

Book Reviews

The Love of God Poured Out: Grace and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in St. Thomas Aquinas by John M. Meinert (*Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2018*), 296 pp.

A GIFTED YOUNG LAY SCHOLAR has given us an important monograph on Aquinas's doctrine of grace. Drawing inspiration from Servais Pinckaers, John Meinert offers a strong argument that Aquinas envisions a constant activity of the Spirit in his seven gifts. The heart of the author's argument is found in the identification of the Spirit's movement in the gifts with actual grace (or *auxilium*). Around this central theme, Meinert weaves a detailed analysis of Aquinas on key terms such as *instinctus* and *auxilium* that spans a broad array of Thomas's texts and commentators.

Meinert primarily situates his work within twentieth-century debates on Aquinas's theology of the seven gifts and his doctrine of grace. That is, he is not interested in relating Thomas to his sources and contemporaries. Meinert's aim is essentially speculative, namely, to draw out more clearly the place of the Spirit in the whole life of grace by his motion through the seven gifts. Meinert's grasp of the great twentieth-century figures impresses: it is a delight to see such intense engagement with much-ignored masters such as Iacobus Ramirez and Marie-Michel Labourdette.

The author's preferred style is a paraphrase of Aquinas followed by analysis, with abundant quotes of relevant texts of Thomas in the footnotes, usually in English translation. This methodological choice has its advantages (the text is more readable with so few long citations) but also disadvantages (the author's key exegetical moves are easily overlooked by the reader, and the texts are not always properly contextualized). Meinert draws extensively upon the *Summa theologiae* [ST] and the Pauline commentaries of Thomas, thus keeping an appropriate focus on the mature works that cover issues wherein Aquinas's thought evolved greatly. An author/subject index completes the work, though the index itself seems to be somewhat incomplete (e.g., the entries on operative and cooperative grace).

The first chapter lays out the state of the discussion in twentieth- and twenty-first-century Thomistic literature: it bears the clear marks of a dissertation. The author surveys Labourdette, Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, Ramirez, Bernard Lonergan, and Joseph Wawrykow. The author treats the

division of actual and habitual grace, the necessity of grace, merit, the distinction of the infused virtues and gifts, the need for the gifts and their intrinsic connection. Most of the theologians covered in this survey were active in the early and mid-twentieth century: it is striking how much of this discussion has faded away, despite the recent renewal in Thomistic theology, where much attention has been devoted to the doctrine of God, the Trinity, Christology, and the virtues, but not to grace.

The heart of the book is found in chapter 2, which seeks to illumine Aquinas's teaching on the seven gifts through his doctrine of actual grace (or supernatural *auxilium*). Here, Meinert especially wants to show that an act of charity accompanies every act of the gifts, and that the operations of the infused virtues always come with the Spirit's motion in one of the seven gifts. Meinert gives a lengthy treatment of how the gifts are really distinct from the infused virtues. He then presents his main exegetical argument that Thomas holds for the perpetual need for the Spirit's motion in the spiritual life. The author also shows how the gifts enable human freedom under divine motion, why the gifts both heal and elevate, and how they relate to operating and cooperating grace, and finally explains how the virtues excel the gifts (and in what way the gifts excel the virtues). The chapter includes an illuminating survey of Aquinas's use of the key term *instinctus* (89–98). Meinert's main thesis largely stands or falls with this chapter, so I will give it the most attention in my analysis below.

Chapter 3 strives to illumine Thomas's doctrine of grace via his theology of the Spirit's gifts. The first main section offers very solid overviews of different kinds of *auxilium* or divine motion in Aquinas and why they are needed. The author then connects the Spirit's movement in the gifts with the grace of perseverance. He also sets forth several ways in which the doctrine of the gifts illumines the distinction that Aquinas makes between different kinds of supernatural *auxilium*, as well as the division of habitual grace. The chapter concludes with a study of merit in light of the gifts.

Chapter 4 seeks to bring the results of the analyses in chapters 2 and 3 to bear on the Thomistic debates presented in chapter 1. Here too, the book bears the marks of a dissertation, as the author shows the extent of his work's originality.

Meinert's central and bold claim is to identify Aquinas's supernatural *auxilium* (at work in the lives of believers) with the Spirit's motion in the gifts. He supports his position with numerous provocative speculative arguments and textual analyses. Meinert refers to Aquinas's explanation of Romans 8:14 in his *Commentary on Romans* (95–96, 105–9). In fact, the passage may well refer to the Spirit's movement in our hearts by charity, and not the gifts (or perhaps both): the text remains ambiguous. This part

of Meinert's exegesis is important, as he points out: "Why does Aquinas use *instinctus* in relation to the gifts? I think the key lies in Aquinas's *Commentary on the Romans*. The text bears quoting in full [and cites paragraph no. 635, on Romans 8:14]" (95–96). The author's identification of the *auxilium* with the Spirit's motion via the seven gifts partly depends on this reading of this passage, which he fairly confidently identifies as a teaching on the seven gifts (105). Meinert seeks to strengthen his argument by citing a rich passage from the *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, chapter 14, where Thomas discusses the Spirit's gift (singular; see paragraph no. 1916). Yet here, Aquinas hardly identifies the Spirit's motion in the gifts with *all* (post-justification) supernatural *auxilium* (106–9). The term "gift" never even appears in the plural. Meinert soon returns to the same paragraph of the John commentary with another citation: "It is the same Holy Spirit who inspired the prophets and other sacred authors and who moves the saints to act. As we read: 'moved by the Holy Spirit holy men of God spoke' (2 Pet 1:21); and 'For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God' (Rom 8:14)" (108). Meinert perceives a clear identification of *all* the saints' acts with the Spirit's motion via the seven gifts. The exegesis does not hold. Next, the author points to several verbal and conceptual overlaps between Thomas's description of *auxilium* in *ST* I-II, q. 109, a. 9, and q. 68, yet overlap need not mean full identity (109–13). Furthermore, q. 109, a. 9, presents concupiscence (the flesh–spirit tension) and lack of foresight in life as the two main reasons for which we need a divine motion or supernatural *auxilium*. It is striking that, for Aquinas, none of the seven gifts directly aids temperance (only indirectly so). Hence, the text would seem to treat a supernatural *auxilium* that includes but also goes beyond the Spirit's motion in the seven gifts. Overall, Meinert opposes the standard reading in the twentieth-century Thomistic school, which sees the Spirit's motion in the gifts as one important sub-set of *auxilium*, an interpretation that can easily account for the conceptual and verbal overlap that he signals.

Perhaps the most compelling text of Aquinas that would seem to support Meinert's thesis is *ST* I-II, q. 68, a. 2. The answer to objection 2 is striking. Thomas states that the infused virtues cannot perfect the believer in such a way that he does not always need the Spirit's promptings. The question is how strictly Thomas should be read here: does "always" remain "often" or "in daily life," or does it mean in every single operation of the infused virtues? The Thomistic tradition tends to take the first approach, Meinert the second. He also points to the corpus of the same article. Here Thomas states that the we only possess the theological virtues in an imperfect way, so that we need the Spirit's help to reach our supernatural

end (100–102, 110–18). But does this mean that any operation of those virtues must be moved by the Spirit via the gifts, or that such operations do not suffice to reach the end of the spiritual life? This question leads me to doubt Meinert's confident conclusion. Finally, Meinert appeals to Aquinas's exposition of Romans 1:9 in his *Commentary on Romans*, but here too, the author seems to read into the text (119). A pattern emerges: the author tends to stretch the texts of Aquinas beyond what they actually say. Indeed, when he does offer key citations, he spends too little time with the details of the text and does not seem to take alternate readings seriously. What we have here, in fact, is too little historical work and too much speculative theology.

Strikingly, Meinert's monograph never considers a doctrinal objection to his position; that is, he does not explain how every act of the infused virtue is accompanied by its complementary gift. For example, if the infused virtues are never operative without the Spirit's gifts, then an act of faith apparently requires its complementary gifts to be actualized, in this case, the gifts of understanding and knowledge (maybe both, or at least one of them?). But can this make sense for all acts of faith? The gift of understanding grants a deeper awareness of the vast distance between our way of conceptualizing divine realities and the realities themselves, so that we come to a deeper knowledge of "what God is not" (II-II, q. 8). The concepts in question are derived from public revelation and man's use of reason. Why would this gift be necessary for an act of faith in the historicity of Christ's miracles, or the acceptance of his parables as true? Why can imperfect yet authentic acts of faith in these things not occur without the Spirit's motion in the gift of understanding? I regularly teach the seven gifts to undergraduate theology students, and I cannot imagine how I would explain why the gift of understanding (or knowledge) must be actualized in every single act of faith. One could think of other examples: why does every act of hope have to include an act of fear of the Lord, one that only the Spirit moving in the gifts can bring about?

