

Book Reviews

The Analogy of Being: Invention of the Antichrist or the Wisdom of God? edited by Thomas Joseph White, O.P. (*Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011*), xiv + 440

THIS VOLUME gathers a number of essays pertaining to the debate in the early twentieth century regarding the analogy of being. The principal characters are Erich Przywara, Karl Barth, and Thomas Aquinas, although other figures, such as Bonaventure, John Calvin, Gottlieb Söhngen, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Ferdinand Ulrich appear, as well. The book has four main sections; the first examines the historical context of the debate between Przywara and Barth regarding the analogy of being, the second offers ecumenical proposals, the third situates the analogy of being within the context of Thomistic *ressourcement*, and the fourth proposes how the analogy of being can renew contemporary theology.

Essays by John Betz on Przywara and by Bruce McCormack on Barth locate the origins of the debate over the analogy of being and how Przywara and Barth developed their respective understandings of analogy throughout their careers. The fundamental problem revolves around the relationship of creation to God and the extent to which knowledge of God can be derived from creation on the one hand and from revelation on the other. Betz cites Przywara's notion of creation as a "suspended middle" between potentiality and end (*telos*). He notes that while Przywara's concept of analogy, as an intermediate term between extremes, addresses how creation participates in God's being and thus highlights the similarity between God and creatures, it also presupposes the "ever greater" difference between God and creation and the fact that any "similarity" of creation with God is grounded in God's infinite otherness and the sheer gratuitousness of creaturely existence.

The notion of creaturely similarity to God was unsettling to the dialectical theology of Karl Barth, whose statement that the analogy of being was the "invention of the Antichrist," is historically contextualized by McCormack's essay. McCormack argues that Barth's condemnation of

the analogy of being, which he never withdrew, was directed primarily against liberal Protestantism, not Catholicism. Barth's contention was that if creation was conformed to God in any way, it was not through existence as such but through the gift of faith—hence his articulation of an *analogia fidei* in the *Church Dogmatics*. In other words, what is similar between God and humanity is not infinite and finite “being” but the faithful obedience of God; humans are “similar” to God only when sharing, by faith, in the Son's eternal obedience to the Father. While appreciating Hans Urs von Balthasar's sympathetic presentation of Barth's theology, McCormack argues that Balthasar could not have understood fully Barth's position on the analogy of being, because Balthasar's study of Barth was published in 1951, before Barth had articulated his later Christology and doctrine of election in *Church Dogmatics* IV/1–2.

The second section of the book addresses ecumenical proposals and reflects on how the debate between Przywara and Barth might lead to convergences between Catholic and Protestant theological priorities. Kenneth Oakes broadens the concept of analogy as found in Przywara's *Religionsphilosophie katholischer Theologie* (1926) and *Analogia Entis* (1932) by examining other works of Przywara, such as his later sermons and exegetical studies. Oakes concludes that Przywara's concept of analogy is much more theological and Christocentric than one might conclude from reading Barth's criticism of the analogy of being. Richard Schenk writes about the historical origins of the analogy of being and its relationship to the scholastic axiom “grace presupposes nature”; he argues that the analogy of being can be the occasion for Catholic theology to explore further grace and faith, in contradistinction to nature and experience. Peter Casarella explores how Hans Urs von Balthasar interpreted Przywara's explication of the analogy of being and how Balthasar maintained a sympathetic understanding of Barth's critique while developing a Christologically oriented version of analogy.

The volume offers several essays pertaining to the analogy of being and Thomistic *ressourcement*. Reinhard Hüter offers a detailed explication of the analogy of being, both as logical and as ontological concepts, in Thomas Aquinas; he refutes opposing critiques of Aquinas's use of analogy by Wolfhart Pannenberg and Eberhard Jüngel. Thomas Joseph White examines, through a reading of Aquinas's scriptural commentaries (among other texts), how analogical predication is necessary for understanding the person of Jesus Christ and the dogmatic language involved in describing the hypostatic union. Bruce Marshall argues that the conventional understanding of Aquinas's emphasis on analogical predication has led to a marginalization of texts and arguments that demand univocal language for certain topics, such as Christology. The fact that God has become human implies that some

things can be predicated univocally of God and human beings; the Incarnation shows that God has been born and has worked, prayed, and suffered as all human beings do, in such a way that what we mean by “birth,” “work,” “prayer,” and “suffering,” is the same for all human beings including the man who is the Son of God. Martin Bieler explores the analogy of being in the modern German philosopher Ferdinand Ulrich (1931–); Ulrich is important as an interpreter of Aquinas, as a source for Balthasar, and for his position that finite being (*esse*) ultimately is not self-subsisting and should be seen as a gift received by something outside of itself (i.e., God).

The last section of the book offers reflections about how the analogy of being can be recovered by contemporary theology. Michael Hanby suggests that the analogy of being can be appropriated by both contemporary theology and science in order to emphasize the gratuitous beauty of the natural world. John Webster offers a structure of Reformed dogmatic theology that synthesizes the analogy of being—understood as a theologoumenon that emphasizes the “ever greater” difference between God and creatures—with Scripture and certain insights of Thomas Aquinas and John Calvin. Finally, David Bentley Hart reflects on the future development of the analogy of being, arguing that an adequate Christology (grounded in the dogmatic teaching of Nicaea and Chalcedon) maintains a balance between the error of absolute identity between God and creation and the error of absolute otherness between God and creation.

Even though the studies on Barth and Thomas Aquinas in this volume are substantial, one of the volume’s most important features is its presentation and exposition of texts from Erich Przywara, whose works have largely remained unavailable to the anglophone theological world. The volume’s bibliography is fairly expansive, as well, and guides readers to further resources. Readers will find *The Analogy of Being: Invention of the Antichrist or the Wisdom of God?* an important contribution to the controversy over the analogy of being and “natural theology” in the early twentieth century, its historical origins, and its implications for contemporary theology. **N V**

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Intractable Disputes about the Natural Law: Alasdair MacIntyre and Critics edited by Lawrence S. Cunningham (*South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009*), xiii + 374 pp.

