

Book Reviews

The Ethics of Abortion: Women's Rights, Human Life, and the Question of Justice by Christopher Kaczor (*New York: Routledge, 2011*), x + 256 pp.

THIS PHILOSOPHICAL work provides an excellent comprehensive evaluation of contemporary moral arguments regarding abortion and argues that “the vast majority of abortions are morally impermissible” (12). The author engages the foremost philosophers who have treated the issue in depth. Fair-minded and balanced, Kaczor’s approach criticizes weak arguments *against* abortion as well as all the arguments permitting it in a tone that communicates respect for all parties to the debate.

The book’s argument follows the basic reasoning that personhood begins at conception, that persons have full moral status from that point, and thus that abortion is morally wrong. The first chapter sets out the book’s thesis and articulates the expectation that dialogue about abortion should respectfully address the strongest arguments on each side. For example, Kaczor works through the many problems with Judith Jarvis Thompson’s famous argument for abortion and frequently engages the arguments of David Boonin, Mary Ann Warren, Michael Tooley, and Jeff McMahan. Chapters two through four refute arguments permitting infanticide and abortion. Chapters five through seven make Kaczor’s argument that personhood depends not upon the presence or absence of certain developmental properties but upon the possession of the constitutive properties of personhood, which are by definition present at every stage of development. This “constitutive property argument” holds that personhood begins at conception, that all persons from conception have certain rights, in particular the right to life, and that abortion violates this right. Finally, chapters eight and nine evaluate arguments for and against abortion in dire circumstances, such as rape, and entertain reasons why the use of artificial wombs, if ever successfully developed, might provide an alternative that preserves life, thereby eliminating any legitimate rationale for choosing abortion.

To some readers, the refutation of arguments for infanticide in chapter two may seem unnecessary. However, some of the most sophisticated arguments in favor of abortion also justify infanticide, implicitly if not explicitly. Moreover, some readers will wonder why Kaczor argues against positions that no one seems to hold or that seem absurd. For example, to argue for the view that species is morally relevant, the author notes the moral difference between a hit and run accident involving a squirrel and one involving a newborn, and he notes the condemnation of cannibalism; both of these examples presume the moral superiority of the human species. This strategy clears away confused thinking and helps readers work through some of the poor rhetoric in the abortion debate. It also puts in place principles that expose weaknesses in more sophisticated arguments, such as McMahan's argument that, since we can create chimeras, the moral status of human beings is a matter of the degree to which a human being possesses a certain characteristic. By noting the obvious fact that sleep does not eliminate personhood, Kaczor demonstrates that personhood cannot be based on the presence of certain characteristics, such as consciousness. This point, however, draws into sharp relief the arbitrariness of basing personhood or moral status upon any transient condition or characteristic, a logical fault which he calls the "episodic problem" (48). Personhood, he argues, cannot be based on something that comes and goes.

Chapters three and four challenge arguments for abortion that deny personhood to the child before birth. In his challenges, he attacks some justifications for current abortion legislation, which permits abortion until the child is born. Kaczor's analysis shows clearly why birth does not modify personhood at all and exposes the weaknesses of arguments, such as those of Mary Ann Warren and of Tristram Engelhardt, to justify abortion but not infanticide. Kaczor notes that the characteristics by which those authors grant protection to the newborn—for example, biological humanity, capacity for social interaction, need for social recognition for survival, preservation of trust and protection of the weak—apply equally to the fetus. The only real difference between the newborn and the fetus is its location, which is relevant to discussions of a woman's rights but completely irrelevant to the child's status as a person. Supposing that location influences personhood, for example, leads to the absurd conclusion that an embryo fertilized *in vitro* or a fetus removed from the womb for surgery has personhood until it is replaced in the womb and by that placement loses its personhood, only to regain it at birth. Kaczor's demonstration here illustrates one of the book's strengths: patiently correcting false reasoning that might otherwise have been more evident, but that the debate's heated rhetoric obscures.

Chapter four continues to expose the arbitrary criteria used to define away personhood before birth and justify abortion. Here the most important justifications argue that if a fetus lacks conscious desires or interests or sentience, or if it has not yet implanted, then it lacks personhood and can be aborted. Against the conscious desires argument for personhood, Kaczor first recalls that, as a standard for personhood, the possession of desires and interests suffers from the episodic problem outlined previously. Then he argues that abortion deprives the child not only of personal interests but of a deeper value, of the good of life itself. He criticizes the logic of the interest standard, noting the absurdity of thinking that a greater or lesser desire to live makes a murder any more or less grave. Similarly, a greater or lesser capacity for pain or pleasure does not render nonexistent either personhood or the concomitant right to life. Regarding implantation, Kaczor explains that laws have historically given importance to implantation as a standard for judging feticide, not personhood, because guilt for murder requires knowledge of the victim's presence. Implantation was historically a reasonable standard for making this judgment but it merely obscures the personhood debate.

Chapters five through seven present the core of Kaczor's argument that all human beings are persons because they have the necessary human constitutive properties, that even the embryo has a right to life, and that abortion violates this right. This argument is based upon an endowment account of personhood, that is, that persons are "beings with endowments that orient them toward moral values, such as rationality, autonomy, and respect," rather than a performance account of personhood, that is, that beings command respect "if and only if, the being functions in a given way" (93). Since even adult individuals differ in performance by degrees, judgments of performance base personhood, and thus equality of rights, upon characteristics that individuals possess differently or not at all. But personhood and the right to life should be based on properties that each person shares equally.

Kaczor identifies biological humanity, present at conception, as the most evident, relevant constitutive property for determining the beginning of personhood. He includes rationality as a constitutive property and argues that rationality is no less present in the embryo, who cannot exercise rationality, than reproductive capacity is present in the person who happens not to be actively reproducing. Thus his "constitutive property argument" for human personhood proposes that any being possesses its constitutive properties (including biological humanity and rationality for humans) at every moment of its existence, that an individual human person is the same being as the fetus (or embryo) from which it developed, and thus that each

human zygote is also a human person. The long section at the end of this chapter provides a good evaluation and rebuttal of the arguments of Singer, Tooley, and McMahan that changes in rational or physical characteristics at some point after conception could represent a new identity for the being and thus the onset of personhood and right to life protection. Similarly, chapter six rebuts other arguments against the personhood of the embryo: for example, that the embryo is related to an adult as an acorn is to an oak; that it is too small, or might undergo twinning, or is like a “bag of marbles” rather than an organism.

Chapter seven completes the book’s basic argument by explaining why the personhood of the embryo and the right to life make abortion morally impermissible. In this chapter Kaczor gives a clear, penetrating refutation of Thompson’s famous arguments that abortion is morally permissible even if the embryo is considered a person. He also handles revisions of Thompson’s arguments by later philosophers who attempted to reinforce those arguments. This chapter will be particularly helpful to those working through the details of various arguments in the debate.

Kaczor’s thesis that the *vast majority* of abortions are impermissible raises curiosity about what circumstances render an abortion morally permissible and why. Kaczor has in mind only cases in which the pregnancy seriously threatens the health or life of the mother, and he argues based on the principle of double effect. Many readers will be surprised that Kaczor does not permit abortion in cases of rape. His guiding principle, an important one, is that the poor circumstances of an individual’s conception, shocking and tragic though they be, do not justify killing that individual. In the case of rape, not only is it possible to bear the child without endangering the life and health of the mother, but “to bear a child conceived in these most difficult of circumstances is to perform an act that is in complete contradiction of what takes place in a rape . . . [when] a man assaults an innocent human being” (184). Kaczor applies this principle to other cases involving difficult circumstances, such as fetal deformity, and asserts that sometimes people are “faced with the choice between the morally wrong and the morally heroic. A merely permissible option is not available” (185). While this observation about heroism has some intuitive plausibility, the book should have given it a longer discussion. Kaczor’s argument requires heroic action of some people who will be completely unprepared to perform it, and persuasive arguments for abortion trade on this reality.

