

Book Reviews

Saint Thomas Aquinas, Volume 2: Spiritual Master by Jean-Pierre Torrell OP, translated by Robert Royal (*Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003*), xiv + 422 pp.

EVEN THE GREATEST of authors are read through the lenses which we receive from education and cultural background. Once modern theology separated academic reflection from spiritual research, this separation has often been applied to a reading of St. Thomas Aquinas. Recent generations of thinkers have underscored the philosophical, metaphysical, or logical value of St. Thomas Aquinas's doctrine, but readers who know how to find spiritual nourishment therein have been much more rare, to the point that the words "scholastic" or "Thomist" have sometimes been used to refer to purely formal thought lacking in spiritual impact. Yet such a dichotomy spells the ruin of theology, and deprives spirituality of its essential foundation. Among their many other qualities, the important publications of Fr. Jean-Pierre Torrell have the great merit of helping us to rediscover the unity of the project of Christian wisdom which St. Thomas Aquinas developed. Unless this integral aim is recognized, the reading of the works of St. Thomas is severed from the profound purpose which animates them. This integral conception of wisdom is indispensable to the vocation of the Christian theologian.

In the first volume of his introduction to St. Thomas (*Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Works*), whose English translation was published in 1996, Jean-Pierre Torrell presented the historical, intellectual, and spiritual portrait of the man who was Friar Thomas. This historical portrait, which has quickly become a classic reference work, was nevertheless only the first leaf of a diptych. In the second volume, Fr. Torrell not only offers a remarkable exposition of the riches of Thomistic spirituality, but also shows the way to an authentic renewal of Thomistic theology and perhaps even to the renewal of theology itself. Here the word "spirituality" should not be understood as referring to a teaching which focuses directly on the rules of concrete human action

in all its particular conditions, since, although he wrote extensively on human action and the Christian life, St. Thomas did not compose any treatises on spirituality in the (modern) sense in which the term is most often understood today. The “spirituality” which we find in his writings consists in a knowledge which, while directing action, remains speculative on account of its end and of the generality of the foundations which it establishes: This knowledge is “speculatively practical” (20). On this basis, Fr. Torrell attractively and convincingly reveals the spiritual doctrine contained in the theological works of St. Thomas: in his theological syntheses and his scriptural commentaries, as well as in his other commentaries and his various occasional writings. It is at the heart of Thomas’s theological enterprise that his spiritual teaching is discovered. Of course, such a reading presupposes that theology itself be understood as a theological school of life on the road leading to the beatific vision (ch. 1). The reading which Fr. Torrell proposes consists in extracting and recognizing the value of the spirituality “implicit” in the theological works of Thomas.

This book constitutes a veritable initiation, an invitation to read St. Thomas: In each section, the reader can sample numerous texts which are quoted abundantly and introduced with precision but simplicity, avoiding superfluous technicality (the notes, which refer the reader to abundant research sources, make it easy to pursue the ideas further). This book introduces us to numerous and often little-known passages drawn from St. Thomas’s commentaries on Holy Scripture, renewing our approach to Thomistic theology. The major themes of his spiritual doctrine, divided up into fifteen chapters, are grouped into two principal sections: “A Trinitarian Spirituality” (Part I), and “Man in the World and Before God” (Part II). It is hardly possible to summarize such a rich work, but, as an incentive to reading it, we should mention the deeply Trinitarian vein in Thomas’s spirituality, which Fr. Torrell highlights beautifully in the chapters consecrated to the central place of the Son (ch. V and VI: “The Way, the Truth, and the Life,” “The Image of the First-Born Son”) and of the Holy Spirit (ch. VII–IX: “To Speak of the Holy Spirit,” “The Heart of the Church,” “The Master of the Interior Life”) in the life of believers. It is a commonplace today to say that the medieval West had forgotten the Holy Spirit and neglected Trinitarian faith: yet exactly the contrary must be affirmed about St. Thomas. The book also highlights the important place in Thomas’s thought occupied by a theme dear to the Eastern Fathers: the “divinization” of man, that is, his conformation to God, to the image of the Son, through the grace of the Holy Spirit. In following the path proposed by Fr. Torrell, one can

therefore perceive that, for Thomas, the realism of an “objective” spirituality completely centered on the Triune God is inseparable from a deeply positive outlook on the substance of the created world, on the dignity of secular activities, and on the dignity of the human person (ch. XIII: “The Most Noble Thing in the World”), leading to an authentic spirituality of communion.

This is no ordinary book; it is not merely one more work of theology or spirituality among others. Rather, Fr. Torrell successfully proposes a profound rediscovery: St. Thomas “is not only a thinker and a master of thinking, but a master of living” (21). The consequences of this rediscovery are of the highest importance, as much for theology as for spirituality. It must be emphasized that we are not dealing here with a spiritual doctrine developed *alongside* theological research, but with a profound spirituality which we discover *at the very heart* of St. Thomas’s theology. This theology truly embodies a spiritual or mystical dimension. It is not called spiritual or mystical because it rationalistically separates theology from spirituality, as was done at the end of the middle ages and in the course of modern times. Rather, St. Thomas’s theology is mystical because it is grounded in a properly speculative (that is, contemplative) approach to the mystery of the Trinity and of the Incarnate Word of God. **N-V**

Gilles Emery, OP
University of Fribourg
Fribourg, Switzerland

Knowing the Love of Christ: An Introduction to the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas by Michael Dauphinais and Matthew Levering (*Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002*), 146 pp.

IN MOST LIBRARIES the works of Thomas Aquinas are classified with the philosophy books. This classification strikes me as a mistake because St. Thomas would undoubtedly have considered himself to be above all else a theologian. The philosophers seem to have captured the literature on St. Thomas, perhaps because Leo XIII in his encyclical *Aeterni Patris* directed that philosophy be taught in Catholic institutions according to the spirit and method of Thomas Aquinas.

At any event, it is a fortunate development of our day that theologians are beginning to reclaim the greatest representative of their discipline. Several recent studies of the Angelic Doctor have concentrated on his theology. In accordance with this trend it is fitting to have a brief new introduction designed to initiate students into the sacred doctrine of the *Doctor communis*.

Knowing the Love of Christ is a compact summary, following in its main lines the order of the *Summa theologiae*. Beginning with the triune God, it passes through creation, salvation history, and the supreme gift of the Incarnation, which sets mankind on its course of return, via the Church and the sacraments, to the eternal vision of the triune God. This overview has the great advantages of emphasizing the mystery of the triune God as the beginning and end of all reality, and of exhibiting Christ as the center of the “economy” whereby God acts in history. The present survey can be useful not only to beginners but to scholars already familiar with St. Thomas. Many of us concentrate so much on individual questions that we fail to see the woods for the trees.