IN 2004, then Cardinal Ratzinger wrote to The Catholic University of America, the Ave Maria Law School, and the University of Notre Dame,

asking each to examine “the values rooted in the very nature of the human person” (vii) in order to develop our understanding of a moral “common denominator” shared among all peoples. This volume is Notre Dame’s response to that letter. It consists of a long opening essay by Alasdair MacIntyre presenting his approach to moral disagreement and Thomistic natural law, eight response essays (Jean Porter, David A. Clairmont, M. Cathleen Kaveny, Daniel Philpott, Gerald McKenny, Kevin L. Flannery, S.J., John J. Coughlin, O.F.M., and Thomas Hibbs), and a substantive closing response from MacIntyre.

MacIntyre’s essay, “Intractable Moral Disagreements,” just over fifty pages long, is the best, clearest presentation of his views on natural law that I know of, and it will repay careful study. His eight interlocutors offer stimulating and surprisingly diverse responses, though MacIntyre does a truly marvelous job of drawing the many strands together into a coherent unified dialogue in his final essay. Here I will focus on MacIntyre’s claims and the responses of Jean Porter and Gerald McKenny.

How can advocates of the natural law, begins MacIntyre, “claim the authority of reason in support of their views *and* yet be unable to convince certain others who are, it seems, not only quite as intelligent, perceptive, and insightful as they are, but also quite as philosophically skillful and informed, yet who remain in radical disagreement?” (2–3). The typical response to this problem is to look more carefully at the arguments in favor of traditional natural law positions in order to make them clearer and stronger. But MacIntyre approaches the problem the other way round, from the perspective of the disagreement. Notice first, he says, that at every point in our lives we must be open to the revision of our in certain ways incurably inadequate and partial understanding of the good. Moral disagreement therefore “has a positive function in the moral life, that of stimulating us to reflect upon the sources of our immediate practical disagreements” and consequently making possible the necessary “self-questioning” that allows for moral development (18).

If disagreement plays this role in our moral lives, “[w]e need therefore to resort to enquiry as to what the truth about these matters is, in company with those others who hold opposing views” (20). Inquiry, in turn, is successful only if interlocutors abide by certain rules: we will not speak openly and impersonally if we fear for the safety of our life, liberty, or property, or for that of our family and friends; nor can we be deceptive, or make promises which we do not keep, and so on. “But we need go no further than this to recognize that the set of precepts conformity to which is a precondition for shared rational enquiry as to how our practical disagreements are to be resolved have the same content as those

precepts that Aquinas identified as the precepts of the natural law” (23). And like the precepts of the natural law, these rules are universal, exceptionless, the same for everyone, and fundamental in the sense that we do not derive them from other principles, but instead “discover that we have already—implicitly, characteristically, rather than explicitly—had to accord them authority” (24). It turns out, therefore, that MacIntyre has “advanced an argument designed to show that Aquinas’ account of the precepts of the natural law, far from being inconsistent with the fact of moral disagreement, provides the best starting-point for the explanation of these facts” (26).

MacIntyre acknowledges that the force of this argument is itself determined by our ability to recognize the presuppositions of the moral life, and so he does not claim that this account of the natural law will enable its defenders “to refute their opponents in ways that are or should be compelling to any rational individual, whatever her or his standpoint” (51). Instead, we must bring to bear all the resources of traditions in conflict that can eventually allow the defeat of one tradition at the hands of another. Here I can only mention the excellent, and lengthy, account MacIntyre gives of the conflict between Thomistic-Aristotelianism and utilitarianism, along with the reasons we have for supposing utilitarianism fails by its own lights in ways Thomistic-Aristotelianism can best explain. (This alone, I might add, makes MacIntyre’s essay well worth reading.)

Jean Porter, however, is “not persuaded that the natural law as Aquinas understands it is tantamount to, or can be made to yield, normative precepts that are both specific enough to be put into practice and valid and binding in all times and places” (55). The natural law as such, though an important resource for framing the moral life, gives us no good reasons for thinking that it will yield universal normative precepts, despite the universality of the first principle of practical reason:

It is far from clear that Aquinas’ theory of the natural law provides a basis for a compelling argument that an alternative cultural norm is simply wrong—for example, that we in the West are right and those in many Asian societies are wrong, to insist that the choice of one’s marriage partner is an overriding individual right. It might be that contrary views on this question, taken together with the very different construals of marriage and family life that they reflect, represent two alternative ways of construing the human inclinations towards reproduction and kinship associations, each rationally defensible as a legitimate expression of human nature, but neither rationally compelling as the only, or even the clearly superior, alternative. (86)

Porter is less concerned with MacIntyre's particular strategy (though she does briefly say that his argument, considered on its own merits, "is at best underdeveloped" [74]) than she is with the use of natural law more generally as a foundation for universal, concrete moral norms; but MacIntyre's own arguments are precisely meant to establish such a foundation, and so Porter's reply, sweeping as it is, is meant for MacIntyre too.

MacIntyre responds that Porter seems to believe that many moral concepts, such as the concept of "murder," are "open-textured" such that they are "open to development and to application in different and incompatible ways, between which there may be no grounds for rational decision, apart, that is, from the moral and other commitments of some particular community, derived from its particular tradition" (320). But if we *actually* consider the concept of "murder" and its development, it appears that "'murder' is not open-textured in the way and to the extent that Porter suggests" (321). Consider, for example, the development of just defense excuses for killing, or of one's moral responsibility for unintentional killing. It is always open to Porter to respond that we have overlooked a particularly persuasive example of a particular moral concept, but then we must take Porter's argument on a case by case basis, and though MacIntyre cannot prove that she will fail, he sees no reason for thinking that she will succeed.

