

Book Reviews

Virtue and Grace in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas by Justin M. Anderson (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020*), xiii + 327 pp.

TO IGNORE AQUINAS'S THEOLOGICAL BACKSTORY to his account of the virtues—namely, his account of grace in its relation to human action—is to distort his account of the virtues. This is the very valid thesis explored by Justin Anderson in *Virtue and Grace in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas*. Anderson critiques the tendency among contemporary Anglophone virtue ethicists to quietly bracket his account of grace even as they admire his account the virtues. More pointedly, Anderson holds that Aquinas's account of virtue is inseparable from his account of sin, grace, “and God's presence in human life and action.” He endeavors to evidence Aquinas's authentic account of virtue and its “inner reliance on the theological categories of grace, sin, and divine providence” (1).

Anderson thus proposes a reading of Aquinas that is diachronic, analytical and systematic, and text-based, and which follows the logic inherent in Aquinas's own reasoning.

And he delivers.

After a brief overview of Aquinas's understanding of virtue in chapter 1, in chapter 2, Anderson explores the Thomistic distinction that will largely serve as a heuristic for most of the study: the distinction between virtue *secundum quid* (pagan virtue) and virtue *simpliciter*, virtue infused in us by God—virtue in the truest sense of the term.

In chapter 3, Anderson traces the historical evolution in Aquinas's understanding of grace as this impacts his understanding of the conditions under which a person can possess or embody virtue. He bases this exploration in part on the work of both Henri Bouillard and Bernard Lonergan. First Anderson explores how that evolution came about in the context of the emergence of two powerful categories of thought: the Aristotelian concept of *nature* in the twelfth century and the category of the *supernatural* in the thirteenth. According to Bouillard, Aquinas's understanding of grace would

have been further shaped by two sets of discoveries during his sojourn in Italy in the early 1260s, the first being two anti-Pelagian tracts of St. Augustine, and the second being the *Liber de bona fortuna*, a Latin compilation, possibly translated by William of Moerbeke, consisting of two chapters on good fortune, one taken from Aristotle's *Magna Moralia*, and the other from the *Eudemean Ethics*.

Aquinas discovers in Augustine's anti-Pelagian works the contention that the beginning of faith is from God and not from the individual. As with the grace of final perseverance, both initiation and perdurance in faith are gratuitous gifts of God. In his encounter with the *Liber* (and particularly his consideration therein of the "problem of the first deliberation"), like other medievals, Aquinas "[was] presented Aristotelian investigations regarding the possibility of a divine movement, even unacknowledged by the agent, at the very roots of human action" (98). And, in Thomas's evolved understanding, this divine influence would constitute an inner movement within the human agent apart from those external circumstances ordained by providence.

Anderson embraces the thesis that, in this context, and under these influences, Aquinas's understanding of grace underwent a "revolution," that a mature Aquinas—and this is the thesis of Lonergan—moves beyond a consideration of grace merely as *habitus* (*gratia gratum faciens*) to a notion of operative grace, of grace as a *movement*, utilizing "the unique idea of a 'moving grace,' a movement of God in, and in some cases with, the human soul" (105).

And—Anderson is emphatic—this revolution in thought quickly steers Aquinas clear of what centuries later will be termed semi-Pelagianism, and toward a firmly anti-Pelagian conception of the human capacity for virtue.

Chapters 4–9 comprise the second and third parts of the book. It is here that Anderson masterfully and exhaustively engages in the heavy lifting of evincing just how, in fact, Aquinas's account of virtue is inseparable from his theology of grace. On the supposition that Aquinas's mature theology of grace understands the latter to play a causal role in the emergence, continuance, and culmination of virtue, Anderson organizes these chapters following a simple schematic rubric, first for *virtue simpliciter* (chapters 4–6) and then for *virtue secundum quid* (chapters 5–9). For each, Anderson identifies the grace conditions which, according to Aquinas, lie at the beginnings of virtue, make possible the human subject's perseverance in virtue, and provide for the attainment of virtue's end. This is, as Anderson observes, to explore the ontological grounding of virtue—in its beginning, middle and end, both in the case of the postlapsarian baptized Christian in a state of grace, and in the

case of the *infidelis*; whether nonbeliever or person who, having fallen from grace through mortal sin, still possesses faith and hope but without charity.