St. Thomas had his own methodological reasons for the order he adopted in the *Summa*, but his preferred order has some disadvantages. Postponing Christ and the Church to the third and last part of the work, he fails to accent the rootedness of grace and of the Christian life in Christ, the Church, and the sacraments. The present abridgement in some respects alleviates this difficulty. Departing from the exact order of the *Summa*, the authors combine the natural and supernatural virtues in a single chapter. After treating the cardinal virtues, they pass immediately to the infused and theological virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Another departure from the order of St. Thomas in this book is the inclusion of some Christological doctrine in the chapter dealing with the New Law and grace. Gratifyingly also, the book concludes with heaven rather than, as the *Supplementum* does, with hell and purgatory.

The present study, while it concentrates on the systematic teaching of the Angelic Doctor, gives considerable attention to his arguments from Holy Scripture. This, likewise, is a distinct merit of the book. Modern readers, thinking of St. Thomas primarily as a philosopher, fail to reckon sufficiently with his reverence for the word of God. Like other mediaeval theologians, he considered that sacred doctrine could draw apodictic arguments only from the word of God in the canonical Scriptures, interpreted according to the literal sense (*ST*, I, q. 1, a. 8, ad 2; I, q. 1, a. 10, ad 1).

Helpful explanations are provided in this book for technical terms such as efficient, final, and exemplary cause. In some cases the authors substitute less technical terms that will be more accessible to the average reader. To avoid excessive dryness, they introduce literary references to Dante, Kierkegaard, Walker Percy, and others.

The authors have undertaken a difficult task. In presenting the *Summa* as a whole (together with the *Supplementum*), they have tried to omit as little as possible. As a result, the text is densely packed and requires close

and unremitting attention. It does not lend itself to casual reading. Even so, the book often fails to indicate in sufficient detail the argumentation by which St. Thomas reaches his conclusions. In this respect it is less satisfactory than somewhat longer books, for example, the concise translation of the *Summa theologiae* edited by Timothy McDermott, or even St. Thomas's own *Compendium theologiae*. But for readers looking for a readable digest hardly exceeding a hundred pages, and using less forbidding terminology, this may well be the best book to use.

An outline of this sort has genuine value. It can serve as a preview for beginners, lest they get lost in the details and fail to see the major lines of the Thomistic synthesis. It can help veterans to reflect on the rationale that underlies the structure of the *Summa theologiae*. It can help the philosopher to situate the metaphysics of the Angelic Doctor within the larger framework of his sacred doctrine.

For two reasons, I would recommend that this book, useful though it be, should not be used as the sole introduction. In the first place, this summary gives no indication of the historical context in which St. Thomas wrote. For an adequate appreciation of his work, one would benefit from some awareness of the situation of the papacy in the middle of the thirteenth century, the evangelical revival led by the mendicant orders, and the problems raised by the popularity of Aristotle—and Averroistic interpretations of Aristotle—in the universities. The student might profitably be introduced to the variety of literary forms used by St. Thomas—not only his *Summas*, but also his *quaestiones disputatae*, his commentaries on Aristotle, Holy Scripture, and other classic texts. The doctrinal questions of the *Summa theologiae* take on new life when one reads his great eucharistic hymns and learns of his ardent devotion to the Cross. A work such as Marie-Dominique Chenu's *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas* would be a suitable supplement to the book under review.

Secondly, I would regret it if the student were given only the paraphrases in the present work without reading the original, at least in translation. Exposure to the very words of the Angelic Doctor communicates a living sense of his mind and spirit. His technical terms, arid and forbidding as they may be, have a precision that no paraphrase can match. The almost incredible accuracy and synthetic power of St. Thomas, in my opinion, sometimes shine forth in his answers to objections. A brief sentence in an *ad tertium* can transmit a world of wisdom. The professor using this survey would do well to assign selected texts to illustrate how St. Thomas handles particular questions.

Neither of these two suggestions is intended as a negative criticism of the work under review. I mean only to indicate ways in which, I believe,

this valuable introduction could be best serve the purposes for which it is evidently intended. N·V

Avery Cardinal Dulles, SJ
Fordham University
Bronx, New York

Being and Some Twentieth-Century Thomists by John F. X. Knasas
(New York: Fordham University Press, 2003), xxvi + 340 p.

INSPIRED BY THE encyclical *Fides et Ratio* in which John Paul II, as in previous writings, emphasizes the value of a metaphysics based on the act of being (*actus essendi*), John F. X. Knasas intends to “defend the continued vitality of the way of thinking called Existential Thomism found in the writings of Jacques Maritain, Etienne Gilson and Joseph Owens” (xvii). Nevertheless, this study is not a mere repetition of their insights, but offers his own synthesis based on a series of previously published articles. At the same time it can be regarded as a sequel to his *Preface to Thomistic Metaphysics*.

Chapter 1 (“Whither the Neo-Thomist Revival?”) divides Thomism after *Aeterni Patris* (1879) into two major currents: Neo-Thomism as the main pre-Vatican II current and Transcendental Thomism, the “dark horse candidate of the larger Thomistic Revival” (18). The chapter serves as an historical introduction as well as a framework or background for the following discussions. “Aristotelian Thomism” (Weisheipl, Wallace, et al.) and “Existential Thomism,” the two schools of interpretation within Neo-Thomism, share characteristics such as a posteriori reasoning, abstraction of commonalities, analogical concepts, the transcendentals, and the existence (*de jure*) of a single fundamental science of the real as the foundation for theology. Aristotelian Thomism regards the formal act of changeable hylomorphic substance as the most fundamental understanding of being, while Existential Thomism stresses the importance of the existential act as a deeper level of understanding how a substance is existing. Transcendental Thomism, initiated by J. Maréchal and based on an a priori intellectual dynamism, attracted post-Vatican II philosophers and theologians, who faulted Neo-Thomism for a naive realism, an ahistorical and abstract metaphysics distanced from the God of Christian belief, and, as a consequence, a separation of nature and grace. The author defends Neo-Thomism against the charge of alleged weaknesses.

In Chapter 2 (“Sensation as the Source of Science”) Knasas insists that metaphysics cannot start with the recognition that being is something separate from matter and motion. The subject of metaphysics is rather the

product of abstraction (*abstraction totius*, according to his reading of chapters 2 and 3 of *De Ente et Essentia*). He therefore opposes Transcendental Thomism, which argues for an a priori dynamism of the human intellect that reveals God as the condition for our consciousness of things.

Since this a posteriori approach has been criticized since Descartes' dream possibility, Chapter 3 ("Sensation: The Invasion of the Real") defends Aquinas's immediate realism by arguing that his understanding of knowledge as a formal reception of form (against the Cartesian notion of two-sided ideas) reveals a level of awareness in which the object is simply something real.

At a further level of reflection one needs to validate the objectivity of one's concepts, especially the vague meaning of being as "something real." Again, the background of Chapter 4 ("The Objectivity of the Notion of Being") is provided by Transcendental Thomists like Maréchal and Rahner who argue that Aquinas validates the objectivity of concepts using the method of retorsion. On the basis of an examination of the texts of Aquinas being used to substantiate this claim, Knasas critiques both the position of Transcendental Thomism and Maritain's critical realism.