Another objection comes to mind: if Aquinas truly thought that the Spirit always moves in the gifts when the infused virtues are enacted, what part of revelation caused him to arrive at such a strong doctrinal conclusion? The Pauline language of the sons of God being led by the Spirit of God hardly suffices, since the Spirit moves in various ways. Meinert would respond by citing *ST* I-II, q. 68, a. 2. Yet it still remains unclear why the imperfect possession of the infused virtues renders impossible an imperfect virtuous act without the Spirit's motion via the seven gifts. That this motion is needed for perfect acts of virtue is clear. But if the acquired virtues can be imperfectly possessed and actualized by us as secondary,

principal causes, why not some operations of the infused virtues as well?

A final doctrinal objection to Meinert's central claim should be mentioned: if the infused virtues cannot operate without the Spirit's movement in the gifts *and* a gift of actual charity, then the Spirit's motion would appear to follow our free decision. That is, we can enact faith, hope, and charity whenever we choose (hence the traditional pious language of "making acts of love" during one's meditation). While the Spirit may well elevate those acts beyond our present habitual capacity, Meinert's proposal would seem to grant the believer a certain control over the Spirit's movement. Here, the classical Thomistic approach (as represented by Ambroise Gardeil and Garrigou-Lagrange, among others; see 30–32) seems more sound: certain virtuous acts remain within our reach according to our free decision (always presuming the presence of natural and supernatural *auxilium* as God's primary causality of human operations), while more fervent acts of virtue are provoked in us in unforeseeable ways, as the Spirit moves through the gifts. For Thomas, the gifts as *habitus* are instrumental causes through which the Spirit moves as principal cause. Aquinas generally does not use the language of instrumental action when referring to daily acts of the infused virtues (acts made possible by the supernatural *auxilium* of cooperative grace, so that the Spirit remains the primary cause of every act, but not the principal cause of every act).

All that being said, it should be clear that the present work's strengths outshine its weaknesses. The links between the doctrines of the seven gifts (*ST* I-II, q. 68) and actual grace (qq. 109–14) clearly need to be drawn, and Meinert generally does so in a deeply insightful and accurate way. For example, he beautifully links the grace of perseverance with the virtue of fortitude and its accompanying gift (176–87). Finally, the work's speculative character stands out as one of its strengths, for the author has clearly entered into the mind of Aquinas and the Thomistic tradition, as he revives a somewhat forgotten Scholastic conversation on the daily workings of grace. Given the density and highly metaphysical nature of the arguments, it seems that the book's audience will primarily consist of professors and doctoral students. Meinert presumes a good grasp of Aquinas's philosophy and a general grasp of his doctrine of grace. The work requires a slow reading, and it is well worth the effort. N.V

Bernhard Blankenhorn, O.P.
Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas
Rome

The Year of Our Lord 1943: Christian Humanism in an Age of Crisis by Alan Jacobs (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018*), 256 pp.

THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1943 is a remarkable and unconventional book. The volume focuses on Christian intellectual life in the year that saw the major reversal of fortunes in the Second World War. At this point the victory of the Allied forces was increasingly recognized as sure. This is the context in which Alan Jacobs tells the story of how prominent Christian intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic envisioned the cultural reconstruction of Western civilization after the war. The subtitle of the book, *Christian Humanism in an Age of Crisis*, articulates this common postwar aspiration. The five central *dramatis personae* that Jacobs casts for his drama are (1) Jacques Maritain, the influential Thomist theologian and personalist philosopher whose presence looms large in twentieth-century Catholic political and ecclesial life, (2) T. S. Eliot, arguably the greatest poet of the twentieth century, whose writing on literature, education, and cultural life offer a traditionalist Anglican voice to the project of Christian humanism, (3) C. S. Lewis, the tireless Christian apologist who became *the* public voice of evangelical Anglican Christianity during the war and remained so until his death in 1963, (4) W. H. Auden, the English poet who during the war settled in America and whose jarring poetry is a scathing denunciation of postwar bourgeois sentiment, and (5) Simone Weil, who, in her short and anguished life, produced aphoristic, staccato-like philosophy—the amalgam of both her mysticism and political activism. Alongside these central figures, Jacobs invites many other contemporaneous acclaimed “Christian humanists” to make a brief appearance on stage.

Already during the last two years of the war, the political and military leaders, captains of industry, jurists, and engineers of the allied forces began preparations for the reconstruction of life after the war. Jacobs’s drama focuses on a series of thinkers less concerned with practical postwar considerations than “with a renewal of Christian thought and practice, especially in the schools of the Western world” (xii). These Christian humanists shared the conviction that a sufficient degree of responsibility for the horrors of the previous decade lay at the feet of an educational system indifferent to a Christian vision of the human person. An authentically human education was vital, therefore, to reconstruct a civilization from the ashes of totalitarian violence.

At the outset, Jacobs narrates the history of two intellectual societies, each on one side of the Atlantic, founded to debate the relation between faith and the social order. The Conference on Science, Philosophy, and Religion, established in 1940 at Jewish Theological Seminary in New York

by its president Louis Finkelstein, gave formal expression to a concern, harbored by many educators, that positivism (in the sciences) and pragmatism (in the world beyond the laboratory) were morally vacuous, endemic to American education, and woefully ill-equipped to educate a democratic citizenry at war with a totalitarian regime. The conviction that eternal realities—justice, truth, goodness, and beauty—can be known and rationally defended was more important to America's war effort than the state of her munitions and battalions. On the other side of the Atlantic a similar gathering met in London, convened by J. H. Oldham; they gave themselves the name "Oldham's Moot." This conversation, which ran from 1938 to 1947, included cultural avatars such as T. S. Eliot, Karl Mannheim, Alec Vidler, Christopher Dawson, Walter Moberly, and John Middleton Murry. The question of the definition of "culture" and, more particularly, the place of Christian faith in such culture animated the discussions at Oldham's Moot.

Jacques Maritain played a decisive role in advancing a particular Catholic version of "Christian humanism." Catholic humanism was envisioned as a response to the humanism first advanced in the Renaissance and culminating in its vicious expression in the Enlightenment. For Maritain, the tale of modern humanism is a narrative of decline, in which an anthropocentric, stunted humanism took root, displacing authentic humanism, falsely imagining "human nature as closed in upon itself or absolutely self-sufficient" (42). The result was a "truncated humanity, a sad parody, almost, of what humans ought to be and can be." By contrast, Maritain sought to advance an "integral humanism" constructed on a Thomistic anthropology, in which the human person and culture are open to the transcendent and intelligible by way of a supernatural teleology.

The war years saw Reinhold Niebuhr become a popular advocate for a "Christian realism"—a muscular Christianity, not afraid to admit and engage with sin in the world. Rather than retreat from an often messy, secular reality, Niebuhr maintained that Christians must redeem the time; they are called to robust engagement in political, military, and economic arenas. Jacobs contrasts Niebuhr's vision of Christian life from that proposed by the players in his drama. Jacobs focuses (especially) on how W. H. Auden and C. S. Lewis insisted on the transcendent orientation of the Christian faith, on the primacy of its otherworldly, eternal dimensions, and the necessity of Christians giving priority to the contemplation of such *eternal* realities. If our citizenship is truly in heaven, maintained Auden and Lewis, this requires that we "decenter the world of politics—not to ignore it, but to shift it toward the periphery, to see it as among the second rather than the first things" (56). Auden asked a pointed rhetorical

question of Niebuhr: "The question is: does he believe that the contemplative life is the highest and most exhausting of vocations, that the church is saved by the saints, or doesn't he?" (55). Likewise, Lewis insisted that the pursuit of learning has the same value in wartime as it does in peacetime: "The war creates no absolutely new situation; it simply aggravates the permanent human situation so that we can no longer ignore it. Human life has always been lived on the edge of a precipice" (58). In marked contrast to Niebuhr, both Auden and Lewis counseled a sustained advertence to eternity even (or perhaps especially) in the chaos of war.

The relation of the Christian faith to power is a major theme of the book. The diverse advocates of a new Christian humanism shared an unease with the use of temporal power to secure spiritual ends. They called for a rejection of the "contract with force" and a renegotiation of the terms of relation with state power and privilege. Charles Norris Cochrane's hugely influential *Christianity and Classical Culture* (1940) had ominous contemporary implications, according to Auden. The "Christian empire" of Theodosius sought to instantiate things of the spirit by power politics; in the contemporary context, that danger seemed particularly acute once again. In a review for the *New Republic*, Auden wrote, "Mr. Cochrane's terrifying description of the 'Christian' empire under Theodosius should discourage such hopes of using Christianity as a spiritual benzedrine for the earthly city" (79). It is a mistake, maintained Auden, to construct the social cohesion required to combat the idolatrous unity of totalitarianism on the edifice of a bourgeois established religion.