Gerald McKenny begins his response by contrasting MacIntyre and Ratzinger with another, rival interpretation of reason and morality. This rival claims that reason does not give us "the kind or degree of knowledge of what is morally good which the Catholic tradition and its Protestant counterparts have claimed it gives us" (199). Whereas thinkers like Karl Barth, Oliver O'Donovan, and John Howard Yoder all look to theology as a fundamentally necessary source of moral truth (either because reason is too badly damaged by the fall to be a source of reliable moral insight, or because God has always intended reason to operate in significant dependence upon God's self-revelation), MacIntyre and Ratzinger both try to maintain the independence of reason from revelation while explaining our undeniable inability to agree on common moral norms.

MacIntyre and Ratzinger do this by developing error theories that can account for the inability of reason to bring about moral agreement. For MacIntyre, we must understand the importance of "the inability of reason since the early modern period to secure agreement on a single conception of the good life" (200), whereas for Ratzinger "while moral truth is in principle accessible to reason, in practice it can be concretely recognized as truth only as it is embodied in a historical tradition. If appeals to reason fail to arrive at moral truth, this is due at least in part to the modern

separation of reason from the historical traditions in which alone moral truth is effectively recognizable as such" (201).

But once we understand the working of rival traditions at any one time (MacIntyre) and the relation between moral knowledge and temporally extended moral traditions (Ratzinger), we also can see that practically speaking, though not in principle, the views of MacIntyre and Ratzinger begin to look like relativism, since there is no real difference between their predictions and those of relativism about the appearance of contemporary moral disagreement. And for this reason, they begin to look more like Barth, O'Donovan, and Yoder than like traditional defenders of the power of reason.

MacIntyre's response is, in many respects, a reiteration of themes he has long developed: "What makes my position not relativistic is my commitment to holding that my views on substantive moral questions can be maintained with integrity only for so long as and insofar as I can show that they can be sustained against their rivals by rational argument, so also committing myself not just to continuing disagreement, but to continuing conflict with those who reject the precepts of the natural law and with those who uphold the authority of positive law that is at odds with the natural law" (341). It is again *disagreement itself* that becomes valuable, for so long as arguments with others are possible, so is resolution, since the possibility of argument presupposes a deeper level of agreement. The relativist has not yet given us good reason to think that some day the disagreement will be total (and therefore that relativism is the proper response, or on the other hand that the abandonment of reason in favor of revelation is the proper response), and so we should not be without hope.

This is, I'm afraid, a woefully inadequate review of a complex collection (I have of course left to one side the other six contributors and MacIntyre's insightful responses to them, but also many claims and nuances of the essays I did consider). Those interested in natural law should give the book a careful reading, if only because MacIntyre's approach to the natural law both harmonizes with traditional interpretations and adds fresh, and necessary, developments for us who live in the age of unreason. N.V

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The Trinity: An Introduction to Catholic Doctrine on the Triune God by Gilles Emery, O.P., translated by Matthew Levering, Thomistic Ressourcement Series, vol. 1 (*Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011*), xvi + 219 pp.

NO ONE has contributed more to Thomistic Trinitarian theology in the past twenty years than Gilles Emery, a Swiss Dominican friar and ordinary professor of dogmatic theology at the University of Fribourg. The present book under review is not yet another marvelously detailed exposition of the Blessed Trinity in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas. Rather, it is a masterly overview, employing a blend of scriptural, historical, liturgical, cultural, catechetical, and systematic considerations to introduce readers to the Catholic teaching on the Trinity.

Emery, who has penned several studies highlighting the different scholastic pedagogies employed by Aquinas in his various texts, chooses a pedagogy that places this work firmly in some of the best currents of theology today. After the introduction, the first three chapters elucidate the essential elements of the Church's teaching. The first is on "Entering the Trinitarian Faith"; the second presents the New Testament teaching on the revelation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and the third considers the confessions of faith, especially the Creed of the first Council of Constantinople (381). The second half of the book dwells upon what Emery calls the "Trinitarian Christian culture," which was formed from the achievement of the Fathers. The three chapters of the second half pay particular attention to the teaching of Aquinas. Chapter Four sketches the principles of person/hypostasis. Chapter Five presents a doctrinal synthesis on the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Chapter Six returns to the creative and saving action of the Trinity. The brief conclusion recapitulates the book's study of the economy through the witness of Scripture, the speculative tradition in articulating the Trinitarian dogma, and the speculative reflection on the action of the divine persons in the world. Before its basic bibliography (for example, it lists only three of Emery's many previous works on the Trinity) and index, the book also offers a glossary (199–203) that ranges from "appropriation" to "vestiges" and supplies two to nine lines of definition for each term.

Throughout the book, Emery shows himself to be a careful teacher. Given the enormous difficulty of writing an introductory text on the Trinity, Emery presents the riches of the Catholic tradition with clarity, calmness, and joy. He does not resort to polemics in settling old scores, but deftly explains what is at stake in learning who God is. For example, he writes, "The teaching of Scripture concerning the Trinity is, at the

same time, simple and difficult. . . . Scripture's manner of speaking is accessible to all: it is not esoteric. But to grasp its profundity is difficult" (19). Quoting from Augustine's *Epistle* 138, to Volusian, Emery emphasizes how Scripture both "nourishes" all believers and "exercises" the minds of the more advanced. One can sense that Emery's own book serves this same dual purpose, for it is written in plain language to nourish readers in general, and, at every step, its lucidity also points to exercises of the mind for readers to ascend further in contemplating the Trinity. The present review now engages in only one such exercise.