The following chapter ("The Richness of the *Ratio Entis*") suggests that analogy, understood as "sameness-within-difference," is the best tool to deal intellectually with reality. Knasas here argues against Ralph McInerny's view that analogy is only a logical doctrine. Rather, for Knasas analogical predication has a metaphysical basis. Knasas then turns to the view, articulated by J.-M. Le Blond and numerous others, that human concepts remain asymptotic to reality. He argues that this view fails to distinguish between "precise" and "nonprecise" abstraction as developed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 6 ("*Actus Essendi*") engages the *actus essendi* of a thing, relying on Joseph Owens's method of distinguishing between the second operation of the intellect that grasps the *esse* of a thing and the activity of forming propositions. In the view of this reviewer, however, Knasas insufficiently distinguishes between *esse* as actual existence and *esse* as the intrinsic act of being (*actus essendi*).

In Chapter 7 ("*Esse Subsistens*"), drawing upon his *Preface to Metaphysics*, Knasas develops an argument for God's existence based on the fourth chapter of *De Ente et Essentia*. Against Gilson's apparent rejection of the cogency of the argument because of its theological suppositions, Knasas argues with Owens that this rejection does not in principle imply that for Gilson the *actus essendi* is philosophically unknowable or that a metaphysical proof of God would be impossible. He therefore disagrees also with Armand Maurer who has argued that Chapter 4 only contains

a dialectical argumentation. Knasas holds that further knowledge of *Esse subsistens* is attained by negation from *esse commune*, that is, by removing “its capacity for addition in individual *esses*” (244.). For Knasas, only at this stage does the negative judgment of separation play a role, in contrast with the majority of Thomistic scholars who argue that the start of metaphysics presupposes prior knowledge of an immaterial being or at least knowledge of something “negatively immaterial,” that is, something which need not to be found in matter (cf. John F. Wippel).

Chapter 8 applies these insights to philosophical anthropology and ethics, in critical dialogue with the work of Germain Grisez. Knasas asks how the idea of obligation arises from the *ratio boni* expressed in the first principle of practical reasoning (*ST*, I–II, q. 94, a. 2). He argues that there exists an order between the *ratio entis* and the *ratio boni*. In his words: “The *ratio boni* is the *ratio entis* in the wake of the realization that as a transcendental, the *ratio entis* contains anything that one might desire. (257). Because human being is not only the “willer” of the good but also the “intellector” of the good, he is a special instance of that good and therefore calls for respect. In other words, the subject of the first principle of practical reasoning is not the idea of the good in itself but the particular human instance. In Knasas’s *metaphysical* interpretation therefore the natural inclinations do not mark an initial consideration of human nature but rather are “further confrontations of practical reason with humans as willers of the *ratio boni*” (264). “In other words, the inclinations form in the wake of the apprehension of goods, the apprehension of goods does not form in the wake of the natural inclinations” (idem). I find it difficult, however, to reconcile this assertion with Aquinas’s statement in the same article that “omnia illa ad quae homo habet naturalem inclinationem, ratio naturaliter apprehendit ut bona, et per consequens ut opere prosequenda,” which clearly manifests the anthropological foundation for the apprehension of the goods, as well as the order between inclinations, goods, and obligation.

Finally, in Chapter 9 (“A Philosophical Estimate of the Twentieth-Century Thomist Revival”), he compares the insights of chapter 2 through 7 with the alleged deficiencies of Neo-Thomism mentioned in Chapter 1, each time reaching the conclusion that Neo-Thomism refutes these accusations.

My remark on the thesis of chapter 8 refers us back to the fundamental and controversial problem regarding the relationship between philosophy of nature and Knasas’s metaphysics and more in particular to the question how it is able to reconcile Thomas’s understanding of nature as essence ordered towards operation with its preeminence of existence or

—as some would say—with the reduction of existence to a flux. These objections would have to be considered by way of a historical presentation of Aquinas's metaphysics like the recent book by John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, to which Knasas only once in a footnote on page 68 refers.

Although on several occasions Knasas refers to his interpretation as a historical presentation, corroborated by Aquinas's texts (see for example his statement that the "use of *separation* to produce the subject of science of metaphysics is speculatively Thomistic," 38), many critics of the Gilson-Owens line are not included in his discussions. The question remains therefore how Existential Thomism can reconcile its preeminence of existence or—as some would say—its reduction of existence to a flux with Aquinas's understanding of nature as essence ordered towards operation. More attention to such philosophers would have strengthened his main thesis that a historically accurate and philosophically sound Neo-Thomism can address the accusations made by Transcendental Thomism. Nonetheless, Knasas's book offers the definitive refutation of the claim that the epistemological and ontological foundations of Transcendental Thomism have a textual support in Aquinas, and simultaneously provides powerful philosophical arguments in defense of Thomistic realism. N V

Jörgen Vijgen

Major Seminary Willibrordhuis
Vogelenzang, The Netherlands

The Popes Against the Jews: The Vatican's Role in the Rise of Modern Anti-Semitism by David I. Kertzer (*New York: Knopf, 2001*), 368 pp.

OVER THE PAST few years, Catholic-Jewish relations and the role of the popes in European anti-Semitism have been the subject of what seems like innumerable books. Most of these anti-papal diatribes—by John Cornwall, Garry Wills, and others—have focused their attacks on the alleged silence during the Holocaust of Pius XII, who has been vilified as "Hitler's Pope." In *The Popes Against the Jews*, however, the Brown University historian David Kertzer skips over Pius XII to attack the entire modern papacy from 1814 to 1939.

That some popes, both medieval and modern, were anti-Jewish is a matter of historical fact. The most notorious papal action in modern times was the 1858 kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara, a six-year-old Jewish boy in the papal state of Bologna, about which Kertzer, a specialist in nineteenth-century Italian history, wrote a book in 1997. On the instructions

of Pope Pius IX, Edgardo was forcibly removed from his parents' home after one of the Mortaras' Catholic servants told authorities about secretly baptizing the boy.

As it happens, no papal action in modern times precipitated as widespread and outraged a public reaction, even among Catholics, as did the Mortara kidnapping, a point which Kertzer himself documented in his earlier book. But what is more to the point—and contrary to the underlying thesis of Kertzer's new volume—Pius IX's action in the Mortara case was tragically unique, rather than historically representative of the papacy.

Beginning during the fourteenth century, a tradition of papal support for the Jews of Europe began to emerge. Kertzer and other recent papal critics have largely missed this "philo-Semitic" tradition. By portraying Catholic-Jewish relations as a history of the popes against the Jews, alleging that the papacy has played a disproportionate role in the rise of modern anti-Semitism, Kertzer ignores the fact that during periods of intensified anti-Semitic persecutions several popes served as protectors of Jewry—especially of the Jews of Rome—upholding their Jewish right to worship freely in their synagogues and publicly defending Jews against a host of anti-Semitic allegations.