Woven into the modern "contract with force" is a technocratic worldview—an idealization of power that seeks to harness nature's power in order to control other people. Nazi Germany was paradigmatic for such a despotic technocratic regime. Churchill warned that unless England stood strong in the face of Nazi aggression, the world "will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the light of perverted science." A common English trope during the war was to identify the Nazis as "masters of new and unprecedentedly dangerous technologies," to which the only authentic resistance was moral—the "forces of character." Lewis's (and J. R. R. Tolkien's) recurring castigation of the philosophy latent in modern science is representative. Modern science and ancient magic share a common genetic code; they are twins—"one was sickly and died, the other strong and throve" (132–33): "Both seek knowledge for the sake of power" (133). Modern science (culminating in technocratic totalitarian regimes) is principally about force, about the control of the many by the few. In the conclusion to *The Abolition of Man*, Lewis wrote: "What we call Man's power over Nature turns out to be a

power exercised by some men over other men with Nature as its instrument" (134).

The concluding chapters of the book concern how these protagonists of Christian humanism understood education and the formation of culture. They shared an antipathy to government-run education systems, whose universal mandates were concocted from on high by "educational experts." The philosophic ills (the use of force and the desire to control) that plague modern science and culminate in the technocratic tyrannies of the twentieth century equally infect liberal and instrumentalist visions of education. A more authentically human vision of education must be envisioned. Maritain's appeal for a personalist philosophy to underwrite education was representative: "The prime goal of education is the conquest of internal and spiritual freedom to be achieved by the individual person, or, in other words, his liberation through knowledge, and wisdom, good will, and love" (126). A prepackaged, statist conception of education as vocational preparation is woefully insufficient, maintained Maritain. Indeed, it "leaves in human life nothing but relationships of force, or at best those of pleasure, and necessarily ends up in a philosophy of domination. A technocratic society is but a totalitarian one" (131). A human education, one that is authentically liberating, cannot be conceived apart from the mediating institutions that mold the young in wisdom: family, church, political affiliations, and, most importantly, "the saints and martyrs [who] are the true educators of mankind" (130).

In a similar vein, Lewis held that a human education is a moral education: "The little human animal will not at first have the right responses. It must be trained to feel pleasure, liking, disgust, and hatred at those things which really are pleasant, likable, disgusting and hateful" (137). As such, the real aim of education is the shaping of loves according to what Augustine would call a normative *ordo amoris*. In his influential essay, "The Social Function of Poetry," Eliot sounded a similar note: poetry serves to shape the affections of a culture. As such, the unifying feature informing the pedagogy of Lewis, Maritain, Weil, and Eliot is the Augustinian quest to discover an authentic *ordo amoris*: "The necessity of seeking the *ordo amoris*, of training the emotional responses before training the rational ones" (182).

The book concludes with a delightful engagement with Auden's comical poem "Under Which Lyre: A Reactionary Tract for the Times." Auden narrates the battle for the soul of the modern university as a war between "the sons of Hermes" and "Apollo's children." Hermes is the god of arts and letters; his offspring dream, interpret, and contemplate. Apollo, the god of reason and order, spawns a love for pragmatism and power, for utility and

administrative bureaucracy. Auden first read his poem at Harvard in 1946, and it is a none-too-veiled denunciation of the direction the university had taken during the war years. The president of Harvard, James Bryant Conant, wanted a university useful to the industrial, military, and governmental needs of a nation at war. To that end, he demoted the humanities, prioritized the useful sciences, and cultivated technological research. With President Conant, Auden recognized Apollo taking his seat of power at the university, seeking to extend his totalitarian technocratic reach:

And when he occupies a college,
Truth is replaced by Useful Knowledge;
 He pays particular
Attention to Commercial Thought,
Public Relations, Hygiene, Sport,
 In his curricula.¹

The sons of Hermes, entrusted with advancing genuine human education, necessarily dread "his threat / To organize us." The situation is dire, but Auden is hopeful: "Zeus willing, we, the un-political, / Shall beat him yet." To resist Apollo's parasitical rule of the university, the sons of Hermes compose, recite, and obey a "Hermetic Decalogue":

Thou shalt not do as the dean pleases,
Thou shalt not write thy doctor's thesis
 On education,
Thou shalt not worship projects nor
Shalt thou or thine bow down before
 Administration.

Thou shalt not answer questionnaires
Or quizzes upon World-Affairs,
 Nor with compliance
Take any test. Thou shalt not sit
With statisticians nor commit
 A social science.

Thou shalt not be on friendly terms
With guys in advertising firms,

¹ W. H. Auden, "Under which lyre," in *Collected Poems* (New York: Random House, 1976), 261.

Jacobs presents “Under Which Lyre” as a hilarious but prescient poem about a perennial pestilence of the modern university.

The Year of Our Lord 1943 has an idiosyncratic but delightful structure: diverse figures flow in and out of a drama held together by a year (1943) and a common theme (Christian humanism). Jacobs’s tale relates the effort of five Christian intellectuals to construct a new Christian humanism in the wake of the catastrophic Second World War. The relevance of their project nearly eighty years later is evident. The philosophic challenges latent in modern science identified by Maritain, Eliot, Lewis, Auden, and Weil remain with us. And the accompanying technocratic and pragmatic vision of education is less questioned now than when they wrote. But their vision for an authentic human education, one that prioritizes the knowledge and love of eternal realities, that seeks spiritual freedom and shapes the *ordo amoris* of the student to respond well to the given structures of the universe, holds out direction and hope. 

Gerald P. Boersma
Ave Maria University
Ave Maria, FL

Jesuit Biblical Studies after Trent: Franciscus Toletus and Cornelius A Lapide by Luke Murray (*Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019*), 218 pp.

“IN THE FIELD of biblical hermeneutics, one area which scholarship has neglected is Catholic biblical scholarship during the late sixteenth century” (17). With this observation Luke Murray begins *Jesuit Biblical Studies after Trent*, a significant contribution to a field that deserves greater attention. The book acquaints the reader with the biblical thought of two Jesuits, situating them within the theological issues of the period, and offers an entrée into future work on the topic.

Murray identifies a number of grounds for the neglect and occasional criticism of Catholic exegesis after Trent: excessive deference to the hierarchical Church, partisan defense of the Vulgate, and the priority of polemical concerns. A notable exception to this general pattern is the nineteenth-century Catholic theologian Matthias Scheeben, who heaped praise upon the early modern exegetes (17–19). Murray steers a middle way between these positions, pointing out the strengths and value of early-modern Jesuit biblical scholarship while avoiding Scheeben’s effusiveness.

Jesuit Biblical Studies is divided into four chapters. The first offers general observations on the Jesuit contribution to biblical exegesis in the decades during and after Trent. Murray dedicates a chapter each to the life and work of Franciscus Toletus and Cornelius A Lapide, followed by one chapter comparing their respective commentaries on John 17. Each of the first three chapters dedicates considerable space to reviewing secondary literature.

Murray identifies several priorities of Jesuit biblical scholarship in the sixteenth century. One of these was defending the Vulgate, although the earliest members of the order differed somewhat on how to do this (49). Another feature was the effort to integrate Scholastic theology, especially the thought of Thomas Aquinas, with knowledge of the biblical languages and other aspects of humanist education. A third feature was interest in the Church Fathers, which was related to the *ad fontes* impulse of the age, but without opposition to Scholasticism.

One helpful feature of *Jesuit Biblical Studies* is its presentation of the Thomistic framework that Jesuit exegetes took from the Angelic Doctor himself and commentators like Domingo De Soto and Thomas de Vio Cajetan. Aquinas viewed biblical inspiration as a category of prophecy, which is a gratuitous grace of knowledge that bestows understanding of divine realities that transcend what human beings can know by their own natural powers (75–76). The commentators drew out more explicitly the distinctions between different kinds of intellectual lights, locating the light of prophecy (*lumen propheticum*) between the light of faith (*lumen fidei*) and the light of glory (*lumen gloriae*) that the blessed enjoy.

A crucial point for the understanding of biblical inspiration in the sixteenth century is that followers of Thomas posited the need not only for the intellectual light of prophecy to illuminate the sacred author's mind, but also for new or reformulated intellectual species that the inspired mind had to judge. On this theory, God can allow the species to come from the prophet's natural experience, or infuse the species himself, or infuse the knowledge directly. This opened up the question of how much of the content in any given instance of prophetic inspiration came from the writer's own knowledge, and how much directly from God; biblical theologians could disagree on the respective weight attributed to each. The role of natural experience provided, in any case, a theoretical justification for studying the historical context and original languages of Scripture (80).

