuperable barrier between Catholics and Evangelicals”: namely that “both sacred tradition and sacred Scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of loyalty and reverence (*DV* 9)” (34). Given his remarkable openness to searching for points of contact as well as his willingness to criticize malformations of his own tradition, George’s reduction of the entire issue to whether or not Scripture and sacred Tradition are coequal and not simply coinherent seems justified in its precision.

Your Word is Truth can only be faulted for lacking total comprehensiveness, which was hardly a necessary scope to impose on its contributors. One might hope for more discussion of individual sources in the Catholic tradition in a discussion that rightly focuses on misinterpretations of Trent. In this regard Thomas Aquinas, with his own *sola scriptura* doctrine (“*sola canonica scriptura est regula fidei*”—*In Ioannem* 21.6.2656), would seem to be a prime candidate for consideration.

Yet it almost seems trite to make such a remark when referring to *Your Word is Truth*. It is a model of truly fruitful ecumenical discussion. In this regard, perhaps one of the future projects for the contributors to this

volume (who are all part of an ongoing project called “Evangelicals and Catholics Together”) would be to compose a joint statement on the method and spirit of dialogue they employ, so that other ecumenical enterprises can benefit from the example of their excellent approach. **N.V.**

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