What does it mean to call God "Father"? Emery expounds upon the analogical meanings of that name by making a fourfold distinction (115–20): (1) the Father of his only Son; (2) our Father in the Son; (3) Father of all human beings; and (4) Father of the world. In undertaking the spiritual exercise of thinking about the meaning of "Father" when speaking about the Trinity, we are thus led into considerations of the life of the Trinity, our entrance into the divine life by receiving the Spirit of adoption through the Son, our creation to the image of God, and the loving creation of all things. Each one of these aspects, expounded by Emery, can serve as a springboard for further meditation.

The first identification, naming the Father of the Son, is the most proper sense of the term "Father." Emery quotes St. Thomas: "Fatherhood and sonship in their fullest meaning are to be found in God the Father and God the Son, since their nature and glory are one" (*ST I*, q. 33, a. 3). Emery thus insists that when we call God "Father" we speak primarily of the Father's eternal relation to his only Son. He also says that the Holy Spirit is not absent from the relation between the Father and Son. Emery writes: "the procession of the Holy Spirit is inscribed in the mutual relation of the Father and the Son. This means that the procession of the Holy Spirit is connected *in itself* to the generation of the Son by the Father" (116). Therefore, a meditation on the proper name of "Father" leads to a consideration of the Trinitarian relations concerning not only the Father and the Son, but also the Holy Spirit.

For the second meaning of "Father," Emery distinguishes how we receive by grace the sonship which the only begotten Son enjoys by nature. This sonship allows us to say "Father" to the one whom the Son calls "Father." It is precisely in this aspect that Emery takes up the question of what we mean when we pray "Our Father." Emery considers the question from three points of view. The first is from what he calls the "ontological" perspective, which is the view that some scholastics used, in referring to the whole Trinity as "Our Father." In this sense, "Our Father" is not prayed uniquely to God the Father. Emery writes: "The

whole Trinity is the cause of our sonship and of the gifts that God gives us. So, if one considers our sonship (our relation to ‘Our Father’) under the aspect of its cause, it refers us to the whole Trinity” (117). The second point of view is still from an “ontological” perspective, but now with a consideration of the divine persons’ order. Since the Father is the principle of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we ask God the Father through the Son and in the Holy Spirit for the goods of this life. In the third point of view, quoting the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2789, Emery considers what he calls the “intentional” aspect. When we have faith and charity in the Church, we are personally united to the Father, and we enjoy a distinct relationship with the Father through the Son and in the Holy Spirit. Emery writes: “Christian prayer is addressed distinctly and properly to the person of the Father” (p. 118). This meditation on the Lord’s Prayer thus leads us to a greater understanding of calling out “Father” in Christian liturgy.

The third and fourth meanings of “Father” in reference to God can be considered together. The third calls upon God as “Father” by virtue of our creation to the image of God, an image that cannot be lost by sin. Even in the rejection of grace and when the image of God is obscured, “the paternal gift of life still remains and, indeed, our human nature still points beyond itself to its fulfillment in God” (119). The fourth considers the aspect of creation from the stance not just of the human race, but of all creation. By the name “Father,” we can recognize how God is provident over the entire world—including wholly material creatures. These final meanings of “Father” allow us to see God’s Fatherhood—not just over all in a life of grace, but over all peoples, and over all things in the universe.

While something of *Summa theologiae* I, q. 33, a. 3 can be seen behind this fourfold exposition, that article cannot be the complete explanation for Emery’s distinctions. Aquinas seems to agree with article 3’s first and second objections, that the prayer of the “Our Father” is addressed to the Trinity (cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate* 5.11.12). Emery recognizes that “ontological” perspective, but places greater emphasis, like the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, on praying in the Lord’s Prayer to the Father through the Son and in the Holy Spirit. Even to consider the Trinity in the context of the “Father” in the Lord’s Prayer is unthinkable in some recent theology. Yet, Emery preserves a place for that interpretation. In fact, he could also have referred to the priest’s doxology concluding the Lord’s Prayer in the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom: “For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto the ages of ages” (cf. John Chrysostom’s preaching on Matthew 6:9 in his *Homilies on Matthew* 19.6). In his expo-

sition of the Lord's Prayer, Maximus the Confessor writes: "In beginning this prayer we are directed to honor the consubstantial and superessential Trinity as the creative Cause of our coming into being" (*Expositio orationis dominicae*, lines 258–60). One thing that must be affirmed is that God the Father is never divided from the Son and the Holy Spirit, but in both East and West, one can find different emphases of considering the Trinitarian aspects of the Lord's Prayer. The tradition is not monolithic. What Emery has done, in this exercise of the mind, is to provide a cogent explanation of various ways of the analogical use of the term "Father," including the "Our Father" of the Lord's Prayer. His writing can prompt readers not simply to debate, but to meditate on God as Father.

This book could be read with much profit by the general reader of theology, and teachers could assign it in a variety of courses on God. It would be an excellent text for acquainting undergraduate students with Catholic teaching on the Trinity. For graduate courses, Emery's book could be paired with Karl Rahner's *The Trinity*, which originally appeared as a long essay in the *Mysterium Salutis* series, in a study of contrasts of approaches on how to renew Trinitarian theology. Unlike Rahner's very influential work, Emery's new book demonstrates an authentic implementation of what *Optatam Totius* 16 calls for in priestly formation. In fact, those studying the Trinity for a seminary education could, for their future ministry, have perhaps no surer, more reliable guide to the "central mystery of Christian faith and life" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 234) than Emery's *The Trinity*.

This book is the first to appear in a series called "Thomistic Ressourcement," edited by Matthew Levering and Thomas Joseph White, O.P. We look forward to many other volumes in a series with such an intriguing title. **NV**

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Addiction and Virtue: Beyond the Models of Disease and Choice

by Kent J. Dunnington (*Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011*), 197 pp.