Thus, for example, Kertzer devotes three chapters to the horrifying allegation that, during the Passover holiday, Jews engaged in the ritual murder of Christian children, to use their blood in the baking of the unleavened bread eaten at the Passover meal. Yet he makes little mention of the relevant fact that a succession of popes since the twelfth century (when the accusation of Jewish ritual murder was first made) were vocal in their condemnation of this libel. In 1247 Pope Innocent IV promulgated the first of several papal bulls devoted to refuting the ritual-murder libel.

Innocent's bull set an important precedent that subsequent popes would follow over the centuries. As the historian Marc Saperstein has pointed out, whenever "charges of ritual murder were brought to the attention of popes, they regularly condemned them as baseless and inconsistent with Jewish religious teaching." In 1758, in response to an appeal from the Jewish community of Poland, Pope Benedict XIV appointed Cardinal Lorenzo Ganganelli (who would later become Pope Clement XIV) to investigate the ritual-murder accusation. After investigating for more than a year, Cardinal Ganganelli produced a report that exonerated the Jews—a document Cecil Roth, a preeminent scholar of Italian Jewish history, has called "one of the most remarkable, broad-minded, and humane documents in the history of the Catholic Church."

This historic report was later cited by Pope Pius X, who repudiated the "infamous fanaticism" of the ritual-murder charge. Indeed, despite

Kertzer's suggestions, the charge of ritual murder was not supported by Pope Pius X, who publicly denounced the accusation in the most famous ritual-murder case of modern times, the 1913 trial of the Russian Jew Mendel Beilis. While Kertzer is correct in arguing that some Catholic priests and newspapers lent their support to the libel, the papacy persistently opposed it.

It is this kind of selective use of evidence that is the most annoying feature of *The Popes Against the Jews*. Time and time again, Kertzer fails to cite or discuss statements and actions that reveal a pope's public opposition to anti-Semitism or defense of the Jewish people. Thus, for example, he never mentions that Leo XIII spoke out in *defense* of Captain Alfred Dreyfus, the French Jewish officer accused of treason in 1894, and publicly condemned the anti-Semitic campaign against him—a fact noted by the British historian Owen Chadwick in his definitive *A History of the Popes, 1830–1914* (a volume never quoted by Kertzer). And while Kertzer does acknowledge that in 1892—two years before the Dreyfus Affair began—Leo XIII strongly defended Jews in a widely circulated newspaper interview, he buries it in a footnote and tries to minimize its significance.

Kertzer similarly indulges a one-sided and incomplete discussion of Benedict XV, who was more favorably disposed to the Jews than many of his nineteenth-century predecessors. Far from sanctioning anti-Semitism, Benedict XV powerfully condemned it in a 1916 statement issued in response to a petition from the American Jewish Committee that asked the pope to protest the persecution of Polish Jews during World War I.

Kertzer's indictment of Pius XI is equally compromised by his selective citations of the available evidence, as well as by serious errors of fact. Monsignor Achille Ratti, the future Pius XI, enjoyed warm relations with Italian Jewish leaders throughout the early years of his priesthood. And during his tenure as papal nuncio after World War I in Poland, amid Europe's largest Jewish population, he confronted for the first time the persecution experienced by Europe's Jews.

This firsthand encounter led the future pope—contrary to what Kertzer asserts—to denounce Polish anti-Semitism. Ratti's disgust with Polish anti-Semitism is amply documented in Sir William Clonmore's biography, *Pope Pius XI and World Peace* (yet another volume Kertzer never cites). "Ratti made it quite clear," notes Clonmore, "that any anti-Semitic outbursts would be severely condemned by the Holy See." Ratti helped the Jewish victims of Polish anti-Semitism in a more tangible way as well: Instructed by Pope Benedict to direct the distribution of Catholic relief in postwar Poland, he gave considerable funds not only to Catholics

but also to impoverished Jews who had lost their homes and businesses in the pogroms.

From this bad beginning, Kertzer moves to a worse conclusion as he turns to Ratti's reign as Pius XI. Unmentioned is the fact that as early as November 1931, the chief rabbi of Milan, on a personal visit to the Vatican, thanked the pope for his appeals against anti-Semitism and his continuing support for Italy's Jews. *The Popes Against the Jews* devotes astonishingly little attention to Pius XI's famous anti-Nazi encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* ("With Burning Anxiety"), issued in March 1937, which produced an angry response from the Nazi leaders in Berlin, who viewed it (correctly) as a pro-Jewish document.

Kertzer's nearly monomaniacal effort to turn everything against the popes will prove at last unbearable even for readers who have little sympathy for the Catholic Church. That there were anti-Semitic Catholics in Europe between 1814 to 1939 no one denies. That their anti-Semitism provided one of the channels through which the evil of the Nazis would find its way—this too is undeniable, a horrifying fact that the current pope, John Paul II, and the modern Catholic Church have begun at last to try to understand.

But what, exactly, is gained by Kertzer's attempts to twist history to his own absolute anti-papalism? What new understanding do we achieve by denouncing as anti-Semites some of the *least* anti-Semitic people of their time?

Benedict XV and Pius XI were known by their contemporaries as opponents of anti-Semitism and friends to the Jews. So, for instance, on September 6, 1938, Pius XI remarked to a group of Belgian pilgrims that anti-Semitism "is a hateful movement, a movement that we cannot, as Christians, take any part in." And, with tears in his eyes as he thought about the plight of the Jews, he famously concluded: "Anti-Semitism is inadmissible; spiritually, we are all Semites." This wasn't said in 1998, when it would be of little moment. It was said in 1938, when the most powerful nation in Europe had an officially anti-Semitic government and was poised only a few hundred miles to the north of Rome. Who could miss what this meant at the time?

Pius XI's contemporaries didn't miss it. After the publication of *Mit brennender Sorge* the Nazis launched a vitriolic counterattack on the "Jew-God and His deputy in Rome"—while the February 1939 issue of B'nai B'rith's *National Jewish Monthly* featured the pope on its cover. "Regardless of their personal religious beliefs," wrote the editors, "men and women everywhere who believe in democracy and the rights of man have hailed the firm and uncompromising stand of Pope Pius XI against

Fascist brutality, paganism, and racial theories. In his annual Christmas message to the College of Cardinals, the great Pontiff vigorously denounced Fascism of both the Italian and German varieties . . . and described the Nazi swastika as a 'cross hostile to the cross of Christ' . . . The first international voice in the world to be raised in stern condemnation of the ghastly injustice perpetrated upon the Jewish people by brutal tyrannies was Pope Pius XI."

In his effort to vilify the modern papacy—and to hold each and every pontiff responsible for all anti-Semitism from Napoleon to Hitler—Kertzer must dismiss or ignore the many instances of papal support for the Jews and the legacies of those modern popes who were known for their decidedly philo-Semitic policies and pronouncements. Worse, he must dismiss or ignore the testimony of those who were actually there at the time. Kertzer's *The Popes Against the Jews* is both false and unpersuasive.¹ N-V

David G. Dalin
Ave Maria College
Ypsilanti, Michigan

The First Grace: Rediscovering the Natural Law in the Post-Christian World by Russell Hittinger (*Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2003*), xlvii + 334.