Murray sees a parallel between the issues at stake in biblical inspiration, on the one hand, and the *de auxiliis* controversy over grace, free will, and justification, on the other. Some scholars, like Domingo Bañez, held that each and every letter of Scripture was directly inspired or dictated by God,

and this position was closely related to the notion of physical pre-motion behind his understanding of justification. Other scholars, by contrast, allowed more freedom to the human author to use his natural talents in understanding and communicating God's message. The Jesuit Leonardus Lessius was one of these, and this position had its analogue in his "Molinist" approach to justification, with its greater emphasis on human freedom and agency.

Where do Toletus and A Lapide line up on these questions? Murray notes that there is a textual issue with Toletus that bears upon the matter: three paragraphs that may be later additions to his discussion of inspiration. These have more of a Bañezian flavor and may be interpolations, because otherwise Toletus's thought seems closer to that of Lessius and his teaching on sufficient grace has a slight Molinist twist (89, 163). There is ambiguity in A Lapide's thought on inspiration, which sought a nuanced understanding of "dictation" that could incorporate the legitimate insights of both perspectives (122, 131). He emphasizes predestination more than Toletus and was thus closer to Bañez on these issues, although he also clearly affirms human freedom and moral responsibility (174, 183).

Toletus made contributions to both textual editing and the understanding of the senses of Scripture. He was appointed to help revise the Vulgate by Sixtus V, but the Pope did not heed the advice of his editors, and the final edition left much to be desired. Under the successors of Sixtus, Toletus and the other members of the commission finally produced the Sixto-Clementine edition in 1592. Like most Catholic exegetes of the period, Toletus affirmed the multiple sub-categories of spiritual senses in Scripture, but he also held that there could be multiple literal senses. He gives numerous reasons for this, including the multiplicity of translations and variant readings in use in the Church. But he thinks that the multiple literal senses are ultimately according to the intention of the Holy Spirit, rather than the human author (96–98).

A Lapide was more prolific and prolix than Toletus, authoring a commentary on the whole Bible, which a quiet life largely free from controversy enabled him to do. While eschewing private judgment, A Lapide believed that everyone should study Scripture (141). He provided an account of inspiration and canonicity that sought to integrate God's direct work with the sacred author with the Church's external authority and liturgical life. A Lapide saw a greater unity between the literal and spiritual senses than most other writers and spoke of the "genuine sense" of Scripture, which is the meaning intended by the Holy Spirit as primary author. Finding it, however, requires placing oneself in the human author's milieu and studying his context and audience (125). Thus A Lapide, while

describing the human authors as instruments or organs, is attentive to their variety, and says that the Spirit is like a flute player who adapts himself to different instruments (131).

A Lapidé brought a strong Christological perspective to the study of Scripture as well as an encyclopedic knowledge of patristic sources and familiarity with contemporary authors. His favorite Father, based on the number of times he cites him, is Augustine, followed by Jerome for the Old Testament and Chrysostom for the New (143). Borrowing from Henri de Lubac, Murray describes A Lapidé's approach as "typological exegesis," which marked a transition from a strict fourfold sense of Scripture to a more spiritual approach that sought to elucidate the meaning intended by the Spirit and the eternal realities of the faith (154).

Chapter 4 offers a concrete and comparative illustration of these Jesuits' exegetical principles in action by examining their respective commentaries on John 17. This brings to the fore a notable feature of early-modern Catholic biblical scholarship: its weaving together of exegetical and dogmatic issues. Neither Jesuit blushes at bringing to bear the unity of Scripture, the definitions of ecumenical councils, or even liturgical sources to explain particular verses. This tendency is one ground for the frequent dismissal of early-modern Catholic exegesis, but in this respect Murray observes and explicates more than he evaluates.

John 17 is also an important locus for the respective views of Toletus and A Lapidé on grace and predestination, demonstrating how each sought to integrate patristic sources in light of the controversies of the day. Murray helpfully provides some tables that offer a sense of how often each Jesuit cited particular Fathers and notes their preference for those who affirmed their own positions. Toletus, for example, is wont to cite Basil and Cyril of Alexandria in support of his Molinist tendencies (180).

It may be beneficial to this relatively uncharted scholarly field to observe some similarities and differences between Toletus and A Lapidé, on the one hand, and one of the earliest Jesuit biblical theologians, Alfonso Salmeron, on the other. Salmeron was one of the founding members of the Society of Jesus and made his name as a preacher and theologian at the Council of Trent. He had no evident intent to become a published theologian, but composed at the behest of General Borgia sixteen volumes of commentary on the New Testament. Although his work did not see the light of day until the turn of the seventeenth century (about fifteen years after his death), the material dates to decades earlier, mostly reflecting the issues that had dominated theology from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the end of the Council of Trent.

A Lapidé knew Salmeron's commentaries and cites them occasionally,

and their works have many features in common: interest in the original languages along with a defense of the Vulgate; encyclopedic knowledge of the Fathers and other theologians; a Christocentric approach and use of typological exegesis; a strong interest in history; regard for the Church's liturgy and practice as a source of theology. While Murray highlights A Lapide's indebtedness to Toletus, he owed something to Salmeron as well.

Jesuit Biblical Studies has a few flaws. While the literature review is quite valuable, it takes up too much space in the main text and could have been condensed. The presence of typos and an occasional stray wording indicates that the copy editing was not altogether careful. These shortcomings, however, detract little from a valuable book on a topic about which too little is known. One would like to see someday a more comprehensive and comparative look at Jesuit biblical studies after Trent, one that would account for Salmeron, Juan de Maldonado, and Benedict Pereira, along with better-known authors like Robert Bellarmine or Peter Canisius. We can hope that Murray has more to offer on this topic. N.V

Sam Zeno Conedera, S.J.
Saint Louis University
St. Louis, MO

Thomas Aquinas and His Predecessors: The Philosophers and the Church Fathers in His Works by Leo Elders (*Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2018*), xv + 382 pp.

SCHOLARS HAVE LONG RECOGNIZED Thomas's extensive reliance upon an array of thinkers, from Aristotle to Avicenna and Averroes in the realm of philosophy, or from Saint Augustine to John Damascene in the realm of theology. And while a number of important studies have explored Thomas's relation to individual thinkers or schools of thought, none have attempted to survey comprehensively all his major philosophical and theological influences in a single volume. Thanks to the late Father Leo Elders, who carefully examines thousands of quotations culled from the entirety of Thomas's work, students of Saint Thomas now have just such a resource. In *Thomas Aquinas and His Predecessors*, Elders shows concretely how Thomas engaged various philosophical and theological authorities throughout the span of his intellectual career. In doing so Elders provides Thomist scholarship with an invaluable resource. His study not

only reveals Thomas's reliance on others, but also highlights his unique and synthetic creativity.

Elders centers his study strictly upon Aquinas's own references, observations, and critical notes (x). He does not delve into the texts of the thinkers treated by Saint Thomas, but approaches them only as they appear in the *corpus* of the Common Doctor. Thus, one should not expect to find anything like a historical study of Thomas's predecessors themselves. Nevertheless, each chapter begins with a summary introduction that includes a brief historical survey of the thinker in question, the focus of each chapter remains principally on St. Thomas's appropriation of and engagement with his predecessors. After each introduction, Elders catalogues Saint Thomas's various summaries, quotations, and interactions with a given thinker or text. Elders's work, which is surely the result of years of assiduous note-taking, in many ways recalls the medieval *florilegia*. Each chapter summarizes an extensive amount of research and provides the reader with a first-hand, though necessarily abbreviated, glimpse at how Thomas engaged with his sources. These appear as paraphrases (with sources in the footnotes) rather than as direct quotations. In fact, Elders seldom quotes Thomas's own words, and rarely adds any comments of his own.

The book is divided into sixteen chapters that are ordered chronologically. The first five chapters deal with Plato, Aristotle (in two chapters), the Stoics, and a chapter on gnosticism and neo-Platonism. Chapters 6–11 delve into the Fathers of the Church: Augustine, Jerome, John Chrysostom, and Pope Gregory the Great, with a chapter on two treatises of Boethius and another on Pseudo-Dionysius. Chapters 12–16 treat important medieval texts and thinkers that are more explicitly philosophical in nature (the *Liber de causis*, Avicenna, Averroes, and a chapter on Avicbron and Maimonides); Elders also includes a chapter on John Damascene and Anselm of Canterbury. Each chapter is self-contained and may be read on its own. Reading the book cover-to-cover, however, is also beneficial, as it provides an overarching sense of Saint Thomas's engagement with the vast array of both philosophical and theological authorities in his works.