"THE TOTALIZING devotion of addiction," Kent Dunnington writes in *Addiction and Virtue*, "is a devastatingly deficient devotion" (175)—and with these words he completes an extended argument that the moral philosophies of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas can free Christians from the inadequate and reductionist accounts of agency that dominate modern conversations around "addiction." Modern speech about addiction, Dunnington argues, is characterized by the false and unhelpful dichotomy

between voluntarist accounts of addiction (particularly, but not only, addiction to alcohol and other substances), in which addiction is presumed to be due to misguided but unconstrained willful choice; and disease accounts of addiction, which presume that addictive behavior is rendered involuntary as a result of genetic vulnerability and physiological change. Dunnington argues, to the contrary, that neither voluntarist nor involuntarist accounts are adequate for the complex reality of addiction, in which individuals can find themselves powerless over their use of a drug and yet, through admission of their powerlessness, can discover volitional resources for recovery. Instead, he argues that persons torn between addictive behavior and the cognitive desire for abstinence suffer from a lack of the proper “embodied knowledge,” or habits, which would allow desires to be informed by knowledge, and knowledge by desire (53). In argument reminiscent of the thought of Pierre Bourdieu (*The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990], 53), Dunnington contends that Aquinas’s conception of habit mediates between the modern dichotomies of instinct and disposition, determinism and voluntarism, voluntary and involuntary; he proposes a conceptualization of addiction as a “rationally informed habit” (73). Invoking Aquinas’s claim that humans judge the goodness or badness of objects not only by natural instinct but “by means of a coalition of ideas” (*ST* I, q. 78, a. 4), such that the animal estimative sense becomes, for humans, the “cogitative estimative,” Dunnington claims that addictions should be thought of as “habits of the imagination and cogitative estimation” (81).

One might expect addiction therefore to be classified in Thomistic terms as a form of the vice of intemperance, but Dunnington argues that this is not so. Intemperance, he claims, names the inordinate pursuit of sensory pleasures, but addicted persons often report receiving no pleasure from their addiction. For Dunnington, this indicates that addiction is *not* the inordinate pursuit of sensory pleasures (intemperance) but is rather the pursuit of certain “moral and intellectual goods” (95). The moral and intellectual goods pursued through addiction, Dunnington argues, are precisely those which have been rendered invisible in the teleological fragmentation of modern culture; in the face of modern consumerism and technological boredom, addicted persons pursue certain goods so tenaciously that they stand as modern prophets: “major addiction can therefore be interpreted both as a response to the absence of teleology in modern culture and as a kind of embodied critique of the late capitalist consumerism which this absence has produced” (112). Specifically, Dunnington claims, addicted persons are pursuing an overarching principle by which to order their everyday actions and also “an integrating principle that renders the immanent activities of

human persons meaningful in light of some transcendent pursuit" (142). Addiction pursues the *transcendent*; in some ways, it resembles Aquinas's description of charity in that it "commands all other activities of a person and directs each of those activities to a unified and substantial end" (150). Unlike charity, however, addiction is not ordered to God; it is a "counterfeit worship" (159), and in this light churches would do well to consider how they might become communities of recovery and friendship for addicted persons—communities which, embodying true rather than counterfeit worship, are at least as beautiful and captivating as the addiction itself.

Dunnington's project, which originated as a doctoral dissertation in philosophy, is ambitious, interesting, and deeply needed. Addiction names a space in which matters of urgent pastoral and social concern run headlong into difficult, contested, and sometimes unexplored theoretical questions; theory *must* illumine practice, and vice versa, for any morally intelligible account. The phenomena of addiction should be of especial interest for Christian interpreters, as religious voices are deeply ingrained in the social history of alcoholism in particular, and as the still-dominant twelve-step approaches to addiction treatment (such as Alcoholics Anonymous), despite their disavowal of confessional specificity, still display a distinctly Christian logic. Dunnington's work, then, is a welcome contribution which, we may hope, will invigorate theoretical Christian work on addiction. His analysis of addiction through Aquinas's conception of habit is full of possibilities for further development; his invocation of Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings as a resource for thinking through the complex agency of addicted persons is thoughtful and well developed; his challenge to the church is bold and much needed. Dunnington's book should be read not only by clinicians and pastors working with addicted persons but by persons who wish to bring Aristotelian-Thomistic virtue theory to bear on a problem of immense personal and social import; grappling with and thinking through Dunnington's treatment is both exciting and potentially fruitful.

Dunnington's work does much to extend theological conversation around addiction and virtue theory, and one hopes that both he and others will continue to explore and to develop the questions that he introduces here. In that spirit, it is therefore worth noting three areas in which Dunnington's argument might be improved upon, or might benefit from further clarification.

First, although Dunnington's work does indeed challenge some of the philosophical presumptions from which many modern neuroscientists and clinicians speak about addiction, his first chapter depicts modern clinical conversations in overly simplistic terms. Citing mostly government websites and books written for general audiences about the addictions,

Dunnington places four propositions in the mouths of hypothetical defenders of medical/disease models of addiction: (a) that substance addiction is always accompanied by the physiological phenomena of tolerance and withdrawal (18); (b) that “changes in behavior that can be traced to changes in brain structure and function are involuntary” (20); (c) that genes predispose to, and therefore determine, addictive behavior (20–22); and (d) that because addiction is a chronic physiological disorder, it should therefore be treated through medical intervention (24). None of these propositions, however, represent the strongest or most nuanced understanding of addiction researchers and clinicians. The revised fourth edition of the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (2000), the current standard for diagnostic psychiatric nomenclature, makes clear that tolerance/withdrawal are neither necessary nor sufficient for a diagnosis of substance dependence; neurobiologists are as aware as anyone that agency is embodied and that casual attribution in genetics is dangerous; within medical practice, there is no clear boundary between the medical and the non-medical, and at any rate many medically oriented clinicians still encourage participation in twelve-step programs. Had Dunnington approached these debates with more nuance, his subsequent theoretical arguments would perhaps be more persuasive to researchers and substance-use clinicians who might happen upon his work.