In the book’s final chapter, Kaczor continues to develop his previously published proposal that artificial wombs could end the abortion debate. He argues that artificial wombs (which at present are not technically possible) would provide such a clinching alternative to abortion that

choosing abortion would reveal either malice toward the child or a discomfort with the idea of artificial wombs that would nonetheless hardly justify abortion. Kaczor adds that artificial wombs would relieve the mother of many if not most of the burdens of pregnancy and thus satisfy a major concern of abortion advocates.

Kaczor's discussion eliminates several poor arguments against the use of artificial wombs, but his own argument needs more development in order to demonstrate that the use of such wombs would constitute a morally acceptable alternative to an *elective abortion*. He invokes the widely accepted, correct premise that removing a nonviable child from its mother's womb is permissible when the child's life is threatened by a pathology in the mother, such as an incompetent uterus, or by the act of another, such as when the mother is poisoned, or even by an act of the mother, such as when her irresponsible driving leads to a car accident or when her smoking leads to lung cancer and she will die. These examples, given by Kaczor, are not controversial because the immediate threats to the child are unavoidable and were never directly intended. Thus, Kaczor effectively demonstrates that the mere use of an artificial womb is not necessarily an unjust deprivation of maternal shelter and gestation.

Kaczor needs to explain in more depth how the use of an artificial womb to avoid an *elective abortion* could end the abortion debate. Their use might exacerbate the problem of professionals' cooperation in that practice. Kaczor recognizes that "if the life of the human fetus is threatened by the choice of abortion, deprivation of maternal gestation is blameworthy . . . [because] the danger to the child is voluntarily caused and could be voluntarily removed" (221). The problem, which runs throughout the book but is not mentioned here, is that the danger is not likely to be removed in places where elective abortion is legal. Thus, on the one hand, it seems just to remove the child from the threat of the mother's will to abort. Kaczor emphasizes this point by observing "[W]hether the danger is voluntarily or non-voluntarily caused makes no difference from the perspective of the preborn who are threatened with death" (221). On the other hand, it is difficult to see why this use of artificial wombs does not represent morally unacceptable cooperation in the mother's project to deprive the child of maternal shelter and gestation, which Kaczor recognizes to be immoral. The mother wishes the child gone from her womb, and the medical team directly provides the essential means, albeit as an alternative to abortion. In practice, willing professionals could easily be found for the procedure as long as it were rare. But what if this practice became widespread? What about the corrosive effects on the moral culture of societies that adopt this practice?

For its comprehensive treatment of arguments for and against abortion, its many wise arguments, and its forthright and respectful tone, this outstanding study is an essential read for anyone seriously considering the abortion issue. N V

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Benedict XVI and the Sacred Liturgy: Proceedings of the First Fota International Liturgy Conference edited by Neil J. Roy and Janet E. Rutherford (*Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010*), 204 pp.

THE ISLAND of Fota lies in the harbor of Cork, behind the town of Cobh. It has now been the idyllic site of six international conferences on the Sacred Liturgy. The first of these, held in 2008, gathered scholars from North America and Europe in order that they might reflect upon the contributions of Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI to the arising of a new liturgical movement in the Catholic Church. One positive aspect of this conference is the fact that not all of the presenters were liturgical specialists. It was refreshing to see a biblical scholar, moral theologian, systematic theologian, historian, historical theologian, and professor of medieval studies being invited to contribute their insights.

The book begins with a brief introduction by a former student of Joseph Ratzinger's, Vincent Twomey, on the importance of the liturgy in Pope Benedict's theology of creation, ecclesiology, Eucharistic theology, sacramental theology, and theology of world religions. This is followed by nine conference papers, which treat of Pope Benedict XVI's own liturgical formation, his specific contributions to a new liturgical movement, particular liturgical issues which have attracted his interest and benefited from his insight, and his understanding of the liturgical vision of the Second Vatican Council.

Joseph Murphy gives a succinct introduction to Benedict XVI's liturgical theology. He recounts how Joseph Ratzinger became a devotee of the liturgical movement of the early twentieth century, and an enthusiastic supporter of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, only to be then disenchanted with many of the changes introduced in the post-conciliar period, becoming convinced that this period had ushered in a disintegration of the liturgy rather than the reform which the Council fathers had desired, and so there arose the need for a new liturgical movement.

Perhaps the material that will be most familiar to those who have been following the dispatches from the frontlines of the liturgy wars will be

that found in the essays by Alcuin Reid, Helen Hull Hitchcock, and James Hitchcock. Reid recounts Joseph Ratzinger's enthusiasm for the liturgical movement, and his subsequent perception of two erroneous misinterpretations of the council—one which rejects the liturgy of the past in favor of the liturgy of the present, and one which rejects the liturgy of the present in favor of the liturgy of the past. To both of these errors, Pope Benedict opposes an organic development over time. One could say that Reid sees Benedict the *homo liturgicus* (157) as the “wise scribe” who brings out of his storehouse things both new and old. Reid presents the Pope as proposing three pillars of liturgical reform in a new liturgical movement. They are (1) the faithful celebration of the modern liturgical rites; (2) the free use of the pre-conciliar liturgical rites; and (3) a “reform of the reform,” that revised the modern liturgical books in order to include some of the treasures previously discarded.

Helen Hitchcock claims that Pope Benedict's approach to the liturgy is a laudable balance between “conservatives” who reject the *Novus Ordo* and “liberals” who wish to model the liturgy on contemporary relativism. She makes the astute point that he views both of these extremes as regarding the Second Vatican Council as a radical rupture with the past, for good or ill, and that both destroy an awareness of continuity in the liturgy, whether they opt for a 400-year-old one or are forever creating new liturgies. Both parties think that faith comes through regulations and learned research rather than the living history of the Church.

James Hitchcock attempts to put the post-conciliar developments in the liturgy into a cultural context. He presents the *Zeitgeist* of that period as moving from a more “pastoral” approach to the liturgy, in the sense of being under episcopal direction, to that of a rule by *apparatchiks*, liturgical “experts” possessing unfettered confidence in their agenda, which was a turn to *anthropos* and away from *theos*. He regards this confidence as misplaced, since they demonstrated little deep understanding of the relationship between the life of ritual and the life of faith. The result, according to Hitchcock, was a devastated Catholic culture. In this reader's opinion, he presents us with two ironies—the pastoral insensitivity of much of the supposedly “pastoral” approach of many of the reformers following a “pastoral council,” and the cultural insensitivity of many, despite the fact that, in the secular sphere, there was a growing awareness of the damage done to indigenous cultures by colonial powers.

By far the longest essay in this collection is that by Manfred Hauke on the work of Klaus Gamber, whom Joseph Ratzinger described, in his introduction to Gamber's *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy*, as “the one scholar who, among the army of pseudo-liturgists, truly represents the

liturgical thinking of the centre of the Church.” To one who had heard about Gamber only via this reported quote from Pope Benedict, this paper was most informative. Gamber is presented as epitomizing that which is needed in a “new liturgical movement”—someone able to steer between the Scylla of “archaism” and the Charybdis of “modern fabrication.” Yet Hauke also gives an analysis that is genuinely and appropriately critical rather than a panegyric. Despite the length of Hauke’s essay, not much space is devoted to a discussion of the reception of Gamber’s liturgical theology by Benedict XVI. Is Gamber an influence, inspiration, soul-mate, or some combination of these?