At the introduction to each chapter, Elders provides a brief historical overview of the thinker in question and notes the possible texts to which Saint Thomas would have had access. Elders also frequently notes the number of times a thinker is mentioned or quoted as an indication of his relative importance in Thomas's *corpus*. Thus, for instance, we are told that the *Stoici* are mentioned ninety-five times (73); Averroes is mentioned ninety times by name and more than three hundred times as "the

Commentator" (309); Maimonides, more than eighty times (337). When appropriate, Elders also specifies places within Thomas's work where a given thinker is cited. Thus, we are told that Gregory the Great is quoted 479 times in the *secunda pars* of the *Summa theologiae* (205), highlighting the importance of his authority in Thomas's teaching on the virtues; conversely, Elders informs us that Thomas only refers to Jerome a few times in his treatise on the sacraments (140). Occasionally, Elders will include lists of maxims or principles that Thomas borrows from different thinkers.

Since Elders only treats thinkers and texts as they arise in Thomas's work, the scope of each chapter varies largely based upon how much Thomas himself engages with them. Arguably the most interesting chapters are those pertaining to Thomas's use of the thinkers of the medieval Arabic and Jewish philosophical traditions. Since Thomas frequently summarizes the philosophical views of his Arabic and Jewish predecessors, Elders's review of these accounts often includes a synopsis of Thomas's own summary. In such instances, the reader is able to gain a significantly better sense of Thomas's engagement. For example, in recounting Thomas's debate with Averroes on the question of the possible intellect, Elders cites Thomas's own account of Averroes's teaching: "Averroes argues as follows to establish his theory: for an immaterial intellect it would be impossible to be individualized, because it is without matter. Therefore it cannot be particular for each human being. If it were proper to every human being, the cognitive species would also be individualized in us, but in reality they are universal concepts" (318). Though dense, this summary nevertheless provides the reader with sufficient background information to understand the significance of Saint Thomas's response to Averroes. For better or for worse, this type of summary represents an exception to most of Elders's work throughout the book. This is due to Elders's penchant for adhering closely to the text. In the same chapter on Averroes, Elders describes how Averroes thought that air contributed to the natural movement of light and heavy bodies on account of a natural necessity. We are told neither the meaning of Averroes's view nor its significance. Elders simply adds, "but, says Thomas, this is erroneous" (329). Without any comment, Elders moves on to the next topic. This is characteristic of many of his summaries. The absence of further analysis may pose a hindrance to the uninitiated.

Elders's study also reflects how Thomas's use of the Church Fathers is different in nature from his use of philosophers. While Thomas typically refers to the latter in matters of reason, he appeals to the former in matters of faith (see *ST* I, q. 1, a. 8, ad 2). As mentioned above, Elders highlights particular places where Thomas borrows extensively from a given thinker. Thus, for example, we learn that Thomas relies heavily on Saint Gregory

the Great on the question of vices and sin. In fact, Saint Gregory is Thomas's most important source on this question (208). Here, too, however, the sheer volume of information comes at a cost. Significant differences are often mentioned without any explicative commentary. For example, Elders tells us that John Chrysostom does not attribute judiciary power to Christ as man but only as he is God. To this Elders simply adds: "Thomas corrects these words: Christ has this power in so far as he is the head of redeemed humanity" (170). This is a remarkable difference. Yet, Elders says no more on the matter.

We can say of Elders's study what he himself wrote of Saint Thomas's commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*: "For the attentive reader the commentary is a mine of information" (59). Elders's study provides an indispensable resource for anyone seeking a greater understanding of Saint Thomas's thought. Furthermore, it provides a useful starting point for research into Thomas's engagement with his sources. On account of the breadth and density of the material covered, Elders does not often provide overarching narratives, nor does he show the reader how all the myriad pieces fit together. As a result, the reader is unlikely to draw any definite conclusions from the study without spending a great deal more time with the primary texts. Elders's extensive notes provide a handy guide to those willing to pursue matters further. Finally, an overview of the work as a whole offers a portrait, rooted in so many texts, of Thomas's engagement with his most important intellectual predecessors. It is fitting to conclude with Elders's final assessment: "The final conclusion which imposes itself after the following detailed survey is that St. Thomas studied and evaluated the doctrine of these authors with perfect objectivity, grasped the essential elements, and examined the extent of their being well-founded and true" (xi). Given Elders's erudition, one does not doubt this claim. Nevertheless, the final conclusion will likely impose itself only on the reader who goes beyond Elders's important survey to the text of Thomas himself. In this regard, Elders's book warmly invites the disciple of Saint Thomas to learn immediately at the feet of the Common Doctor. 

Joshua H. Lim
 Thomas Aquinas College
 Santa Paula, CA

Handbook of Catholic Dogmatics, Book One: Theological Epistemology, Part One: The Objective Principles of Theological Knowledge by Matthias Joseph Scheeben, translated by Michael J. Miller (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2019), xi + 426 pp.

SPURRED BY THE WAKE of the First Vatican Council, the German theologian Matthias Joseph Scheeben set to work on his *Handbook of Catholic Dogmatics*, a project that he hoped would yield an up-to-date resource of unparalleled comprehensiveness for the study of dogmatic theology. After nearly twenty years and more than three thousand pages of output, Scheeben's work on the *Handbook* and his life were brought to a premature close. Nevertheless, the three large tomes that he had completed and published prior to his death stand as both the *magnum opus* of his career and a masterpiece of modern Catholic theology. Martin Grabmann certainly echoed the judgment of many when he identified Scheeben as the greatest dogmatic theologian of the nineteenth century ("and recent times") and described his *Handbook* as "the deepest, and the meatiest, dogmatic work in the German language."¹ Where enthusiasm for Scheeben has been notably absent among American and English-speaking theologians, moreover, this arguably owes something to the fact that no full English translation of the *Handbook* has ever been available—that is, until now.

Scheeben's monumental *Handbook* is now on offer by Emmaus Academic in the English language thanks to the similarly immense efforts and talents of Michael J. Miller, who has been translating it for more than three years, and David Augustine, a doctoral candidate and Scheeben specialist at the Catholic University of America, who rigorously proof-reads and prepares the indices and bibliographies for the English volumes. The work here under review is the first volume (1.1) of this English translation, whose content corresponds to the first half of the first treatise of the *Handbook*, originally published in 1873.

"Theological Epistemology" is the titular subject of this first treatise, whose pride of place in the *Handbook* likely owes much to the profile that its fundamental-theological topics had very recently received from the Council. In any case, this first treatise is not the sort of "ground-clearing" epistemology of Cartesian heritage that prefaces and establishes the possibility of whatever philosophy or theology it introduces. In investi-

¹. Martin Grabmann, "Scheebens theologisches Lebenswerk," included in M. J. Scheeben, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Freiburg: Herder, 1941), xxxi (translation mine). See also Cyril Vollert, "Matthias Joseph Scheeben and the Revival of Theology," *Theological Studies* 6, no. 4 (1945): 453–88.

gating the sources, nature, and structure of faith, Scheeben's epistemology addresses the question of *how*, and not *whether*, faith constitutes an act of true and legitimate knowledge.

The treatise's basic two-part division follows the distinction between the knowing subject and the object known, and inverting the priority of modern epistemology, Scheeben follows Saint Thomas in giving first place in the treatise to the "*objective* principles" of faith. More than an homage to the Angelic Doctor, this ordering reflects Scheeben's conviction that the more important half of the causal explanation of faith lies entirely outside the agency and psychology of the believer. Thus, while volume 1.2 analyzes the subjective acts of volition, assent, and apprehension that faith entails, 1.1 (the volume of this review) investigates the nature of the objects that elicit them—namely, the divine truths to which the believer assents and the means by which these truths reach and authoritatively confront us with the force of a summons from a supreme lord enjoining and evoking the assent of faith in us.

With Saint Thomas, Scheeben accepted the Aristotelian principle that acts are specified by their objects. By implication, we cannot understand the nature of the act of faith without first understanding the nature of its object. The fundamental or "primordial" object and principle of faith, moreover, is divine revelation, and thus, in the first of the book's five chapters, Scheeben examines the nature, modes, purpose, and history of divine revelation, identifies mystery as its characteristic content, and develops a taxonomy of the kinds of truths that belong to or relate to it in one way or another.

Divine revelation is the logical centerpiece of this book, as of Scheeben's theological epistemology as a whole; nevertheless, the topic to which he devotes the bulk of its 389 pages is the Church's teaching body and its role as the agent of revelation's transmission and proclamation. And just as the nature of faith is defined by the nature of divine revelation as its object, in a similar way the nature of the magisterium is what it is as a consequence both of the way that God chose to make himself known and of the purposes of that revelation.