Second, and more substantial for his philosophical argument, Dunnington’s insistence that addiction is not intemperance is a puzzling move, and not only because Aquinas himself places drunkenness (*ebrietas*) within his larger treatment of the vices opposed to temperance without any such qualification (*ST* II–II, qq. 149–50). Dunnington states that, whereas intemperance entails the inordinate pursuit of sensory pleasures, addiction entails pursuit of “moral and intellectual goods” (95); but this seems to get both intemperance and addiction slightly wrong. For Aquinas, as for Aristotle before him, *all* human action, including vicious action, intends happiness as its final end (*ST* I–II, q. 1, a. 7); intemperance occurs not when humans stop pursuing “moral and intellectual goods,” but when they seek the fulfillment of those goods in mutable pleasure-giving (or pain-reducing) things (*ST* I–II, q. 72, a. 2; II–II, q. 142, a. 2). Though it is unclear whether Aquinas would want to classify addiction as intemperance or incontinence (*ST* II–II, q. 156, a. 3)—this would likely vary on a case-by-case basis—there is no need to assign addiction to a class of habit distinct from either of these. That addicted persons sometimes claim to derive no pleasure from their addictive behavior is an insufficient reason to claim otherwise, as such judgments are always made in retrospect, in the light of the guilt and shame and brokenness that follows such behavior. *Something*

about the experience of ingesting an addictive substance—ecstatic pleasure, perhaps, or relief from pain, anxiety, or boredom—propels the person to further use, which fits quite nicely with Aquinas's account of intemperance and (especially) incontinence.

This second qualification would seem to be only a technical issue of Thomistic exegesis, but it directly leads to a third qualification at the heart of Dunnington's project. Though Dunnington clearly states that addiction is *not* a virtue and that it is ultimately idolatrous and destructive, he nevertheless describes addiction in a way that borders on romanticism. Addiction "makes accessible certain kinds of moral and intellectual goods" (101); it is "a sort of rejection of consumerism's enthronement of the immediate over the teleological" and is "an embodied critique of . . . late capitalist consumerism" (112); addicts "may be our most forceful and eloquent modern prophets, reminding us of the peril that a denial of the transcendent brings" (145). In all of this, Dunnington paints a picture of the addict as someone who rejects the banality and teleological nihilism of late-modern society and, by focusing so intently on a single object of will and desire, stands in prophetic critique over that society. But this language, in particular that of "prophet," is difficult to square either with biblical descriptions of prophecy or with the Thomistic conception of vice. Unlike Dunnington's "modern prophets," for instance, biblical prophets were aware that they were prophesying, and their prophetic speech-acts, though often controversial and countercultural, were not per se sinful. But Dunnington holds that addiction is often "not incommensurate with the category of sin" (133), and indeed Dunnington's analysis of addiction and sin points toward a possible alternative rendering of the addicted person in the light of modern culture. In such a rendering, addicted persons would be seen not as embodied *critiques* of modern culture but, instead, as embodied *signs* of it, bearing in their bodies the brokenness, the unfulfilled longing, the panicked pursuit of mutable things which can never deliver what they seem to promise. There is no glory in addiction under this alternative description, but there is certainly hope: hope for healing, hope for redemption, hope for the transformation of desire. As Dunnington correctly holds, such healing cannot arise from addiction itself; it comes from without, from one who loves first, and in that loving, enables the return of that love. Such, at least, is the Christian story toward which Dunnington's book so powerfully and helpfully points.

N V

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Biblical Natural Law: A Theocentric and Teleological Approach by Matthew Levering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), viii+ 288 pp.

REGRETTABLY, natural law theory often dwells in the shadows of academic suspicion. On one hand, some philosophers dismiss natural law as a religious invention smuggled under the cloak of a philosophy of nature. On the other hand, some theologians look askance at natural law because it seems to be a philosophical position advertised under the banner of only a couple biblical proof-texts. Within this context, Matthew Levering's *Biblical Natural Law* attempts to set each party at ease both by vindicating the biblical witness to natural law and by examining the appropriation (or misappropriation) of natural law by the philosophical tradition.

Biblical Natural Law, then, begins not with contemporary natural law scholars but with biblical scholars of various stripes. Through new insights in the study of Second Temple Judaism, biblical scholarship is enjoying a rediscovery in natural law. The Protestant biblical scholar Richard B. Hays and Jewish scholar David Novak in particular are leading the charge in establishing the place of law rooted in nature as something ubiquitous in Jewish legal theory. Novak demonstrates that the primordial accounts of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and Noah and the deluge presuppose a law of creation that includes natural obligations along with rewards and punishments. The Torah, then, is not opposed to a cosmological law; rather, it is based upon it. Rather than rely on specific proof-texts, such as Romans 2:15, "the work of the law written in their hearts," biblical scholarship concurs that the Hebraic doctrine of creation itself assumes human teleology and thus a notion of law based on human nature.

Of course, the biblical account of natural law is not unique and there are various versions of natural law, both ancient and modern, which compete with the biblical notion. Levering examines Cicero's teleological account of natural law and demonstrates how Augustine transforms it with a theocentric interpretation. Perhaps, we might even name Augustine's approach as a "theotelic" version of natural law. Although Augustine's appropriation underwent some modification in the medieval era, the truly variant versions of natural law emerged after Thomas Aquinas.

The most important contribution of *Biblical Natural Law* lies in its close analysis of the disintegration of the received philosophical notion of "nature" and consequently, the disintegration of "natural" law. Beginning officially with Ockham, the doubtful place of formal causality and final causality led to the abandonment of the essence and teleology of human nature. As the concept of "nature" becomes ambiguous, so also the concept of "natural law."