CAN HUMAN BEINGS recognize the precepts of the natural law without adverting to the question of God? The first two chapters of this important book answer no, and the remaining chapters drive the point home by means of detailed discussion of the legal, political, and cultural crises now facing the United States and the Western world in general. Hittinger emphasizes that modern debate over moral issues lacks an ability to account for "the first grace," creation and providence, without which Christian morality will not make sense. Creation bears the imprint of the divine mind who created it. This imprint is God's wise order of creaturely flourishing, the order of justice. God's wise order, expressing the commands of his providence or practical reason, has the nature of law (cf. 45, 61–62). Natural law is our rational sharing in this eternal law or divine providence of God. It follows that natural law, and the political and legal arguments that depend upon it, cannot be understood adequately outside "theology" (natural and/or revealed).

Reserving a prominent place for natural theology in sustaining the discourse of providence, Hittinger points out that the modern effort to

¹ This review previously appeared in *The Weekly Standard* (November 5, 2001): 36–38.

understand “natural law” without “theology” represents a break from the development of natural law doctrine from the 2nd century A.D., a legal tradition from which the Protestant Reformers did not dissent. The break occurs with the Enlightenment thinkers: Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant (cf. xvii, 13). Against the modern attempt to describe the natural law outside of a notion of divine providence, Hittinger argues that avoiding the question of God makes it impossible to define natural law. From his study of Aquinas, he notes that natural law is located in three “foci”: the human mind, nature, and the mind of God. The former two depend upon the latter. As law, the natural law is in the mind of God. In a participated way, the natural law is in human minds (as first principles) and in nature (the providential order). Thus without recognizing the relation of the created order to the Creator, it is impossible to develop an adequate account of “natural law.” In the classical theological tradition, Hittinger remarks, “Natural law is never (and I must emphasize *never*) defined in terms of what is first in the (human) mind or first in nature” (9). Once God is bracketed out, “we have either nature or the human mind as the cause of the law—not the cause of knowing or discovering, but the cause of the law itself” (9).

On the former view, nature is the cause of “natural law” and so the natural law is opposed, in Cartesian fashion, to human (rational) freedom. On the latter view, the human mind is the cause of “natural law” and so the natural law is a human construct enforced by the power of ideology rather than inscribed in reality. Not only secular positive law, but also the laws promulgated by the Church’s Magisterium, then appear as ideological assertions that restrict the potential flourishing of the individual human person. As Hittinger states, “When the starting points are made autonomous, the human mind declares independence not only from the deeper order of divine tutoring but also from the tutoring afforded by human culture, including human law” (14). Without God, the natural law is turned into its opposite. Whereas in fact the natural law is “participated theonomy,” as Martin Rhonheimer has argued and as Pope John Paul II has affirmed in *Veritatis Splendor* (xxvi), for many modern natural-law theorists “God” is an enemy of the autonomous authority of the “natural law” (9; cf. 26), and religious claims about morality in the political and legal spheres become suspect. As an example, Hittinger repeatedly turns to the moral theology of Josef Fuchs. Despite Fuchs’s Catholic credentials, Fuchs’s theory of natural law rests upon this positing of human autonomy over against God (47–50). In affinity with *Veritatis Splendor*, Hittinger thus shows that the key difficulty for moral theology today is not so much particular moral questions, no matter how pressing, but

rather is the principle that the universe, as created, manifests an eternal law that provides for creaturely flourishing.

How can one recognize and describe these requirements (the precepts of natural law) upon which true human positive law is based? Hittinger argues that turning away from God distorts the human ability to make judgments about the precepts of the natural law:

As a law, natural law is not “in” nature or the human mind, but is rather in the mind of God. The immutability of natural law, he insists, is due to the “immutability and perfection of the divine reason that institutes it.” Insofar as natural law can be said to be “in” things or nature, it is an order of inclinations of reason and will by which men are moved to a common good. While the created order continues to move men, the effect of that law (in the creature) is bent by sin—not so bent that God fails to move the finite mind, for the fallen man is still a spiritual creature, possessed of the God-given light of moral understanding, but bent enough that this movement requires the remediation of divine positive law and a new law of grace.” (11)

Hittinger goes on to remark that whereas Aquinas does not envision resolving ethical problems solely from the perspective of the natural law abstracted from theology (natural or revealed), modern theorists of the natural law have sought to do so, with results that evidence the necessity of the “remediation of divine positive law and a new law of grace” (11). Indeed, Hittinger suggests that the modern practice of appealing to a “natural law” cut off from “theology” (that is, cut off from a Creator God) has so distorted the concept that employing it in public discourse is often counterproductive. He writes, “It seems to me that the expression ‘natural law’ ought to be avoided whenever possible in the Christian address to the world about worldly things” (34–35). Instead, in order to express the meaning of “natural law,” he suggests using the phrase “higher law,” which has been used in important ways in American political and moral discourse from Abraham Lincoln to Martin Luther King, Jr. (36).

Hittinger also proposes that philosophers and theologians should pay deeper attention to two of Pope John Paul II’s recent encyclicals, *Veritatis Splendor* and *Evangelium Vitae*. Regarding the latter encyclical, he notes that “the Pope vigorously supports the modern experiment in constitutional democracy and human rights. But once he discerned that the rhetoric of natural rights was being used to justify killing the unborn and infirm, he took his readers in *Evangelium Vitae* back to the book of Genesis.” The first chapters of Genesis display how human rationality and morality are inscribed within the order of divine providence. In Hittinger’s

reading, *Evangelium Vitae* aims at renewing political and legal discourse about creation and providence. *Veritatis Splendor* focuses upon the Church's theological discourse, in order to reintegrate "natural law into the dogmatic theology of revelation and Christology" (37).

In light of these foundational arguments in the first two chapters, the next six chapters (3 through 8) of *The First Grace* focus upon the role of the judiciary vis-à-vis natural law. Although a collection of essays, therefore, the book achieves a valuable argumentative flow. Hittinger argues throughout that discerning and encoding the natural law in positive law is a task that belongs to legislators (chapters three and four). In the twentieth century this legislative task has been usurped in the United States by an activist judiciary, particularly the Supreme Court. As Hittinger shows, the Supreme Court after World War II has consistently identified the natural law with rights that originate in the individual, understood as radically autonomous from social bonds (chapters five and six). Not surprisingly, then, the Supreme Court has also consistently presented religion as a divisive, coercive, irrational, and idiosyncratic reality (chapter seven) that "is contrary to the institutions of democracy" (169). Having given a detailed account of the situation, he turns in chapter eight to the question of whether the Supreme Court has gone so far as to threaten its own legitimacy. This question is settled for him by the Supreme Court itself, which in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992) explicitly argued that its own legitimacy is at stake in the debate over the validity of the Court-ordered "right" to abortion (183). He remarks that "while the Court is free to change its case law at will, and thus to make the Constitution a mere by-product of its shifting opinions, the other branches and departments must submit to the case law as though it were the Constitution" (212). Having made clear that the Supreme Court has usurped legislative authority in many areas, he argues that a reversal of this situation will depend upon the development of public awareness of the constitutional crisis that presently exists. Just as the Dred Scott case galvanized (thanks in large part to the rhetorical power of Abraham Lincoln) the public, so might a future case awaken the public to the contemporary Supreme Court's usurpation of power (see 205ff.).