Chapter 2, arguably the most important chapter of the book (and its second lengthiest), thus expounds the magisterium—its hierarchical organization and head; its relation to the believing body of the Church, its apostolic heritage, its prerogatives and charisms—all as so many implications of its defining role as the complement of divine revelation. That revelation should need some such complement in the first place owes to the fact that God has revealed himself in particular historical moments, events, and persons rather than in the immediate *here* and *now* of every

human being—a fact elaborated at some length in the diachronic-historical survey of revelation at the close of chapter 1. Some specially authorized teaching body is needed if revelation is to move integrally beyond its historical debut and into every time, place, idiom, and culture thereafter. Still, the task of the mediator of revelation is more than that of a translator and curator, and a divine revelation cannot be reduced to a mere content that need only be disseminated somehow. Revelation is the sovereign word of the King of Kings and a mandate summoning every heart and mind to the obedience of faith. The live, authoritative voice and Person of revelation, though no longer present immediately, are thus no more dispensable than its contents—the events, words, deeds, and doctrines that the teaching body of the Church preserves and presents to all the world. If it is truly to mediate this sovereign word in its integrity and with its essential imperative force, the mediator of revelation must also bear, vicariously, the authority and personal presence of Christ as the apostles did. And so it does in fact, as Scheeben argues, drawing on scriptural and patristic sources to demonstrate that the apostolic commission was understood both to have entailed this kind of authority and to have passed from the apostles to their episcopal successors.

Chapters 3 and 4 elaborate the mediatory role of the teaching body of the Church in relation to Sacred Scripture and the material content of ecclesial Tradition. Scripture and Tradition possess each its own dignity as distinct but radically interdependent media of divine revelation, and each relies, in its own way, on the ministry of the teaching office. Scripture is the preminent record of revelation, inspired, as Scheeben carefully explains, in such a way that we can rightly ascribe authorship to God without thereby subtracting anything from the agency of its human authors. Nevertheless, we could never have known of the unity and supernatural character of these various ancient books if the apostles and their episcopal successors had not promulgated them as Sacred Scripture. The status of Scripture, in turn, attests the divine commission and prior authority of the teaching office in virtue of whose testimony the Church has received it as the word of God.

Beyond this formal dependence on the teaching apostolate, Scripture (the Gospels in particular) stands in a relation of material dependence upon the oral tradition of the apostles and their successors. The New Testament is a written subset of the apostolic teaching that was otherwise passed down by the Church and its magisterium, by the guidance of the Spirit, through the various modes and media of ecclesial Tradition.

Chapter 4 identifies these modes and media, elaborates the principles that govern ecclesial Tradition as a collaboration of human and divine

agency, and explains how the substance of the apostolic oral Tradition has lived on in its integrity through every age in the Church's preaching, belief, and practice, under the unfailing guidance of the Spirit. In light of this study of the actual operation of Sacred Tradition—a study aided in no small measure by his extensive familiarity with this same Tradition—Scheeben explains the precise sense and application of the criteria (*universitas*, *antiquitas*, and *consensio*) of Saint Vincent's famous canon of catholicity. Here as throughout the book Scheeben emphasizes the significance of the magisterium and especially that of its supreme pontiff in his jurisdictional capacity. Consequently, catholicity is ultimately not a measure of the aggregate witness of the Church's individual members. To identify the mind or spirit of the Church with a mere aggregate or simple majority in this way would suggest that the Church's members stood in no more integral a relation to one another than do the members of a heap. The governing metaphor, by contrast, in Scheeben's construal of the Church and the interrelation of its members is that of a living organism; consequently, although every member and organ is implicated in the Church's total life and integrity, they are not all equally essential to that life, constitutive of it, or representative of it. Just as and *just because* the apostles were the heart and soul of the Church in the first century, so also their episcopal heirs thereafter constitute its organic core. And just as Saint Peter was then the foundation stone of the Church and the fundamental bearer of the promise and charism of the Spirit of Truth, so also the heirs of his see inherit his foundational office along with the abiding presence of the Spirit who preserves his judgments from error, thereby lending them their supernatural authority.

Chapter 5 studies these judgments of the pope and magisterium along with the other ordinary modes by which the teaching body of the Church asserts the word of God in one authoritative voice, thereby constituting the believing Church as one body under the headship of Christ. Here Scheeben characteristically elaborates a typology of dogmatic pronouncements that is helpful in its thoroughness, if somewhat tedious and outdated at points. Perhaps more noteworthy is Scheeben's discussion of the authority and infallibility of the pope in relation to that of the quorum of other bishops present at an ecumenical council. Although the decisions of such councils derive their authority and infallibility preeminently from the pope as head of the teaching body, Scheeben argues, the contribution of the other bishops is neither superfluous nor merely auxiliary.

Scheeben closes this final chapter with a discussion of the development of dogma and a brief Denzinger-style survey of the most important official teachings of the Church. Surveys of this kind are a programmatic

feature of the *Handbook's* argumentation and an often-valuable resource for researchers seeking historical overview and bibliography pertinent to a specific question or topic. Especially in the sections where he addresses a question that is in some way unsettled, Scheeben canvases the most important voices on the matter, from the authoritative teachings of the Scriptures, magisterial pronouncements, and early fathers, to the sophisticated and sublime insights of medieval and modern scholars and mystics. And juxtaposing these as well as Scheeben's own position, of course, is a lineup of contemporary theological foils (most prominently, Jansenists, Gallicans, and Protestants) and the partisans of a number of disputes that have since lost much of their urgency.

In general, the book is very navigable for research and episodic reading thanks to its hierarchical organization and Scheeben's use of two type sizes in the body to distinguish his primary line of argumentation (in large type) from secondary elaborations and excurses (in small type). Additionally, two new indexes (one for scriptural passages and another for subjects and persons) and a bibliography complement the English translation and make it even more research-friendly than its German antecedent.

Research utility and navigability come, however, at a significant cost to the volume's general readability: staccato transitions from subtopic to subtopic make some chapters read like encyclopedia content, and the body is quite cluttered with citations and sometimes bewildering layers of organizational scaffolding. The average sentence is a similarly over-engineered sprawl of nested subordinate clauses and other incorrigible artifacts of German syntax and neo-Scholastic diction.

None of this, of course, implies any reproach to Mr. Miller, whose translation rightly privileges clarity and fidelity to the subtlety of Scheeben's original thought and expression. Nor for that matter need it count as a reproach to Scheeben himself. At least some of the book's inaccessibility is to be expected of any work with its compendious aspiration and recondite subject matter. Nevertheless, such a challenging book is not for everyone, and I mean this not only in the sense that it represents an intellectual hurdle demanding a reader with a special, intellectual fitness. The book is challenging, furthermore, in the sense that many of its American and European readers today will find its sensibilities, as well as many of its overarching theses, disagreeable. Some, will find in it an excessively polemical tone and a preoccupation with theological truth that is insufficiently nuanced with pragmatic concerns about, say, ecumenical and pastoral implications. Others will certainly complain about its "ultramontanist" and "authoritarian" leanings. Along such lines, the twentieth-century American theologian John Courtney Murray complained that Scheeben,

captive to the preoccupations of his time, had made too much of the obdiential character of faith. "It was not Scheeben's fault," Murray dismissively remarked, "that he lived in the nineteenth century."²

Beyond the theological and philosophical preparation and the patience and precision of mind that this book certainly demands, the reader seeking to access its full value, I suggest, must be at least as acute in his awareness of the century that he inhabits as a reader, as he is of the century to which the work in question belongs. 

Jason C. Paone
Catholic University of America
Washington, DC

The University and the Church: Don Briel's Essays on Education edited by R. Jared Staudt, (*Providence, RI: Cluny Media, 2019*), xxxvi + 250 pp.

ALMOST ALL ACADEMICS have thoughts about the nature of the university, its flaws and its possibilities. But Don Briel (1947–2018) was unique: he looked deeply at the best of what had been written about Catholic education, perspicaciously analyzed its current state, and then, with astonishing effectiveness, *implemented* his visionary plan. *The University and the Church: Don Briel's Essays on Education* lays out Briel's "Foundational Principles" (part 1) and his understanding of "The Church's Vision of Higher Education" (part 2), and concludes with "Catholic Studies and the Renewal of the University," his personal account of and reflections on the university programs he actually initiated (part 3). George Weigel notes in his foreword: "The essays in this volume are more than a memorial to a great educator, a good man, and a faithful disciple. They are a template for the ongoing reform and development of Catholic higher education" (iii).

In chapter 1, "Wanted: A Ground for the Imagination," Briel juxtaposes two moral responses to the experience of the world: Martha Nussbaum's call for tolerance in light of "the radical individuality of all concrete experience," and by contrast, his own view that "the fundamental mystery of all experience of the world evoked by the religious imagination is humility" (6). Briel then applauds authors (Flannery O'Connor, Walker Percy,

² John Courtney Murray, "The Root of Faith: The Doctrine of M. J. Scheeben," *Theological Studies* 9 no. 1 (1948): 20–46, at 46.

and others), who, with the humility to let God be God, can then see the world in a clearer light.