Particular attention is given to the seventeenth-century Dutch thinker Hugo Grotius. As Richard Tuck explains in a passage quoted by Levering, Grotius holds that “what God has shown to be his will, that is law” (84). This complements Grotius’s assertion that natural law would be true *even if God did not exist*. The once-comfortable marriage of philosophy and politics was rent asunder by this received assumption of Grotius. Here marks the modern shift in natural law theory, since it openly divorces law from metaphysics. Heinrich Rommen laments that this move “split the scholastic doctrine of natural law to its very core” (quoted on 85). This philosophic shift eventually gave way to the Leviathan of Hobbes, since there was no longer any metaphysical grounding for law besides coercive force. This problem continued to reverberate through the pens of John Locke and David Hume as a form of politicized nominalism. In the voice of Rousseau natural law became repackaged as a rejection of political civilization. In the philosophical realm, it gave birth to Kant’s desire to root the constitution of law in the individual’s practical reason, and also to Hegel’s pursuit to ground law in the historical evolution of Geist. In Nietzsche it reached its crescendo when the voluntaristic “will to power” supplanted an intelligible human nature.

The problems raised by modernity are answered by Levering’s suggestion that *ecstasis*, the radical self-giving of a person to another, is the missing piece, which captures authentic human personhood. This feature of self-giving rests also at the center of biblical revelation, yet it has its first inclination in nature. Rather than embracing this social aspect of personhood, modernity considered the human person as an “individual”—the most basic indivisible unit of society. Notably, modernity lacked the ancient philosophical obsession with friendship. As natural law became more anthropocentric, the doctrine of the human person became far too narrow. The corrective is to view human persons as “ecstatically” ordered to the particular flourishing of a personal communion with God.

This ecstatic model of human nature is what Levering identifies as the teleological and theological aspect of natural law. The first principle of the practical reason, as defined by Saint Thomas, is that “the good is to be done and pursued and the evil is to be avoided.” As Germain Grisez has emphasized, the first principle is not an imperative but a gerund implying inclination—and Thomas Aquinas explicitly bases natural law on inclinations. Hence, reason is naturally inclined to the good of the human person. Every Thomist knows that the good has the nature of an end, and so natural law must be understood teleologically. Levering cites Servais Pinckaers and Graham McAleer as grounding human teleology rightly in a metaphysical framework of nature. By articulating *ecstasis* toward the

good, the traditional terms of human nature, inclinations, and the good are not only preserved but underscored.

The natural human inclination toward self-giving and friendship begs for an account for the relationship between law and love, and this topic forms the final chapter of *Biblical Natural Law*. There is a Western prejudice, thanks in part to Martin Luther, that “law” is constrictive to natural inclinations, whereas “love” transcends rules, enabling a perfect outpouring of the person. This false dichotomy depends ultimately on a faulty definition of law. If the traditional definition of law were maintained, then the dichotomy would not exist. “Law is an ordinance of reason for the common good, made by him who has care of the community, and promulgated” (*ST* I–II, q. 90, a. 4). It is the final cause, “the common good,” that moderns neglect, and this is the reason why moderns cannot articulate a teleological version of jurisprudence.

Biblical Natural Law, then, begins as an apologia to the theologians, next addresses the philosophers, and ends again with an appeal to the theologians. In the conclusion we find that natural law, like everything in nature, is ordered to the supernatural. That “grace perfects nature” is yet again the answer to one of the great problems of faith and reason. Natural law cannot be alone, since it is oriented to something beyond it. Here the theologians find comfort. Natural law is not our participation in God through faith or through the beatific vision. It is something much lower. Nevertheless, the teleology of natural law entails the ecstatic aspect of human nature. Nature longs for an end that is beyond its natural means. As Levering puts it, “natural law, in its very structure, carries us outside ourselves,” or as Romanus Cessario puts it, “The end draws” (221).

Contemporary authors of natural law theory sometimes neglect the need for a robust investigation of human teleology, as if this topic were not proper to human nature *qua* human nature. By contrast, Levering examines this problems head on, and as a result, his analysis is particularly insightful. Few authors are able to weave together the writings of Cicero, Saint Paul, Descartes, Hegel, and Nietzsche in under two hundred fifty pages, yet Levering accomplishes the task by his keen appreciation of the problems of “nature” and “law” in the great tradition of the West. The reader of *Biblical Natural Law* is sure to find a refreshing treatment of natural law, because it directly addresses why *natural* law must include an account of human nature. N V

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Good and Evil Actions: A Journey through Saint Thomas Aquinas

by Steven J. Jensen (*Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010*), xiv + 324 pp.

AT A TIME ripe with controversy among Catholic moral theologians and philosophers concerning a number of the most difficult moral questions of all time, Steven Jensen has courageously contributed a significant, timely, and welcome contribution with his book *Good and Evil Actions: A Journey through Saint Thomas Aquinas*. The book is evidently the work of a profound, precise thinker who has carefully read and considered not only several works of St. Thomas that few other moral theologians and philosophers have even opened, but countless articles and books from just about every contemporary scholar who has made any contribution whatsoever to this discussion. For this reason alone, the book is a “must read” for any serious Catholic moral theologian. Any moral theologian alive today would benefit from reading this masterful work. In fact, if I were to mention even a relatively small portion of the ways in which this book has clarified my own thinking on the subject, this book review would be far too long. Therefore, I restrict my comments to Jensen’s principal concluding thesis. Concerning this, I offer the following respectful critique as food for thought.

In the penultimate chapter of the book, Jensen clearly states what is apparently his principal thesis: “Can we, in short, explain all sin, murder as well as bestiality, by way of some normative teleology from which the action falls short? Yes, indeed” (260). Applying this principle to explain why murder is intrinsically wrong, Jensen continues, “Murder is wrong because we should love other people as subjects of the good, with a love of friendship, and not with the love of utility” (260). He further explains that this principle depends upon a teleology that “arises from the will itself, which is naturally inclined to love others with friendship.”