In looking at what he regards as a crisis in sacred art, Uwe Michael Lang takes, as his starting point, the distinction between “religious” and “sacred” art made in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §122. Sacred art is that which is destined for the *sacrum*, for the sacred liturgy. It is also popular, since it is intended to be understood and loved by the faithful. After briefly recounting the Church’s historical teaching on sacred art, Lang then outlines the expression and fundamental cause of a crisis in contemporary sacred art: this art, which in many ways is little more than a tired imitation of early twentieth-century art, embodies a rejection of the beautiful. It is the ugly that is true. This understanding led to a widespread notion that “beauty is not an appropriate category of the Church’s worship” (105). In spite of this notion, Lang sees the present time as a propitious moment for the Church to renew its engagement with the secular artistic world through its understanding and presentation of the transcendentals. “The search for beauty has nothing to do with mere aestheticism or flight from reason, because, from the divine perspective, beauty, along with truth and the good, is convertible with being” (103). Lang thinks that Pope Benedict agrees with Dostoevsky’s idea that “the world will be saved by beauty,” the beauty revealed on the face of Christ.

Dennis McManus and Jorge Maria Cardinal Mejia give two different but complementary accounts of the difficulties facing the translator of liturgical texts. McManus gives an impressive analysis of the historical and philosophical context of current theories of translation. Although a non-specialist in translation theory may miss a few of the finer points, McManus’s account is very enlightening. To learn that “dynamic equivalence” is only one of a number of schools of thought in translation theory, or that its philosophical foundation is to be found in logical positivism, leads one to a better understanding of the complexities involved in making “faithful” translations of liturgical and biblical texts.

Mejia takes a broader approach to the problem of translation. He places this problem in a theological context—that of Babel and Pente-

cost. He sees both as still being present with us. The need for translation is ultimately the consequence of sin. All translations are imperfect. Pentecost is a sign that, within the Church, this consequence can be overcome. Pentecost raises the possibility of true mutual understanding, of overcoming incomprehension and misunderstanding. For Mejia, translation is not merely a practical task. The translator must see it as a ministry, a service to build up the Body of Christ. Mejia finishes with the reflection that although all languages are of equal worth, the ancient practice of distinguishing Hebrew, Greek, and Latin as “sacred” is worthy of respect, since it was in the first two languages that God chose to speak to us, and Latin has been the historical vehicle for the transmission of the faith in the Latin Church. It would have been good to see Mejia develop this “incarnational” principle to include the revelation of the Father to us in Jesus the Christ, for he too is a “trans-lation”—the Word of God who came and pitched his tent amongst us.

It is the final essay by Neil Roy which has remained most vividly in my mind. He gives a brief analysis of a particular point regarding those two lists of saints which fall, in the Roman Canon, before and after the narrative of institution and the consecration.

The first list occurs in the prayer named for its incipit *Communicantes*; the second list appears in the prayer beginning with the words *Nobis quoque peccatoribus*. This paper contends that the two groups of saints, led, in the first instance, by the Blessed Virgin Mary and, in the second, by St John the Baptist constitute a eucharistical *Deësis*, which presents them in an intercessory role on either side of Christ made present on the altar in the institution and consecration.

Roy goes on to show how this δέησις, this supplication, entreaty, petition, or intercession, is to be found in both Christian art and doctrine, especially in the east. He points out what these two groups of saints in the Roman Canon can teach us about the worship of God in the sacred liturgy, how the Canon “introduces in a marvellous order the Bride, the Bridegroom, and the Friend of the Bridegroom who will welcome all those invited to the Mystical Supper, the Lamb’s high feast (197).” Roy’s essay is a simple example of what the whole goal of liturgical scholarship should be—helping the Body of Christ to worship God in the sacred liturgy. By itself, it is worth the price of admission.

Although this book gives an excellent introduction to many of the current philosophical, theological, historical, cultural, aesthetical and linguistic challenges confronting the contemporary celebration of the sacred liturgy, it does not cover everything. For example, those looking

for an introduction to Benedict XVI's profound insights into music in the liturgy can read the proceedings of the Third Fota International Liturgy Conference, on Benedict XVI and sacred music. There is also one potential drawback to a conference such as this—all of the presenters seem to be thoroughly convinced of the rightness of Pope Benedict's liturgical ideas. How interesting it would have been to read the papers from a conference on Benedict XVI and the Liturgy that included such balanced critics of his liturgical theology as Joseph Komonchak, Thomas Rausch, and John Baldovin. N V

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Humanism and Religion: A Call for the Renewal of Western Culture by Jens Zimmermann (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012*), x + 379 pp.

THIS SUBTLE, difficult, and wide-ranging study aims at nothing less than the revival of the religious basis of a humane culture in Western lands. There are several ways in which this aim might be realized: by direct evangelization, for instance; or, again, by adopting an educational program in which classical Christian literary texts and artifacts are key; or, yet again, by devising legislation that would align the positive law with natural and divine law in the relevant jurisdictions. The book under review eschews such strategies. Instead, it argues that values and verities accepted by humane people (there is a tautology here, for the definition of humane people includes reference to accepting the values and verities in question) depend for their historical genesis on the Judaeo-Christian tradition and, philosophically speaking, are only defensible by accepting some version of that tradition's fundamental anthropology—summed up in the description of man as the *imago Dei*.

Expressed thus, the work's purpose and method don't sound, perhaps, especially startling or even original. But what is unusual about the work (here I employ a comparison from cricket, with apologies to American readers) is how far the author feels he must move back in the crease before he can take aim and bowl. For a good deal of the book is taken up with defending such notions as epistemological realism, the use of participation language in metaphysics, the complementarity of transcendence and immanence, the necessity of historical understanding, the significance of the ability to translate from one language to another for the unity of the human species, and other basic philosophical matters which are remotely, rather than proximately, involved in any defense of the status of humanity as "in the image of God."

This makes the book subtle. What makes it also difficult (apart from the inherent demands of the subject-matter so described) is that the author does not expound this circle of ideas in his own name. Instead, he explores these themes through a series of investigations of other writers, whether corporately, as in the case of the Fathers (though here Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus, and Augustine are specially prominent), or, more usually, individually. He paints a gallery of portraits that include, most importantly, Vico, Dilthey, Heidegger, Levinas, Gadamer, Blondel, and Bonhoeffer. As these names may suggest, a key focus of the book is interpretation theory, introduced chiefly, I believe, so as to keep at bay the two intellectual positions from which the writer seeks to distance himself: a thorough-going anti-religious skepticism, and an equally distasteful (in his eyes) religious "fundamentalism." The problem here is that the term "fundamentalism" is exceptionally slippery unless very tightly defined. The Australian theologian Gerald O'Collins has remarked that he ceased to use it when he saw it applied to himself by a reviewer who considered it sufficiently evidenced by someone's upholding the bodily resurrection of Christ.

Throughout the body of the book, however, some very fine things are remarkably well said. This is especially so in regard to the manner in which the Incarnation is said to constitute the climactic expression of the *imago Dei*, and to license, not least through its own expression in the Tradition of the Church, the Eucharistic community of foot-washers, many of the philosophical motifs the author has discussed in relation to figures from whose minds (we may be fairly confident) these Christological, ecclesial, and sacramental-moral themes were entirely absent.