Briel's foundational principles of education are in large part drawn from John Henry Newman and Christopher Dawson. From Newman, Briel learned that the non-Christian bent of modernity is not primarily a matter of rationality. With Newman, Briel considered "the rejection of Christianity to arise from a fault of the heart, not of the intellect; that unbelief arises, not from mere error of reasoning, but either from pride or from sensuality" (15, citing Newman, *Letters and Diaries*). Briel would later apply this insight in the specific ways that he formed his seminal programs in Catholic Studies, first at the University of St. Thomas (St. Paul, MN), and later in programs across the country and internationally. He clearly grasped that students, faculty, and administrators needed something that addressed the whole person. A superior argument would not be sufficient.

Briel found a way forward in Newman's distinction between a university and a college. For Newman, "the university is committed to the exploration and disputation of various theories and thus embodies . . . 'the element of advance,' or progress, whereas the college, focused on the formation of mind and character of the student, promotes a certain 'stability,' thus situating students in a living tradition" (200). In the preface, David Deavel nicely summarizes this crucial distinction: "The university principle, found particularly in the lecture hall, promotes the unity of knowledge and the relationship between faith and reason, while the college principle involves both personal formation and an attention to study. Both principles require the presence of the Church to survive" (x). Briel's great accomplishment was to take Newman's nineteenth-century ruminations, readjust them for our own time and problems, and bring them to life.

Briel's vision was bold, but it was also doable. Prudently, he recognized that, while a large or even a mid-size Catholic university could not adopt Newman's ideas whole cloth, "a creative minority"—a program or department within the university—could do so (224). And so, in cooperation with colleagues from several departments, Briel initiated the Catholic Studies program at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1993. The practical beauty of Briel's endeavor is that it can be achieved within existing Catholic universities as well as secular state universities. Briel's chapter "Renewing the University in a Tragic Culture" reports on important instances of programs in both kind of settings, programs that have taken root in the United States and elsewhere in North America, South America, Europe, and Africa (138).

Briel perceptively saw that these programs were "at once potent and modest" (138). The modesty comes from the very achievable, bottom-up,

small beginning. A carefully crafted proposal submitted to already existing university governing structures can get things started. The potency of the program is a bit like Jesus's mustard seed: its very small beginnings lead to something substantially greater. Once started, the Catholic Studies program will first grow, if it is going to succeed, by the attractiveness of its subject matter and faculty, and then will further grow by the attractiveness that students exert on other students. Once established, the crucial development of students living together in dorms or in designated houses consolidates, deepens, and expands the program, as do associated social and recreational programs. Perhaps most of all, faculty, staff, and students worshipping together repeatedly opens the endeavor to the joy of participating in an incarnational vision. Living together in communities in search of both faith and reason is an adaptation of Newman's understanding of the college—the *communio personarum*—that lies at the heart of the venture. This personal, relational possibility is revitalizing for adult leaders, and it is a priceless gift for Catholic students trying to negotiate their way through the difficult transition of university life.

Briel laid out nine general characteristics of the program (138–40). (1) Interdisciplinary in nature, it is designed to form a habit of mind in students that includes *wonder* when encountering great things. (2) Ecclesial in nature, it acknowledges that the Catholic intellectual tradition cannot be sustained except in an ongoing “dynamic tension with the authority of the Church” (139). (3) The programs are not solely focused on texts; they invite students into a *communio personarum*, a fellowship of Catholic minds and hearts, both past and present. Moreover, they extend to “lectures, book discussions, films, retreats, service projects, pilgrimages, liturgies, and social events” (139). (4) Featuring carefully designed study-abroad programs and leadership-formation programs and fostering students to become witnesses in the university and the broader world, the program is aimed at the intellectual and spiritual development of the whole person. (5) Reaching beyond the humanities and social sciences, Catholic Studies attempts to become a leaven within the greater university, by the formation of “future lawyers, physicians, teachers, engineers, social workers, and business people” (139). (6) Perceiving a possible threat, Briel sought programs that “are academically rigorous, overcoming the temptation to pietism, and to see the Catholic faith as an emotive rather than intellectual claim” (139). (7) The program fosters vocation, both for the priesthood and in lay vocations. (8) It aims to form a community of friendship, with bonds of communion among students and faculty. (9) It seeks to form an apostolic corps for the evangelization of the culture.

In writing this review, I can attest that Briel's nine characteristics of

a Catholic Studies program are not merely whimsical desiderata. As a member of the St. Thomas faculty who is not formally part of Catholic Studies, I have frequently taught and gotten to know students in the Catholic Studies program. The brightest, highest achieving, and most intellectually engaged students in my courses are quite commonly Catholic Studies students. And to the degree that one can assess such things, they also seem to be among the happiest and most stable. Beyond the University of St. Thomas, Briel's visionary program is now in over eighty locations in the United States and overseas (140).

The eleven collected essays of Don Briel are each of a very high quality. Each essay captures insights from great figures like Newman, Christopher Dawson, Pope Saint John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and a range of others. Anyone interested in Catholic higher education might profit from a close reading of these essays and the very fine introductory material by George Weigel, David Deavel, and R. Jared Staudt. Deavel did not exaggerate in calling Briel "an unforgettable figure," but the book is not an encomium for Briel. It is rather a clear articulation of foundational principles for Catholic higher education and an utterly engaging report of how Briel and others brought them to life. The book is realistic about current problems, but it is also deeply hopeful. After all, Briel's vision was implemented and continues to succeed in remarkable ways.

Michael Polanyi once noted that, whatever one's limitations or mistakes, making "a move in the right direction" can open up a new world of discovery for others.¹ Don Briel made a very good move in the right direction, one that was both theoretical and thoroughly practical, and, to the best of his ability to discern it, based on God's guidance. *The University and the Church* encapsulates the apostolic thought and action that have thus far proved so successful. This volume will become an invaluable resource for those wishing to contribute their own efforts. N.V

Philip Rolnick
University of St. Thomas
St. Paul, MN

¹ Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 310.

Divine Scripture in Human Understanding: A Systematic Theology of the Christian Bible by Joseph Gordon (*Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2019*), xiii + 442 pp.

JOSEPH GORDON'S ambitious book promises a "constructive systematic account of the nature and purpose of Christian Scripture." It "articulates the intelligibility of Scripture and locates it within the work of the Triune God in history and within human cultural history," including the highly variegated material history of the Bible (8). It is much more than a book on doctrines surrounding Scripture (unity, authority, inspiration, inerrancy, etc.), although its interventions there are valuable. A systematic theology of Scripture demands, Gordon says, that Scripture be understood within a comprehensive vision of the divine economy (a "rule of faith"), a theological anthropology, and detailed knowledge of the Bible's material history. Tall orders each, but Gordon delivers on all three, giving both general systematic accounts of admirable sweep and adjudications on many particular questions. The book began as Gordon's Marquette dissertation under Father Robert Doran (whose *The Trinity in History* is influential throughout) and D. Stephen Long. The book belongs to the Lonerganian project but draws from many wells—*ressourcement* giant Henri de Lubac is Gordon's other great muse, alongside Irenaeus, Origen, and Augustine—and has nothing cliquish about it. Lonerganian terminology is explained at an introductory level and applied to a bevy of Scripture-specific problems Lonergan never treated. It makes a happy addition to Notre Dame Press's already lush *Reading the Scriptures* series, edited by Gary Anderson, Matthew Levering, and Robert Wilken.

Scripture is located within the "broadest" possible theological location, the creating and redeeming work of the Triune God in history: an "all-encompassing," "threefold personal self-communication of divinity to humanity," in which Scripture serves as a privileged useful "instrument" for transforming human persons into the image of the Son, in the Spirit (96; 30, 113–16, 209, 212, 227, 248–60; see 2 Tim 3:16–17). Correlated to the Trinity's work transforming persons is a fundamental anthropology which is basically Lonergan's, but it is wonderfully enriched by many others, especially de Lubac's programmatic insight (revived by Lewis Ayres) that, for the ancients, Scripture's divine intention was its efficacy for soulcraft, for remaking the psyche and re-ordering it to spirit (116–22). But in that case, we will only understand Scripture's divine intention if we have a psychology—a philosophical anthropology of "the soul," or interiority—fully adequate to the data of human life, and to the theological commitment that the *telos* of human beings is beatific vision (122; cf. 247).

Gordon proposes Lonergan's cognitional theory as this adequate psychology, and sets it within familiar Lonerganian anthropological accounts of self-transcendence, meaning, language, value, and the prospects for human self-transcendence in history under the observed conditions of sin and finitude (122–66).