The final three chapters of the book explore the institutional and cultural ramifications of the modern understanding of "natural law" as undergirding radical autonomy. Chapters nine and eleven address the issue in terms of the relationship of Church and state, while chapter ten explores the development of liberalism itself.

Chapter nine shows that the radical autonomy of individuals is not ratified by *Dignitatis Humanae*, as some theologians, overreading the docu-

ment, have argued. Hittinger argues that *Dignitatis Humanae* defends religious freedom without taking up the broader topic of Church-state relations: "It may prove surprising, if not frustrating, that *DH* puts to one side theoretical treatment of the issues that directly touch, in American terms, upon establishment of religion. . . . For the Second Vatican Council, it was quite enough to tackle the problem of the religious civil liberties of individuals, communities, and the Church herself" (224, 225). His knowledge of the history of papal statements enables him to argue persuasively that the Council fathers were making the point that "the Church does not rest its case for liberty on the confessing state. It would be a mistake to make *Dignitatis Humanae* say anything more, or less" (227). He points out that *Dignitatis Humanae* does, however, insist theologically both upon the eternal law as the basis for religious freedom and upon the origin of the Church's "sacred liberty" in Christ's direct command (233).

Chapter ten explores the roots of the contemporary situation in liberal romanticism's ideal of the individual genius, including the individual religious genius, as the engine of cultural development. Following Christopher Dawson, Hittinger suggests that the radically autonomous individual marks the triumph of consumerist *techné* over against the Victorian Enlightenment's valuation of familial, economic, and political bonds. A radical autonomy fostered by technology represents a vulgarization, in Dawson's view, of the Victorian liberal ideal of the role of the autonomous genius as the formative mediator of culture and of religious experience.

Finally, chapter eleven argues in agreement with Jacques Maritain that the answer is not to return to sacral conceptions of the state, in which the state embodies the temporal common good, in union with the Church as the embodiment of the supernatural common good. For Maritain, along with Popes Pius XII and John Paul II, the "body politic" is not reducible to the state. Instead, the state instrumentally serves the common good by fostering the various societies that compose the body politic. The danger of this view of the state, exemplified by the work of Ernest Gellner, is that once one conceives the state in instrumentalist terms, it becomes difficult to conceive of any society, or societies, ordered to a higher, noninstrumental end. In Aquinas's defense of the mendicant orders, Hittinger finds a way of defending the existence of various societies, ordered to the common good, within the body politic.

Hittinger's insights into the importance of the concept of providence and his investigation of the ramifications in the legal order of the loss of this framework represent in themselves a magnificent achievement. His insights should inspire further work in the area of Church-state relations, as illuminated by the doctrine of providence. When he ventures into this terrain,

filled as it is with historical, political, and theological landmines, he proceeds cautiously but articulates the problems too well to enable the reader to be fully satisfied with the solutions currently on the table. For example, he writes, “While liberals valued civil society principally for instrumental reasons, Catholic social thought emphasized the intrinsic value of social forms like the family, the private school, churches, and labor unions. And, Catholic social thought has always been suspicious of the market models of social pluralism . . .” (283). He knows, however, that market models of the common good have arisen almost necessarily out of the liberal state. Unlike less insightful commentators on the right and the left, he sees both the problems with the sacral model of the state and the problems that arise when the instrumental state can no longer sustain cultural awareness of the reality of the common good, above all beatitude.

Similarly, he writes of how Christian faith should be manifested in and by civil society:

In a certain respect, this theological reflection has just begun. One can see why, in 1965, it would have been precipitous to force *DH* to attempt to resolve the issue of how religious liberty and confession of religious truth on the part of civil society might be synthesized in a distinctly contemporary mode—one in which democratic institutions prevail, where civil liberties of all are duly honored, and where christianization or rechristianization has progressed to the point that the essence of the Gospel has worked its way into a fully public manifestation. *DH* does not rule it out, but by the same token it does not bring it into view as a pressing problem. (226)

His eight earlier chapters on the culture of death that arises when the state cannot account (theologically) for God’s providence, however, have already made clear to the reader that it is perhaps the “pressing problem.”

Hittinger thus recalls us to the task of articulating, inside and outside the Church, the doctrine of divine providence, a doctrine that can only be fully comprehended after sin in the light of the New Law of grace. He has illumined Pope John Paul II’s contribution to this articulation, and he has modeled a Thomistic approach to reclaiming this understanding of human creatureliness in the legal, political, and cultural spheres. We are deeply in his debt. N V

Matthew Levering
Ave Maria College
Ypsilanti, Michigan

The Two Wings of Catholic Thought: Essays on *Fides et Ratio*, edited by David Ruel Foster and Joseph W. Koterski, SJ (*Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003*), xi + 249 pp.

TRUTH IS SYMPHONIC. The editors of this collection use Balthasar's theme to explain their approach to the 1998 encyclical, *Fides et Ratio*. This is not a systematic analysis of the document—the closest it comes is a twelve-page summary outline and an appended index. Rather, the collection's essays bring out various themes present in the encyclical. We hear strands of wisdom literature, medieval and modern philosophy, and modern encyclicals, distant hints of the new evangelization and Catholic universities, and the classic themes of Christian philosophy, metaphysics, the person, and the Seat of Wisdom. A bibliography of related works suggests further strains that may be present. Foster and Koterski's symphonic approach to the encyclical brings out the Holy Father's own sapiential understanding of truth: not a neat, syllogistic progression, but a circular movement from faith to reason and back, perceiving in the interweaving of every human strand the presence of the great composer, Eternal Wisdom.

The collection begins with essays on the encyclical's approach to four classic doctrinal questions. Avery Cardinal Dulles opens this section by appraising the state of the question, "Can philosophy be Christian?" in light of *Fides et Ratio*. Having sketched the history of the question in the early twentieth century, Dulles details three relations of philosophy to faith in the encyclical. Prior to faith, philosophy may "attain conclusions that are true and certain," but ultimately "an autonomous philosophy cannot be self-sufficient. . . . Understanding seeks faith" (10–11). Aided by faith, philosophy is cured of pride, encouraged for difficult questions, and given access to "certain truths that are in principle accessible to reason but might never be found in fact without revelation" (15). Within faith, philosophy defends "strict mysteries, but . . . not conundrums" against objections, shows analogies to the order of nature, and demonstrates the "internal coherence of the whole supernatural order" (16–17). In its appraisal of the interpenetration of faith and reason, writes Dulles, the encyclical brings the question of Christian philosophy to a new level in which, like Mary, inviolate nature becomes truly fruitful in offering itself to the Word of God.