A subtle book may influence subtle minds. More straightforward intelligences will be puzzled. How is it possible to renew a set of presuppositions, desirable for the background of thought and sensibility, in a culture that has rejected the credenda which are their foreground articulation? If a culture, still desiring (for the most part) to be humane, has lost that sense of the personal derived from Trinitarian Christology, and the feeling for the incarnational issuing from the Incarnation, can this sense and this feeling be revived without evangelical proclamation, and without a public agenda for the transformation of all dimensions of life together? I very much hope this book has a positive effect commensurate with the huge effort of thought that has gone into its making. But, without a revival of the Church herself, I should also be very much surprised. N V

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A Universe from Nothing: Why There Is Something Rather Than Nothing by Lawrence M. Krauss, afterword by Richard Dawkins (*New York: Free Press, 2012*), xix + 202 pp.

Why Does the World Exist? An Existential Detective Story by Jim Holt (*New York: W.W. Norton, 2012*), 309 pp.

ATHEISTS HAVE always had particular difficulty answering Gottfried Leibniz's famous question: why is there something rather than nothing? One sign of their perplexity is their standard non-answer: *well, if God exists, who created God?* Exactly why this riposte is seen as the ace's trump in the atheists' deck of cards is baffling. For the God of classical theism is held to be the *uncaused* cause. Perhaps theists are wrong in their belief in this kind of God; but to ask who created *this* God is only to sidestep the issue by refusing to engage the very God monotheists claim to be worshipping. Meanwhile, in this back-and-forth round robin, Leibniz's question goes unanswered, leaving the universe hanging out there as just a sheer, brute, unexplained fact.

Some atheists must realize this, because now the ground of argument has shifted to the latest developments in cosmology, where the claim is heard that the universe brought itself into being, a position advocated most recently by Lawrence Krauss in his book *A Universe from Nothing*. But readers don't have to wait long before they come to realize that the author is playing a game of Three-Card Monte here. For at regular intervals he changes his definition of nothing: initially, he seems to concede a thoroughgoing concept of nothing in the Leibnizian sense, but then—sometimes alerting the reader to his legerdemain and sometimes not—he starts talking about nothing as, well, *something*. Here is a particularly rich example of Krauss at work:

First, I want to be clear about what kind of “nothing” I am discussing at the moment. This is the simplest version of nothing, namely empty space. For the moment, I will assume space exists, with nothing at all in it, and that the laws of physics also exist. Once again, I realize that . . . [for] those who wish to continually redefine the word so that no scientific definition is practical, this version of nothing doesn't cut the mustard. However, I suspect that, at the times of Plato and Aquinas, when they pondered why there was something rather than nothing, empty space with nothing in it was probably a good approximation of what they were thinking about. (149)

The reader will especially savor Krauss's use here of that coy adverb *probably*, which can be translated to mean: “Since I can't be bothered to

read enough in the history of philosophy to know what I'm talking about—philosophy now having yielded the runner's baton to physics anyway—I'll just attribute to authors I've never read what they must have meant, and all to suit my own convenience." Convenient indeed: "I am more interested here in being true to our current understanding of the universe than in making an apparently easy and convincing case for creating it from nothing" (165). But it's *Krauss* who's being easy on himself here, and not remotely convincing. For time and again he keeps importing a "something" (however wispy and speculative) to act as a stand-in for the philosopher's true nothing, thereby avoiding Leibniz's dilemma. His argument, in other words, is more suited to the enticements of a carnival barker trying to get patrons into the tent to see the tattooed lady flaunt her freakishness than it is to the engagement of a serious professional who is wrestling with Leibniz's question on its own terms.

No wonder, then, that the author, near the end of the book, has to shut down his curiosity about the sheer, blunt existence of the universe: "Why is there something rather than nothing? Ultimately, this question may be no more significant or profound than asking why some flowers are red and some are blue" (178). No wonder, too, that he keeps shifting his argument from metaphysics (where he is totally at sea) to the safer shores of physics: "When we ask, 'Why?' we usually mean 'How?' If we can answer the latter, that generally suffices for our purposes" (143). Again, as with his lazy adverb *probably* noted above, his cop-out adverbs here—*usually* and *generally*—are unintentionally hilarious. The reader is bound to ask: So what about those moments when the How question does not suffice? Our author never asks that question, and he certainly never answers it.

The book comes with an Afterword from England's most devout atheist, Richard Dawkins, who overreaches badly when he ranks it with Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*. After reading the book, with all its shape-shifting maneuvers and sleights of hand worthy of a professional magician, the reader will be especially amused by another fillip of unintended irony from Dawkins's Afterword: "Theology not only lacks decimal places: it lacks even the smallest hint of a connection with the real world" (190). So that's theology's problem: it lacks decimal places. The man is simply beyond parody.

But as to Krauss's book itself (rather than Dawkins's empty dithyramb), and prescinding from Krauss's risible arguments for a self-caused universe out of a Nothing that turns out to be a Something, even a skeptical audience can still appreciate his skill as a popularizing explainer. General readers innocent of the arcana of physics have much to learn here about the role of quantum mechanics in cosmic origins and about how dark energy

will hasten the end of the universe. The recent discovery of the latter has now established that the universe will not eventually collapse back in on itself into what is known as a “singularity” (the initiating moment of the Big Bang) but will continue to stretch out into virtual infinity because of the repulsive force of the aforesaid dark energy: Billions of years from now, all galaxies will recede past earth’s event-horizon (thereby disappearing from our visual field), after which even atomic matter itself will eventually break up. The scenario Krauss depicts is no doubt bleak, and he says so: “the future . . . is one in which nothingness will once again reign . . . with nothing in it to appreciate its vast mystery” (179). But without a truly *metaphysical* argument for God’s existence, he cannot explain the hope irrepressibly present in the human heart in the face of certain death, one’s own and that of the universe as well.

Jim Holt, too, subscribes to that old chestnut rejoinder of the college sophomore: “If God exists, who made God?” But at least *he* realizes that there is a genuine problem here once it is stipulated that God does not exist. In his pleasingly written “existential detective story,” Holt takes his readers along on his journey as he interviews several scientists and philosophers (and one novelist, John Updike, but no theologians, although Updike mentions his debt to Karl Barth), most of whom, but not all, are atheists.

One great virtue of his book comes from the ease with which he dispatches Krauss’s argument (who must be glad he was not interviewed): “If the laws of physics are Something, then they cannot explain why there is Something rather than Nothing, since they are part of the Something to be explained” (161). To his credit, physicist and Nobel laureate Steven Weinberg concedes the point: “I’m not saying that the multiverse would resolve *all* philosophical issues. It would eliminate the sense of wonder surrounding the fact that conditions in our universe are just right for life and consciousness. But we would still be faced with the mystery of why the laws of nature are such as to produce the multiverse of which our universe is a part. And I don’t see any way out of *that* mystery” (157).