A “systematic theology,” on Lonergan's understanding, has to be “at the level of our time,” especially our awareness of the historicity and subjective mediation of all knowledge and meaning (30). We know the Bible is not a self-interpreting subject who “speaks” autonomously (39; 27–31). The Bible cannot be “de-peopled;” there is no biblical message just “out there” on the page, unmediated by the interests, judgments, decisions of human beings—just as there is no “criterion of objectivity” external to the processes of understanding and judgment (39, 28). The unified, authoritative Bible is not an unambiguous datum “out there” for inspection, so we could simply “‘take a look’ at Scripture to see ‘what it says’” (30). Gordon holds on Christian faith “that Scripture is inspired and . . . mediates divine revelation in the very particularity of its words. . . . [But] the judgment that it is possible to ‘let Scripture speak for itself’” is untenable (28).¹ *Sola Scriptura* varieties that construe the Bible's authoritative statements as self-attesting data “out there” are defunct. “Our only access to the texts as intelligible is our own subjective constitution made up of our own experiences, our own linguistic apparatus, our own horizons of understandings, judgments, decisions . . . memories, and . . . imaginations;” as Lonergan says, “there is nothing ‘out there’ except spatially ordered marks,” marks we can only interpret by appealing to criteria of coherence and intelligibility which go beyond whatever is “out there” (109). That is not to say there are no criteria of objectivity; it is only to say, on Lonergan's maxim, that “genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity. It is to be attained only by attaining authentic subjectivity,” not by appealing to the mythology of de-peopled data or criteria “out there.”²

To pick up any available instantiation of the Bible is, Gordon says, to encounter the judgments and decisions of countless transmitters, translators, scholars, scribes, redactors, and authors, from an astonishing diversity of historical and cultural locations. The contents of the Bible—both the

¹ “That Christian Scripture is truthful, unified, and authoritative for Christian faith, thought, and praxis, is non-negotiable within the horizon of Christian faith. It is a constitutive judgment of the present work” (263).

² Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, vol. 14 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Robert M. Doran and John D. Didosky (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 273 (cited on Gordon's 20 and 143.)

canon and individual texts' contents—have been determined by the judgments and decisions of Christian communities. A unified, authoritative, divinely inspired Bible is not a datum, not an “already-out-there-now-real,” primitively lying around. Christians have claimed that scriptural texts (*these* texts and not others; *this* textual variant and not others) are the preeminent Word of God not because their unity and inspiration were available for inspection as data, nor because texts circulated with incontrovertible apostolic attribution (219–20), and so on—but because Christians made the intelligent, responsible judgment that these texts were uniquely efficacious in the Triune God's ongoing transformation of human beings in the historical missions of the Son and Spirit. “Revelation is . . . the entry of divine meaning into history,” and since it is a meaning, it is available as something intelligently grasped by subjects, not as a self-attesting datum (149, 109).

Several things follow. First, since the Bible is not “a static deposit of . . . [already-]out-there-now-real completely perspicuous revealed propositions about reality,” we can only understand Scripture from within a horizon of prior theological judgments about the character and scope of the Trinity's work in history—namely, a “rule of faith” (35). These judgments are both informed by and inform our reading of Scripture. Gordon devotes chapter 2 to Irenaeus's, Origen's, and Augustine's *regulae fidei*, and from them draws normative guidelines for a contemporary rule of faith. Chapter 3 articulates this rule with admirable scope and ambition. A rule should be ecclesial, narrative, and open to development and technical specification (just as Church councils developed technical terminologies and distinctions to settle questions—*homoousios*, *hypostasis*, etc.). It should be “realist,” meaning not mere narrative recital, nor grammatical rules in a reductive sense, but an articulation of Christian judgments about the actuality of the Trinity's work “in the history that is” (74–75, 82). A contemporary rule adequate to Scripture's witness should hold a free *creatio ex nihilo* by a noncompetitively transcendent God who exercises “irresistible efficient causality” in all created events (it is God who reduces potency to act in every event), though secondary causes “have their own relative freedom and efficacy” (80–93). These classical positions are not Hellenistic distortions of biblical testimony, but are “trajector[ies] internal to the larger canonical witness” (91).³ In short, the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed is a fully adequate contemporary rule of faith (81–82, 215). The chapter's end affirms sanctifying grace as *sanans et elevans* (culminat-

³ Quoting Gary Anderson, *Christian Doctrine and the Old Testament: Theology in the Service of Biblical Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2017), 58.

ing in “cruciform” deification), and sketches a theology of the missions of Son and Spirit (94–107).

Secondly, since we are aware of the historicity and subjective mediation of all meanings, we need not think that Scripture’s complex material transmission (via the decisions of countless human beings) is embarrassing for, or competitive with, a theological understanding of the Bible. Since the Trinity’s economy is coextensive with the single “history which is,” the material details of Scripture’s historical transmission are fully part of this providential economy. Since theological judgments are judgments about this real and single historical work of salvation, we will have “a responsible understanding of what . . . precisely . . . the Triune God has given us in Christian Scripture” only by attending to this material transmission—to “what Scripture has been” in this providential history (82, 198, 173). Gordon surveys this material history in a fascinating fifth chapter, which both intervenes on specialist issues and gives non-specialists a comprehensive introduction to theological questions and answers provoked by the history of book technologies attested in the Bible’s transmission history. Christians’ judgments about Scripture’s authority, inspiration, and unity are reflected in the status they attributed to scriptural texts in use, Gordon says. So the history of this use, registrable in material evidence, is a prime locus for understanding what Christians have meant by Scripture’s unity, inspiration, and authority (263).

Divine providence has prevented Christians from ever attaining indefectible certainty about scriptural texts’ historical transmissions, authorship, and origins. But “the fact that the Triune God has not preserved the [‘original’ texts of Scripture, nor an unchanging canonical list]—whether wholesale or merely in a single historical tradition—is theologically instructive” (194). The contents of scriptural texts, the canon’s make-up, affirmation of Scripture’s inspired authority—none of these determinations are rooted in “some already-back-there-then un-interpreted set of canonical autographs” (171). Scripture has *always* been determined by the rational judgments and responsible decisions of human beings undergoing transformation by the Spirit in Christian communities. Even today we should speak of “the ongoing determination of Scripture” (171). Scripture is shown to be unified, authoritative, and inspired not by extrinsic features like *having been named such by an ecclesial community*, but by “its translators, readers, and hearers [being] transformed in accordance with the divine intentions of its author, the Triune God, who has caused it to be written and to whom it testifies” (172). Scripture is shown to be Scripture when it remains preeminently useful in our cruciform deification (205–8). At the same time, Scripture refers to a plenitudinous historical *res*—“the

recapitulation of all things in Jesus Christ in . . . history" (252–53; cf. 79, 105). If a primary criterion for Scripture is usefulness, then equally important is texts' efficacy in witnessing to the past and ongoing divine works in history. The rule of faith articulates an understanding of this work, and on this basis the Church judges which texts adequately witness to this *res*.

This has consequences for canon. Christian history shows that the *de facto* criterion for canon has been communities' judgments about texts' continual efficacy in the Trinity's work transforming subjects, rather than extrinsic criteria like apostolicity or antiquity (195–205, 219–20). In our judgments about canon, we "unconsciously," and rightly, defer to the authority of the community passing down precisely *these* texts as preeminently efficacious in Christian transformation (206–7). Canonization formalizes a tradition's "performative" judgments about usefulness (see 172).

Gordon's judgments encourage irenic ecumenism on canon. "The historical variegation of [Christian Scripture's] actual material instantiations . . . makes it impossible to . . . locate the unity, authority, and divine origins and characteristics of Christian Scripture exclusively in any single historical instantiation of the text or in any single textual tradition of transmission" (205–6). The criteria for contents and canonicity are not extrinsic (apostolicity, antiquity), but indexed to texts' perennial usefulness. And since the Bible has, as a matter of divine providence, been diversely instantiated even within single Churches, then, Gordon concludes, the Triune God has never left a Christian community without a Bible adequate for God's redemptive work (206). On this view, the Catholic Church and Orthodox Churches should not see slimmed-down Protestant Bibles as deficient for God's providential purposes. At the same time, sixteenth-century Protestant arguments for cutting apocrypha are implicitly undercut, since they appeal to extrinsic criteria for canon (antiquity, Hebraic purity from Hellenism), rather than the real criteria—usefulness in deification and effective witness to the *res* of God's historical work. Gordon's approach defaults toward more ample, not more restrictive, senses of canon.

If there is one major topic absent from this richly compendious systematics, it is Scripture's spiritual (or allegorical) meaning. But Gordon says he will treat this in a planned future volume, one that promises to be as deep, wide, and rewarding as this one (367n153, 369n179). N.V.

Matthew Z. Vale
University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, IN