Virgil, "the very symbol of reason" (22), led Dante through the dark wood of the lion's pride, the leopard's lust, and the she-wolf's avarice. Fr. Koterski finds here a helpful image for "The Challenge to Metaphysics in *Fides et Ratio*." The modern state is threatened by the she-wolf of undifferentiated power, which rules not according to the truth of the

human person, but according to “the vote of the parliamentary majority” (no. 83). “Deprived of reason,” quotes Fr. Koterski, “faith has stressed feeling and experience” (no. 48); thus the Church is threatened by the leopard of “spiritual good feeling” (30). Finally, the college is threatened by a rationalist pride that would rather judge the contents of faith than learn from them. Like Beatrice calling Virgil, the pope calls “a philosophy of *genuinely metaphysical* range” (no. 83) to lead the faithful through the perils of this dark wood.

In her essay on “Person and Complementarity,” Sr. Prudence Allen discusses the “creatively synergistic” relations of persons. These relations, she writes, are better represented by the formula “ $1 + 1 \geq 3$ ” than “ $1 + 1 = 2$ ” (67). In a “pilgrimage-like journey” (57), Sr. Allen works through the personal acts of reason and faith, the educational structures of philosophy and theology, and the relations of actual philosophers and theologians. In each, she finds a relationship that is more fruitful the more each partner is fully him- or herself.

The doctrinal section concludes with Jesuit scholastic David Vincent Meconi’s reflections on *Philosophari in Maria*. “The human search for meaning does have a face,” writes Meconi, “. . . the face of a mother” (87). As model of receptive wonder, self-offering, and contemplation, Mary is the philosopher *par excellence*. Drawing from throughout the encyclical, Meconi shows that “Mary’s inclusion at the end of *Fides et ratio* . . . is anything but some spurious or pious addendum.” Rather, shows Meconi, it is “a recapitulation of the project as a whole” (86).

The second section of the collection explores “implications” of the encyclical. In a provocative essay, Bishop Allen Vigneron considers philosophy’s leading role in the evangelization of culture. Christian thought, he maintains, must purify and become incarnate in the genuine insights of human culture. The first Pentecost began the Gospel’s incarnation in a “culture of creation.” Beginning with the “New Pentecost” of Vatican II, however, the Gospel must now bring forth from modernity’s turn to the subject a “culture of communion” (103). Vigneron describes the philosophical virtues needed by the leaders of this new evangelization: “the habits which make fruitful dialogue possible” (106).

Collection co-editor David Ruel Foster discusses how “*Fides et Ratio* provides the principles for a robust affirmation of academic freedom,” in contrast to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*’s “weak affirmation” (111, cf. 115). At the heart of academic freedom is the defense of objective truth: both as the basis for dialogue and as the object of the Church’s continual search. Foster also gives an interesting argument for “second-level academic freedom”: the rights of *institutions* as well as individuals to pursue their proper

line of inquiry. The essay may focus excessively, however, on the question of “rights.” Christian faith is treated only as a deficient knowledge, while the Church is exhorted to respect the “maturity” of the scholarly community. An essay titled, “The Implications of *Fides et Ratio* for Catholic Universities” might be expected to present a more positive contribution of the Church to the academy. Notably, Foster’s is one of the few essays with no reference to the Incarnation or the “Christian distinction.”

The collection’s final section examines the encyclical’s relation to various historical periods. Fr. Koterski returns with an essay on biblical Wisdom literature. The encyclical, he writes, treats this literature as a model of faith seeking understanding. We find the believer, like a pagan philosopher, reading “the book of nature” as “a first stage on the path that leads to knowledge of God” (135). Yet, especially at the Cross, this quest for knowledge must always reach beyond merely natural methods. Having examined the encyclical, Fr. Koterski moves on to his own survey of faith and reason in the Wisdom literature. He concludes that this literature provides a model for philosophy, not in “the generally prevailing sense of the word,” but in its fully “sapiential dimension,” which “may well be one of John Paul II’s most cherished projects in *Fides et Ratio*” (160).

Michael Sweeney and Timothy Sean Quinn, colleagues at Xavier University, offer a compelling pair of essays on the medievals and the moderns. Sweeney finds a twofold use of medieval thought to establish the coherence of faith and reason. The Pope draws heavily from Augustine and Anselm to establish reason’s implicit *desire* for the truths of faith. But he relies on St. Thomas to establish the *possibility* of fulfillment. Specifically, Thomas is important for establishing “some account of nature whereby there is an internal necessity to created things” (170) (without which there could be no natural reason) and the possibility of metaphysical and objective ethical knowledge (without which there could be no overlap between faith and reason). In the encyclical, however, Thomas is only one model of “a general or abstract philosophy”: any philosophy fulfilling these basic criteria would also be compatible with Christian faith.

But Sweeney notes a problem. The moderns deny both the need and the means for this compatibility; it seems the Pope is merely imposing medieval standards on modern philosophy. In his essay “Infides et Unratio,” Quinn responds to this problem with a devastating critique of modern philosophy. “From its inception,” writes Quinn, “the ‘modern’ philosophy understood itself less as a quest for wisdom than as a project of emancipation from any authority” (178). Indeed, even ancient philosophy had to be rejected as unable to “militate against takeover by revealed religion” (181). Thus, Sweeney proposes, the various aspects of modern

philosophy that the Pope finds contrary to faith are not properly philosophical conclusions but derive from the dogmatic assumption that faith is contrary to reason.

The collection closes with a meditation by Cardinal Dulles on the differences between the First Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on Catholic Faith *Dei Filius* and *Fides et Ratio*. The two, he proposes, "are speaking to radically diverse situations" (195). While Vatican I battled against "self-assured rationalists" and "skeptical fideists" (193), these parties had almost dispersed by the time of Vatican II, and in the day of John Paul II "the rationalist mentality hardly survives" (196). Thus where "Vatican I adopted a two-stage schematism," John Paul finds "a harmonious fusion of philosophy and theology" (200–201). In this light, the Church of John Paul II approaches the world primarily in a mode of positive dialogue.

The Two Wings of Catholic Thought provides a fine overview of doctrinal and historical perspectives of *Fides et Ratio* and two provocative essays on implications that may be drawn from it. The collection attunes our ears to the symphonic nature of truth, and exhibits the continued faithfulness of many within the Society of Jesus—seven out of ten essays come either from Jesuits or from Xavier University—to that symphony of Eternal Wisdom. N.V.

Eric M. Johnston

The Catholic University of America
Washington, D.C.

After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism by Fergus Kerr, OP (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 256 pp.