Another virtue of the book comes from Holt’s philosophical acuity in spotting a grammatical snag in the way the word *nothing* is used in ordinary language. Normally, that pesky word serves as a substitute for the term *not anything*, as in “Nothing is better than a hot shower after a long day in the coal mines.” But the word can also be used nominally, as in “Nothing is better than life in prison” (meaning “I would prefer capital punishment to a life sentence without parole”). In a clever passage, Holt takes these two usages—as the adverbial negation of the word *anything*

and as a noun in its own right—and weaves them into an amusing riff that bears quoting in full:

What is nothing? Macbeth answered this question with admirable concinnity: “Nothing is, but what is not.” My dictionary puts it somewhat more paradoxically—“*nothing* (n.): a thing that does not exist.” Although Parmenides, the ancient Eleatic sage, declared that it was impossible to speak of what is not—thereby violating his own precept—the plain man knows better. Nothing is popularly held to be better than a dry martini, but worse than sand in the bedsheets. A poor man has it, a rich man needs it, and if you eat it for a long time, it’ll kill you. On occasion, nothing could be further from the truth, but it is not clear how much further. It can be both black and white all over at the same time. Nothing is impossible for God, yet it is a cinch for the rank-est incompetent. No matter what pair of contradictory properties you choose, nothing seems capable of embodying them. From this it might be concluded that nothing is mysterious. But that would only mean that everything is obvious—including, presumably, nothing. (41–42)

Beyond this drollery, Holt continues to catch out most of his interlocutors begging Leibniz’s Ultimate Existential Question—or, in the case of the famous philosopher of science Adolf Grünbaum, not asking the question at all: “Either you have a hunch that the sheer existence of the world needs an explanation, or you have a hunch that it doesn’t,” says Holt. “Grünbaum stood firmly in the latter camp, and no intuitions about the alleged simplicity of nothingness were going to move him” (75). But as Holt points out, wishing away a question does not answer it, anymore than a policeman telling pedestrians to walk briskly past a crime scene solves the crime the pedestrians have just been told to ignore.

The author also catches out the Christian philosopher Richard Swinburne in another—but in this case rather different—question-begging moment. Swinburne rightly holds Anselm’s ontological argument (which claims that God *must* exist because that’s what the definition of God is: *necessary* being) to be fallacious. But then Swinburne goes on to claim that Anselm’s fallacy entails that God does not exist necessarily; rather, God only *happens* to exist, contingently. Holt of course joins Swinburne in noticing that the ontological argument argues from the dictionary, not from reality, and for that reason collapses: “An idea of God is not a kind of God, albeit less perfect, any more than a painting of a piece of fruit is a kind of fruit, albeit less nutritious” (112). Swinburne, however, takes that insight to prove that God exists contingently, meaning, as a brute fact—a fact so brutal that it comes as a surprise even *to God*:

But would Swinburne go so far as to say that God's existence was a "brute fact"? "Yes, I would," he replied. "I would say that. It's not merely that there is no explanation for God's existence. There *couldn't* be an explanation. One of God's properties is omnipotence. If anything happens to him, it's because he allows it to happen. Therefore, if something else brought about God, it could only be because God *allowed* it to bring about God." (105; Holt's italics)

This strange way of putting things leads to intolerable conundrums; and to his credit Holt is not shy in spotting them and in driving them home to his interlocutor:

"As to why God exists, I can't answer that question. I can't answer that question," [Swinburne responds]. Could even Swinburne's God, if we were able to ask him, answer it? "I am who am," the voice from the burning bush announced to Moses. But did that voice ever ask, "Whence then am I?" If there were an explanation for God's existence, then God, being omniscient, would know it. But if there really was no explanation—if he is indeed the Supreme Brute Fact—then he would know that too. He would know that his own existence as a contingent being was, in Swinburne's words, "vastly improbable." Would the divine mind be puzzled by its inexplicable triumph over the perfect simplicity of Nothingness? (106)

What lies behind Swinburne's bizarre conclusion, I think, comes from a change in the debate inaugurated by René Descartes, who led natural theology into a cul-de-sac when he defined God as *causa sui*, that is, as the cause of his own being. But as John Caputo notes in his lucid booklet *Philosophy and Theology* (Abingdon, 2006), this position is incoherent:

Descartes established what would become standard practice among the moderns, to refer to God as the "cause of itself" (*causa sui*) whereas for Aquinas, God is the "first cause uncaused," the cause of everything else but himself without a cause. If something else were the cause of God, then God's cause would be greater than God. Then why not say that God is the cause of himself? Because that makes no sense. It would mean that a thing gives itself what it does not have—like lifting yourself up by your own bootstraps, or bringing yourself into being where you previously did not exist. To be your own cause is to be before your time, to be there ahead of your own coming into being, which you then bring about; it is to be there already when you are not there yet. Like being your own father or mother. And that makes no sense. But while such things are impossible for us, surely they are possible with God, for whom all things are possible? Not so fast, answered Aquinas. It makes no sense to say that God can do things that make no sense, not

when God is the very height of sense and meaning and truth. It pays God no real compliment. It makes much more sense to say . . . that God is the first cause of everything else but God himself is uncaused, that God exists in and of himself, as pure and sheer eternal necessity, without beginning and without end. (25)

This reader concluded Holt's book both admiring his tenacity in keeping his interlocutors' feet to the Leibnizian fire but also hoping that somehow that tiresome who-made-God rejoinder could be declared forever *illegal*—not of course in the felonious sense of a violation of criminal law, but rather in the computer-programming sense, as when one gets an error message after instructing a pocket calculator to divide by zero. That shopworn who-created-God meme might seem like the ultimate zinger in a college dormitory late at night; but it does not get at the God of classical theism. As Thomas Aquinas said, with his usual lapidary flair, "Everything eternal is necessary" (*De Potentia* q. 7, a. 9). Not necessary in the Anselmian sense, as if atheism is conceptually impossible; rather, necessary in the sense that the concept of God as contingent cause of himself is self-contradictory.

That said, one does learn from Holt's book that atheism always remains a live option for genuine searchers, and it does so precisely because of the human condition, a point Thomas too recognized: "Whatever is comprehended by a finite being is itself finite" (*Summa theologiae* I–II, q. 4, a. 3, ad 1). As Isaiah said, and as Blaise Pascal never tired of repeating in his *Pensées*: "Truly thou art a hidden God" (Is 45:15). N.V.

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Romance and System: The Theological Synthesis of Matthias Joseph Scheeben by Aidan Nichols, O.P. (Denver: Augustine Institute, 2010), ix + 537 pp.

THIS WORK is something of a *Summa* of the work of Scheeben for those who lack the capacity to read the several thousand pages of material which remains untranslated from the original German. Scheeben's *Handbuch der katholischen Dogmatik* alone ran for well over 3,000 pages.

Aidan Nichols's overarching thesis is that Scheeben's work combines both "romance" and "system":

Owing to its emphasis on the mysteric, it must perforce press into service a range of imagery in order to express what lies beyond reason. That

is a feature which links it to Romanticism in philosophy and the arts: hence my term “romance”. At the same time, its concern to do full justice to the epistemic status of theology as a science . . . also obliged Scheeben to make a serious effort towards “system”. That is the feature which links his work to classicism in philosophy and the arts—both pre-romantic and, in the shape, not least, of neo-Thomist metaphysics and theology, post-Romantic too. In Scheeben’s case both romance and system are in the service of recreating what in the High Middle Ages was a self-evident thesis. To wit, the human being, with his knowing and experiencing, is encompassed within a greater, more comprehensive, supernatural whole. (4–5)

At almost precisely the same time as this book was published an essay by John Milbank appeared in *Modern Theology* with the title “The New Divide: Classical versus Romantic Orthodoxy.” The general thesis of Milbank’s article was that liberal theology is on the wane and that the interesting contemporary debates are between those who seek to defend the rationality of the faith with reference to philosophical propositions and doctrinal pronouncements and those interested in an engagement with Romantic-movement issues, including the love and reason relationship, the history and ontology relationship, and the reason and tradition relationship. Milbank presents the division in the following terms:

The “romantics” think that the collapse of a reason linked to the higher *eros* led to the debasement of scholasticism and then to secular modernity. Resistance to the latter had therefore to oppose rationalism and even to insist more upon the role of the “erotic”—the passions, the imagination, art, *ethos* etc.—than had been the case up till and including Aquinas. The exponents of “classicism” on the other hand (largely located in the United States) trace secularity simply to a poor use of reason and regard the scholastic legacy, mainly in its “Thomistic” form, as sustaining a true use of reason to this very day. . . . The conflict between these two parties is therefore one between opposed metanarratives.¹

The question of the influence of the nineteenth-century scholastics and German Romantics on contemporary theology is thus something of a “hot topic.” At least two authors have already sought to bridge this division with a valorization of the more erotic dimensions of Aquinas. See, for example, Graham McAleer’s *Ecstatic Morality and Sexual Politics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005) and Thomas Hibbs’s *Aquinas, Ethics and Philosophy of Religion: Metaphysics and Practice* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press,

¹ John Milbank, “The New Divide: Classical versus Romantic Orthodoxy,” *Modern Theology* 26 (2010): 26–38.

2007). In the present work Nichols is fostering a similar reconciliation project by offering Scheeben as an exemplar of a *via-media* between the two main schools of Catholic theology in nineteenth-century Germany: the Catholic Tübingen School (especially in its early phase) and neo-Scholasticism. One might argue that these schools were the precursors to the contemporary division identified by Milbank.

The book contains chapters on Scheeben's account of the theological virtue of faith, of the nature and grace relationship, of the Christian mysteries, the modes of revelation and its transmission, the one God, the attributes of divine being and life, the immanent and economic Trinity, Creation and the Fall, Christology, sacramental theology, justification and glorification, and Mariology and ecclesiology. The work is therefore a systematic theology in one volume.

In the early sections Nichols makes it clear that Scheeben was no Kantian. His core concept of faith was a kind of *Autoritätsglaube*: "authority-faith." This is "a firm holding as true or a decided judgement of the mind, that does not rest on its own insight or direct acquaintance (*Kenntnisnahme*) with the object of that judgment, but on the insight or knowledge made over to us by another intelligent being" (22). Nichols thereby concludes that Scheeben regarded reason's authority as a participation in the authoritative rationality of God (23).

Consistent with this anti-Kantian orientation, Nichols argues that Scheeben is committed to the view that not only theology but also philosophy can and should be "Christian and Catholic." Scheeben can thus be read as a precursor to Étienne Gilson, who was a leading figure in the French debates of the 1930s on the issue of whether there can be such an animal as "Christian philosophy."² In an earlier work, *From Hermes to Benedict XVI: Faith and Reason in Modern Catholic Thought* (2009), Nichols argued that Ratzinger/Benedict XVI follows in the tradition of Gilson on this issue. Thus one might conclude that Scheeben, Gilson, and Ratzinger/Benedict approach the issue of the relationship between faith and reason from the same or a very similar perspective.

² For an account of these debates see *Reason Fulfilled by Revelation: The 1930s Christian Philosophy Debates in France*, edited by Gregory B Sadler and published in 2011 by The Catholic University of America Press. This book sets out the players in the debate and places the protagonists into three camps: Neo-Thomist Opponents of Christian Philosophy, Thomist Proponents of Christian Philosophy and Non-Thomist Proponents of Christian Philosophy. Having identified the basic intellectual fault-lines between the protagonists, the editor then offers English translations of the significant articles by Étienne Gilson, Antonin D. Sertillanges, Bruno de Solages, Maurice Blondel, Fernand van Steenberghen, Étienne Borne, Gabriel Marcel, Léon Noël and Emile Bréhier.

Nichols also observes that “for any given theological author, the relation between reason and faith is mirrored in the account offered of the relation between nature and grace; or, in other words, the reason/faith relationship is in epistemology what the nature/grace relationship is in ontology” (65). In this context Nichols explains that while Scheeben begins with “exceedingly clear distinctions” he then seeks to “marry them” and he uses a variety of nuptial metaphors to describe their union. The following is Nichols’ more expansive account of Scheeben on this pivotal issue:

He [Scheeben] seeks to establish that, at any rate, sharing in the holiness specific to God himself can *only* be termed beyond nature in every sense. Accepting that, in an absolutely basic sense, there is a *capacity* for this vision in the human being or else it would not be a fulfilment for man however superlative, Scheeben insists that the “appetite” for it must be *elicited* and an “act of the will ordered to that beatitude without moving by a supernatural agent cannot be had.” He accepts the implication that a purely natural end for man is, therefore, thinkable (*denklich*) and its approximate contours could no doubt be stated theologically and philosophically (it would entail some form of knowing and loving God). But “in actual fact” (*tatsächlich*) it is not by reference to such a putative natural end but only in relation to the revealed supernatural end that our nature has been determined. The will must be raised above its own nature, just as the mind must be exalted by means of the light of glory. Otherwise, a “love-unity” between the blessed and God analogous to that between the Father and the Son—and this is what the New Testament holds out to us—cannot enter the anthropological picture. *Caritas beatifica* can only be supernatural, surely. (84)

This approach was discussed in some depth by von Balthasar in *Seeing the Form*, Vol. I of *The Glory of the Lord* series at pages 104–17 of the Ignatius Press English translation, wherein he drew the following conclusion:

At the heart of Scheeben’s understanding of things lies the notion of the “in-formation” of nature and grace, nature thus being considered to behave as *materia*. This in-formation, however, is understood as a divine ‘begetting’ in the ‘womb’ of nature. Matter-and-form, a philosophical pair of concepts, is deepened and ‘transfigured’ by Scheeben into the bride/bridgroom relationship. (110–11)

In one line Nichols asserts that Scheeben was indebted in his analysis of the nature and grace relationship to Francisco Suárez and Juan Martínez de Ripalda, though he does not take the observation further and offer an inventory of the debts Scheeben owed to these Spanish

scholastics. Given Karl Rahner's quip that Suarez's account of the relationship between nature and grace was the "original and mortal sin of Jesuit theology," it would be an interesting exercise to examine in depth just how close in thinking Scheeben was to Suárez. Certainly at the time when Scheeben was writing, the Suárezian account was the dominant position, but Suárez is now generally credited with fostering the idea that there are two separate ends for human beings, and this interpretation does not sit well with contemporary nuptial mystery theology. Moreover, it was an idea explicitly rejected by the young Ratzinger in his essay on the treatment of human dignity in *Gaudium et Spes*. If Scheeben's work is to be appropriated for the contemporary nuptial mystery theology projects, it might first need to be de-contaminated of any Suárezian residue. It may also be necessary to examine more closely Scheeben's use of the noun "supernature." Henri de Lubac, in *A Brief Catechesis on Nature and Grace* at pages 33–41 of the Ignatius Press English translation, was critical of Scheeben for turning the adjective "supernatural" into a noun "supernature." De Lubac endorsed what he called the "contorted explanation," in Karl Rahner's *Mission and Grace*, of why this is a problem.

When it comes to the issue of revelation Scheeben argued that there are two significant moments: first, the acceptance of revelation through the act of faith, and secondly, the understanding of that content through the representation or conception of that truth. In relation to the second moment, Scheeben acknowledged that no conceptuality will yield a thoroughly complete understanding of revelation (41). Thus revelation cannot be reduced to a pocket-book of doctrines. There will always be a surplus. In his *Mysteries of Christianity* (5), Scheeben wrote:

A truth that is easily discovered and quickly grasped can neither enchant nor hold. To enchant and hold us it must surprise us by its novelty, it must overpower us with its magnificence; its wealth and profundity must exhibit ever new splendors, ever deeper abysses to the exploring eye.