This thesis, as stated, is perhaps the most important and decisive (and in a certain respect, most original) conclusion of Jensen’s dialectical journey, a journey that culminated with definitive stands on some of the most difficult moral questions of all, in chapter 5. In that chapter, Jensen concluded that craniotomy, for example, is wrong precisely because the doctor seeks to introduce in the material (the child) “the good of subordination or use for some further end” (208). The act is wrong because the doctor “cannot possibly seek to introduce the good of the subject itself, which is the good that the love of friendship would seek” (208). With regard to the question of palliative sedation, on the other hand, which has the unintended effect of causing the death of a patient, Jensen judges that

this act may be licit, but only because the doctor “seeks to change the patient for his own good, namely, that he might be relieved of pain” (209). The question of the morality of the act is once again reduced to the question of whether or not one person uses another. In his evaluation of the hysterectomy case (when a life-threatening, diseased uterus—having a non-viable embryo living within it—is removed in order to save the life of the mother), Jensen concludes that one principal reason why this act can be licit is because “the doctor ends up placing the unborn child in a dangerous situation, but this change—of the child being in a dangerous situation—is not a means to achieve her goal; rather, it is a consequence of her action” (216). And finally, in the case of self-defense (the particular case of shoving a life-threatening assailant off oneself, foreseeing that he will probably fall off a cliff and die), Jensen concludes that this particular kind of self-defense can be licit because “the defender does not aim to place the assailant in a dangerous situation as a means to save her life; rather, she aims to remove him from her, from the position in which he threatens her life” (218). In every case, the act in question (which in some way leads to the death of an innocent person) is morally wrong if it amounts to “using” someone, and the act is perhaps morally permissible if it does not amount to this.

Taking many arguments such as these (regarding the morality of acts that involve directly or indirectly killing human persons) along with other arguments that invoke teleology to explain the wrongness of certain actions—for example, lying is wrong because it violates the teleology of human speech, and bestiality is wrong because it violates the teleology of the reproductive act—Jensen draws the following, most universal, conclusion:

All human actions, then, even those that engage merely the power of locomotion, are good or evil in relation to some teleology. . . . When the will turns to act upon another human being, then it naturally seeks the good of that person; consequently, actions arising from the will and directed upon this person must realize this order. Since using another is opposed to the love of friendship, acts of using human beings are natural errors of the will, failures to realize the order implemented by reason (263).

Despite the many fine attributes of Jensen’s book, which one would be hard pressed to enumerate even in the most summary way, this most comprehensive conclusion—which is by far the most worthy of careful consideration and comment—seems to be neither entirely Thomistic nor true. Jensen admits that this argument has a “Kantian flavor,” but he insists

that it is “rooted in St. Thomas, who distinguishes between two kinds of love, love of concupiscence and love of friendship” (134). (Jensen cites *ST* I–II, q. 26, a. 4.) Now admittedly, we should love human persons not merely for what they can do for us but also for who and what they are, and St. Thomas is very clear about this. But it does not seem that Jensen’s conclusion follows therefrom, either in truth or in the mind of St. Thomas.

For example, if I go up to a cashier and ask, “May I have change for a dollar?” it suffices that I respect him or her for who he or she is (as a human person). Evidently, I do not, in order to avoid moral fault, need to intend a particular change in that person that is for his or her good every time I interact with him or her. And in general, there is nothing morally wrong with friendships of utility. Every employer/employee relationship is a friendship of utility. Certainly we should love every human person for who he or she is, but it suffices if our intention for their personal good is habitual. In any case, St. Thomas never comes close to saying that whenever we have any physical interaction whatsoever with another human person, we are required to intend a change in them which is for their betterment.

Moreover, it seems that it is not necessarily wrong even to act directly on another person, even contrary to their will, in a way which is for their overall harm. For example, if the only way that I can save the life of an innocent person is by pushing another innocent bystander down in such a way that he or she breaks his or her arm, this may be laudable, depending on the circumstances. If that bystander, knowing my intentions, still resents the fact that I broke his or her arm, this is really irrelevant. His or her will might be disordered.

Finally, it does not even seem to be *necessarily* wrong to “use” someone, contrary to their will, in a way that ultimately (and almost certainly) leads to their death! Does not the government continually “use” innocent people to protect itself against enemy armies? I think it is safe to assume that any Thomist would agree that it does not matter if being drafted and consigned to the front line of the Battle of the Bulge is against the soldier’s will, so long as it is not against his conscience. I do not mean to imply that this act is a form of killing (on the part of the persons drafting), but it is certainly a form of use which is physically harmful to innocent persons.

These examples seem to demonstrate that harmful, involuntary “use” (even in the extreme) is not what makes murder wrong. Rather, it seems that what really makes murder intrinsically wrong is what St. Thomas actually said: murder is the killing of a man who is good (and not *merely* as useful)

both in himself and in relation to others (*ST* II-II, 64, 1 and 6). What makes murder wrong, according to St. Thomas, is the fact that there is not due proportion between the action and that upon which the act bears.

Extending this critique to the general current behind Jensen's thought, one must doubt that it is a universal principle that what finally makes intrinsically evil acts evil is the violation of a certain teleological order. It seems that at least some acts are intrinsically wrong because they simply violate the nature of things (of which teleology is a part, but not the whole). For example, one should not worship as God what is not God, and one should not use the name of God as if it were profane. Is not the most general and universal principle of morality simply that it is right to act in accordance with the nature of things, and it is wrong to act in violation of the nature of things? Is it not then simply the nature of things (of which teleology is an essential part) that first and finally determines the rightness or wrongness of human actions?

In any case, even if we must offer this respectful critique of Jensen's principal thesis, there is no doubt that any serious Catholic moral theologian or philosopher will benefit greatly from reading this book. There is simply no way to make the subtle distinctions that need to be made without joining Jensen in this kind of courageous, dialectical journey. **N-V**

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