FERGUS KERR'S new book is the culmination of a lifetime's study of the work of St. Thomas Aquinas. Few are better prepared than Kerr to accomplish one of the book's primary objectives—to "destabilize" the "standard conception of Thomas's thought" (vi). Dominant at many Protestant and secular institutions, and not exactly absent from Catholic universities, this conception is essentially reductionist. It shrinks Aquinas's thinking about God to the five proofs at the beginning of the *Summa theologiae* (reading its *prima pars* poorly). It caricatures his ethics as a system of morals based exclusively on natural law (reading its *secunda pars* superficially). It ignores what he says about salvation and Christology (reading its *tertia pars* not at all). Against the standard conception, Kerr attempts to expand our comprehension of Aquinas's thought in chapters with such provocative titles as "Overcoming Epistemology," "Stories of Being," "Theological Ethics," "Quarrels about Grace," and "Deified Creaturehood."

Refusal to affirm the importance of Aristotle for St. Thomas would be unreasonable, even perverse. As Kerr notices, however, such affirmation does not imply that St. Thomas ought to be classified as an "Aristotelian" (9). Here Kerr joins a growing chorus of interpreters who want to call attention to the importance of other authorities for St. Thomas (not only the Platonic authors, but also Augustine and the other Fathers). Awareness of Aquinas's historical context would suggest that his intention is not to replace Christian doctrine with Aristotelianism (as some critics still charge), but "to transpose and integrate key Aristotelian terms into traditional Christianity" (14). Kerr acknowledges that such observations do little to reconcile rival interpretations of Aquinas. Not unsympathetically, he cites Serge-Thomas Bonino's recent aspiration to find a "truly Thomist approach" that would integrate a multiplicity of diverse readings. However, Kerr seems ultimately pessimistic about the possibility of resolving such hermeneutic conflicts. His own approach is to judge some readings as "deeply misguided," and yet to take them seriously by asking what in Aquinas's texts prompts these misreadings, and what makes them "attractive, and almost unavoidable" (16).

One such misreading that Kerr interrogates is "epistemology." Building upon the work of others, Kerr notes the anachronistic tendencies of modern attempts to read St. Thomas as "therapy for Cartesianism" (18). After recalling the origins of such approaches in Kleutgen's Suarezian appropriation of St. Thomas, Kerr proceeds to examine more recent manifestations of the syndrome. Here he mentions R. P. Phillips's ostensibly Thomist textbook (once used frequently in the education of seminarians), which locates "epistemology" as "the first part of metaphysics" (20). As one might expect, Kerr is considerably more sympathetic with what he calls "Wittgenstenian Thomism." Drawing upon his own experience, Kerr judges Wittgenstein's "exposure of the absurdities of assuming that the interior life is radically private" to be a useful propaedeutic for understanding Aquinas's "pre-Cartesian account of the human mind and will" (21). Nonetheless, he criticizes this approach to the extent that it appeals to St. Thomas "as a source of good philosophy," without bothering to read his theology. For Kerr's version of Aquinas, "epistemology is not separable from theology" (33). One can invoke Aquinas as an alternative to modern epistemology, but not by forgetting that St. Thomas "is interested in the activity of the human mind only in order to elucidate the way in which human beings imitate God" (33).

Kerr brings this perspective to bear in his examination of Barthian rejections of Thomist natural theology. He reminds us of Barth's virulent denunciation of *analogia entis* as "the invention of anti-Christ" (35). In a

chapter titled "Prolegomena to Natural Theology," Kerr acknowledges that if Catholic theology actually subordinated Christian doctrine to naturalistic metaphysics, Barth's attack would be perfectly justified. But, as Kerr argues, a contextually sensitive reading of the relevant documents would show that "far from encouraging foundationalist rationalism in natural theology, Vatican I was explicitly suspicious of anything of the kind" (38). According to Kerr, a more authentic understanding of the concepts of cause and substance than one finds in the handbooks (here he draws helpfully upon the work of Norris Clarke) would suggest that authentically Thomist (if not Thomistic) natural theology bears little similarity to Enlightenment natural religion. Rather, it is "embedded in a theology of God as creative and self-diffusive good" (51).

Another common misreading of Aquinas stems from an exaggeration of the role of natural law in his approach to ethics and politics. Kerr advances two main contentions in his chapters "Natural Law: Incommensurable Readings" and "Theological Ethics." First, to say that Aquinas is primarily a natural-law theorist is to say very little until one specifies what natural law means for St. Thomas, a task which turns out to be surprisingly difficult. Second, natural law is not the only or the most important moral concept in Aquinas. It is not that Kerr disparages the concept of natural law. He sides with those who find it a sane middle ground between moral constructivism ("it's right because we judge it so") and divine-command theory ("it's right because God tells me so"). But he resists the temptation to make the concept simpler than it is. By juxtaposing rival and incompatible accounts of Thomist natural law, he leads the reader to appreciate the complexity of the concept, while providing a useful (but not remotely comprehensive) summary of some recent interpretations.

In his chapter titled "Theological Ethics," Kerr concurs with several rejections of the notion that St. Thomas would affirm an autonomous, "philosophical" morality. Here Kerr stresses the importance of the *secunda pars* of the *Summa*, and particularly its *secunda secundae*. Not by accident did Thomas insert his "practical theology" intended for future Dominican pastors between "the two mysteries of faith: the triune Godhead and the mystery of the Incarnation" (118). Kerr notes the presence of a progressive element in Aquinas's pedagogy. Against approaches to ethics that he found inadequate, theoretically and practically, "Thomas tried to deconstruct the sin-dominated moral theology in the pastors' handbooks of his day, by dispersing the standard list of virtues and vices throughout a systematic consideration of the human being as moral agent, with goals, capacities, emotions, dispositions, and so on, which have to be integrated, with the help of law and grace, for them to attain the beatitude which is

their ultimate end” (118). Here Kerr is not merely writing a long sentence. He provides an elegant summary of the architecture of the *prima secundae*. A deeper understanding of the structure of the *Summa* promises to illuminate the way in which other important concepts bear on St. Thomas’s ethics. Kerr not only cites beatitude, the virtues, the gifts of the spirit, and the image of God, but also brings “deified creaturehood” into the picture. Here he draws upon the recent work of Anna Williams, whose reading he characterizes as “simple and brilliant” (160).

As a map of the thorny terrain of Thomistic studies, *After Aquinas* is valuable. One complaint—in a book of this genre, which encourages (and requires) frequent reference to its citations, it is exceptionally frustrating to be forced to flip constantly from the narrative to the notes and back again. It is not that Kerr’s book is useful simply for its expositions of other authors. *After Aquinas* not only provides commentary; it also furnishes context of a sort needed by both beginning students of Aquinas and advanced scholars. Even when his judgments are debatable, they merit careful consideration, proceeding as they do from a passionate longing to understand the legacy of St. Thomas. **N V**

Robert Miner
Baylor University
Waco, Texas