Here one might say (though Nichols does not make this point) that Scheeben anticipated Jean-Luc Marion's notion of "saturated phenomena," which "exceeds what the concept can receive, expose and comprehend."

Nichols does however lament that Scheeben did not pay more attention to the Tübingen theologians on the point of the historical nature of revelation. This was the particular contribution of the Tübingen theologians (in part through Rahner, Ratzinger, and de Lubac) to the Vatican II document *Dei Verbum*. Nonetheless, this oversight notwithstanding,

Nichols concludes that “everywhere the Trinity is central to [Scheeben’s] construction,” and that within the Trinity, Christ constitutes “the ‘heart’ or ‘knot’ of that *nexus mysterium* in his own person” (490). While Scheeben may have missed some Tübingen insights, with the consequence that he failed to reach the *Dei Verbum* position of treating Christ’s revelation as the primary source of both Scripture and tradition, he did nonetheless offer a systematic theology that was deeply “Christocentric Trinitarian.”

In his account of the Trinity, Scheeben was influenced by a wide variety of theologians including Augustine, Anselm, and especially Richard of St. Victor (266). Here Nichols observes:

For Richard, the love of Father and Son is not fully perfect in every respect since, in loving each other, they love different objects—and this introduces a difference of direction in their love. Their mutual love first becomes unconditionally perfect in the Holy Spirit. In him, the affections of Father and Son are fused into one by the fire of their love for this third, since now their love has the self-same object. (269)

Nichols concludes that Scheeben’s preferred account of the Holy Spirit is not so much an echo of Richard as it is an anticipation of von Balthasar (270).

Other points of particular theological interest were:

1. Scheeben’s insistence that the Church is not preaching an old natural morality with some added trimmings, but rather her proclamation is a new supernatural morality that participates in the sublime character of dogma (78).
2. Scheeben’s opposition to the notion that the minister of the sacrament of marriage is the priest who blesses the union rather than the covenanting couple themselves. On this point Nichols concludes: “theologians who accepted the notion that marriage even between the baptized is a profane reality until given a blessing by the Church’s minister have lent their support, wittingly or not, to civil attempts to separate out marriage as such from the Church” (406).
3. Scheeben’s view that a married couple are not merely a symbol of the union of Christ and the bridal Church but rather that Christian marriage is intrinsically rooted in the spousal union of Church and Redeemer (405).
4. Scheeben’s stance on predestination does not follow St. Thomas but in Nichols’s judgment comes closer to the view known as “congruism”

associated with St. Robert Bellarmine and St. Francis de Sales.

Finally, Josef Höfer proposed that Scheeben is a Catholic Dilthey—"in all his activity as a theologian Scheeben wanted to serve the more interior realization of salvation, just as Dilthey did the enrichment of secularized life" (486). They were both interested in the reality of human life as it is lived with its "supernatural" dimension (in the case of Scheeben) and a "spiritual" dimension (in the case of Dilthey). One might also suggest that there are interesting affinities between Scheeben and Blondel. Scheeben was trying to do in theology what Blondel was trying to do in philosophy, that is, to bring history and dogma together in an integrated whole.

Given that Benedict XVI has emphasized that "love and reason are the twin pillars of all reality," it is certain that one of the key projects of the current generation of theologians will be that of reconciling at a higher level of synthesis the contributions of the scholastic and the Romantic heritage. For far too long, scholastics have operated as though being a good Catholic is all about having the right intellectual framework which governs a well-disciplined will, while the heart has been treated as nothing more significant than an organ to pump blood around the body. The Romantics rebelled against that disposition, and various individual scholars have been aware of the problem. Dietrich von Hildebrand, for example, was daring enough to write about the heart as a serious philosophical subject; Robert Sokolowski in his work on natural law has emphasized that the words for the heart in Latin and Greek (*cor* and *kardia*) as used by St. Paul in his Letter to the Romans "do not connote the separation of head and heart that we take for granted in a world shaped by Descartes"; Jean-Luc Marion has carved out a space for a consideration of such subjects as love and idolatry at the highest levels of the elite academies, and Joseph Ratzinger has identified the understanding of the "mediation of history in the realm of ontology" as the most serious theological question of the twentieth century. Not only is it impossible to ignore the questions of the relationship of reason to love and of ontology to history, but the task of gaining a deeper understanding of these relationships is at the core of magisterial efforts to deal with the cultural crisis of the Western world. Nichols has therefore done scholars a great service by making Scheeben, someone sympathetic to both romance and system and interested in both history and ontology, accessible to English readers. N V

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Inspiration and Interpretation: A Theological Introduction to Sacred Scripture by Denis Farkasfalvy, O.Cist. (*Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010*), x + 251 pp.

THE CENTRAL question of this book concerns the relationship between hermeneutics and the doctrine of inspiration. The starting point is the reconstruction of the formation of the Christian Bible in two parts: the choosing of the Old Testament and the joining of the Old Testament with the New. Farkasfalvy notes that the earliest expression of the Christian faith is preaching and personal witness, not the production of written documents. He observes that a new interpretation of the Old Testament in light of Christ led to production of new literary works. His central question is, if the word of God is found in the Scriptures in a unique and special way, how does this translate into exegetical practice? Problems concerning inspiration, canon, interpretation, and interconnection between the two testaments can be expressed in two categories: (1) the origins of the biblical texts as divinely inspired literary products and therefore as normative for the Church, and (2) the principles and methodology of exegesis.

Farkasfalvy examines first the role of the Old Testament in the apostolic Church. Citing 1 Corinthians 15:3–4, he notes that Paul here envisions Scripture in its totality: he presupposes the authority of the Jewish Scriptures, as well as the faith Israel put into these sacred writings. The Church's Bible, he continues, is the product of communal discernment, and this process was an organic one. Concerning the notion that the starting point for the apostolic Church was preaching and not writing, he addresses the "problem" of pseudonymity. He writes that the gospels circulated under their current titles, but this does not necessarily imply that they were written by these persons. "Authorship" can simply mean that a certain work was written on someone's authority, and in this sense it refers more to the spirit of a certain work than to the one holding the pen. The goal in the attribution of texts was to link the text with the preaching of the supposed witness: writing is an extension of apostolic preaching.

Farkasfalvy also notes that all New Testament Scripture has a Eucharistic provenance, which indicates that the texts of the New Testament originate in the historical, social, or cultic background of the early Church's celebration of the Eucharist. The Pauline epistles are perhaps the clearest instances of this, but he also cites Acts 20 and the gospel narratives of the feeding of the multitudes. All of these texts arose with an eye toward and on the Eucharistic assembly. For Farkasfalvy, the key to the Scriptures is the discovery therein of salvation history. The central principle that governed the process of establishing the canon is that a certain work is

built on the prophets and apostles: a gospel was accepted or rejected on the basis of its apostolic credentials. Marcion, for example, accepts Luke because he assumes that Luke follows Paul, and because for Marcion Paul was the only true apostle.

Farkasfalvy spends some time speaking of patristic exegesis after Irenaeus, particularly with reference to Origen. While he concludes the chapter by drawing attention to patristic authors who were influenced by Origen's exegetical schema (Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, etc.), his primary focus is Origen's four senses of Scripture as he himself understood them. The literal sense is that which is gleaned through textual, literary and grammatical research, and thus it will be the same for any reader who approaches the text. The literal sense, however, is not to be equated with the historical-critical understanding of the text for two reasons: first and foremost, Origen lacks a specific historical consciousness; second, modern historiography is done critically, with special attention paid to an author's biases and presuppositions. The allegorical sense, Origen writes, is a spiritual or symbolic meaning of the text, the Christological relevance of a given passage. Farkasfalvy observes correctly that the allegorical sense is the cornerstone of Origen's approach. Origen's allegorical sense could be said to be an expansion of Irenaeus's synthesis. The modern critique of allegory, of course, is that it is open to arbitrary use and fanciful applications. Because of this tendency, Origen's approach (as well as the allegorizing tendencies of other ancient authors) has been viewed with suspicion. Origen's third sense is the tropological, or moral, meaning of a given text. Every text that speaks of Christ must lead to questions concerning moral conduct. The fourth sense is the anagogical or eschatological, or that which concerns the final outcome of salvation history. For Origen, the second, third, and fourth meanings are collectively the spiritual sense of the text. This is expressive of a sort of Platonic dualism between letter and spirit. Letter is a sign and symbol, and thus it both veils and reveals the reality toward which it points. For Origen, the final point of the exegetical process is a spiritual encounter between God and the human soul. Exegesis, therefore, is as much about experience as it is about intellectual comprehension. Farkasfalvy writes that Origen's legacy led to the so-called Golden Age of Patristic exegesis: for a millennium, all exegetes were influenced by and reliant upon Origen's model.

Farkasfalvy writes of a shift that occurs in the Middle Ages. In this period, the letter by itself is counted as dead, and the context for interpretation is always the Church's living tradition. For Aquinas, *sacra scriptura* and *sacra doctrina* are mutually inclusive, and the task of theology *writ*

large is the interpretation of the Bible. Medieval exegetes perpetuate Origen's fourfold schema, as well as the notion that all Scripture is a reflection on Christ. The rise of the Scholastic exegete brought with it a revival of classical philosophy, as well as closer attention to the literal meaning and less attention to the moral meaning. On inspiration in medieval exegesis, Farkasfalvy writes that God is counted as the principal cause and thus is fully the "author" of all biblical texts. Divine causality is, however, mediated through imperfect instruments. Therefore, the text is considered to be the product both of divine and of human authors. These are not in conflict however, because of the subordination implied by the scheme of instrumentality. Farkasfalvy's chapter on medieval exegesis is tellingly short. On the one hand, he admires theologians of the period for their interest in textual mechanics. But his criticism is that they seem to have had more interest in constructing theological systems than in exegesis. Moreover, he maintains that exegesis in this period is overburdened by allegory and symbolism, and that the period was characterized by a lack of clarity in the relationship between interpretation and philosophical reflection.

The humanistic renaissance of the fifteenth century represents a major break with the past. This movement was characterized by an eagerness to cultivate the original Hebrew and Greek and to demand a new theological discourse based on these more "authentic" forms of the text (note Erasmus's first printed edition of the Greek NT that appeared in 1516). Following this movement, the Reformation translations brought the Bible to the masses, and these translations were considered by some to be superior to the Vulgate because of their basis in the original languages (notably, the Vulgate was itself a translation of the Greek and Hebrew, at least in theory). So-called spiritual exegesis also continued in this period. For Catholics, the Spirit was found to be active in and through the teaching office of the Church, whereas for Protestants, it was at work in the private realm of the conscience. In doctrinal disputes, the allegorical sense of Scripture was not thought to be acceptable, and so focus shifted to the literal, historical sense. This gives rise to the notion of Scripture as a source of proof texts and a collection of propositional statements which, for Farkasfalvy, constitutes confessional exegesis. In the eighteenth century, the Enlightenment gives birth to the rational study of the Bible.

Moving on to Vatican II, Farkasfalvy proffers his double thesis concerning *Dei Verbum*, the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation. First, he writes that *Dei Verbum* successfully restored the proper context in which Tradition developed and nurtured the theology of inspiration, inerrancy, and the ecclesial use of Scripture. Second, he argues

that the document is a sketchy and incomplete text that still awaits completion. For it and for the theological manuals, the point of departure is the proof of the existence of inspiration. Revelation in *Dei Verbum* is comprehensive in that it includes all forms and means of communication that have been chosen by God. Revelation takes place in history, and so it cannot be reduced to verbal and conceptual expressions. Moreover, revealed truth itself cannot be reduced only to propositional statements; it is a complex set of historical events and developments. Farkasfalvy's criticism of *Dei Verbum*, or at least an observation concerning the text, is that it makes no attempt to bridge the gap separating the precritical view of history from contemporary thought. In his view, the Council document "cautiously preferred to repeat traditional language and avoided confrontation between biblical history and modern anthropology" (173). Moreover, *Dei Verbum* is incomplete because it fails to provide more specific guidelines about the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament, as well as the relationship between human and divine authorship. According to Farkasfalvy, the following questions (noted on 201–2) need to be answered. First, how does formation of the Bible transmit the charism of the prophets and apostles? Second, how did subjective inspiration that affected the biblical authors result in biblical texts and in the Church's possession of the canon? Third, the issue of verbal inspiration needs to be revisited: we must recognize the importance of the canonical text's accuracy and the Church's ongoing vigilance over Scripture. Fourth, we must explore the ecumenical potential and relevance of the New Testament canon.

The central question of this book is: If the Bible is an inspired book, and uniquely so, then how does its inspired character affect the way(s) in which it is to be interpreted? The presupposition, of course, is that the Bible *is* inspired. That is, this is not a point that Farkasfalvy is interested in—or even able to go about—proving. Instead, his main concern is to specify what is meant by inspiration and how inspiration affects such things as truth and inerrancy. These terms, to be sure, also need definition. Farkasfalvy proposes, in concert with other church documents, a relationship of mutual reciprocity between inspiration and truthfulness: the Bible is inspired if and only if it is true and vice versa. Farkasfalvy is uncomfortable with the notion that God is the author of the Bible, in the sense that God has never written anything (at least not in the literal sense). He is more comfortable in speaking of God's inspiring the Bible in the sense that Jesus himself is the beginning of the gospel. That is, Jesus' words and deeds inspired others to preach and share the good news of God's salvation. It is essential in this context to remember that kerygma precedes text.

The book as a whole is well constructed, and the chapters on Irenaeus and Origen, specifically on their pioneering exegesis, are especially insightful and clear. Those chapters establish that the two theologians read the Bible in and with a pre-critical mind and that they read various texts in concert with others. Unfortunately, he doesn't really, in the later portions of the book, go on to use what he has established in the earlier. The chapter on inspiration and medieval exegesis—the shortest in the book—seems to be cast in an air of frustration with much of medieval exegesis. The chapters on *Dei Verbum* and post-Council literature are by far the most synthetic in the book. Farkasfalvy approaches *Dei Verbum* in a spirit of respect and admiration, but he is not wholly uncritical of the document or its propositions. Overall, the thesis of the book is that the Bible begs to be read in the same spirit in which it was written, and only when we do so may we arrive at the true meaning of the texts contained therein.

Farkasfalvy has attempted in this work to address several important and daunting questions in a relatively short space, and he has done so with an enviable level of clarity. This book stands out among many recent attempts to answer questions related to interpretation of those texts that Christians considered inspired, and is recommended for anyone interested in issues pertaining to theological exegesis of Scripture. **N V**

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