Anderson's chapter 7—"The Conditions for the Beginning of Virtue *Secundum Quid*"—is particularly crucial to his critique of contemporary virtue theory's "standard account" of how Aquinas conceives of the possibilities for virtue in the person lacking grace. The chapter thus seeks to resolve any number of questions: What sort of resources does this graceless virtue provide for living an excellent life? How perfect can nontheological virtue be? What sort of virtuous life is possible without God's grace? And especially, if grace plays so significant a role in Aquinas's conception of the moral life, what do we have in the moral agent when grace is removed from consideration? And Anderson is at pains to insist that this investigation must be faithful to Aquinas: "We cannot decide in advance the sort of responses we will accept from Aquinas on behalf of Aquinas" (176).

Anderson's dissent from the standard account of Aquinas's theory in chapter 8—in which he explores the corrupting effects of sin on the pagan's possibilities to grow in virtue—is the fruit of a wonderfully holistic read of the Angelic Doctor. "My position is not that Aquinas is, in fact, pessimistic about the possibility of the pagan's virtue. My position is that his optimism is not born from his account of that virtue itself. If one were to insist on banishing grace from the picture, even from the picture of 'pagan virtue,' then one would come to such a pessimistic view. However, Thomas never did imagine such a banishment, and hence his optimism remains" (177).

The problem, then, with the standard account is not what it asserts, but what it lacks. "There is good reason to think Aquinas never divorces, even from the virtue of the one without grace, God's direct and immediate operation in every act of pagan virtue. . . . This means Thomas's account of pagan virtue cannot even begin without acknowledging a second way divine action is present to the virtue of the graceless," namely by way of divine application (193–94). And here, Anderson has done some of his finest scholarship.

Divine application, as expounded by Aquinas—see especially *Summa theologiae* [ST] I-II, q. 9, a. 6, particularly ad 3—is a conception of God's causal activity within his creatures which, going beyond mere conservation in being, remains nonetheless always on the natural plain, falling short of a supernatural intervention. God, as first cause of his creatures, brings it about that the natural causality he creates should in fact be effective. Within the rational creature, before she can proceed to the self-determination with which she is endowed, there must be a primal movement by which she is moved from potency to act to in fact be a self-determining rational being. (Domingo Bañez would famously refer to this as *premotio physica*). In other words, the

rational creature is the proximate cause of his self-determination, but not the first cause; the rational creature remains capable of self-determination, but not absolutely independent of the Creator's presence and providence.

As for the great battles around freedom and grace which considerations of divine application or divine premotion historically set in motion, Anderson acknowledges that a detailed discussion is beyond the scope of his volume. This teaching is at the heart of the *De auxiliis* controversy, and is logically tied to Aquinas's account of divine providence and predestination. The point of divine application is that God disposes natural agents to act, and "if a human agent is free to determine himself to the good, then God has infallibly moved him to be so free" (203). This divine application—which would have been operative in the rational creature even before the fall—is the natural analog to the divine moving grace Aquinas will discuss one hundred questions later, in question 109 of *ST* I-II.

Anderson carefully traces the development of Aquinas's understanding of divine application through his more mature thought influenced by the *Liber* and Aristotle's doctrine of "first counsel" and the beginnings of deliberation in human action (see *ST* I, q. 82, a. 4, ad 3). In thus identifying the nature of divine causality's impact on pagan virtue according to Aquinas, Anderson draws into wonderful relief how divine application is the basis for the intimate presence and influence of the divine in human action. He summarizes beautifully: "A divine motion, then, stands as the first, natural breath of the process of human action. It constitutes the natural analog for how God will grace an agent to dispose himself for the accepting of his gift of habitual grace. Nevertheless, this natural analog is not a grace itself. It is a divine motion given to the human agent by God, without any mediating principles, which begins human action" (220).

From all this and especially from his conclusions in chapter 8, treating the question of the graceless agent's perseverance in virtue, two conclusions follow. First, when Thomas conceives of the possibility of virtue in a graceless agent, this does not imply a conception of "virtue without God." For Aquinas, there is no such possibility. Second, his optimism about the graceless agent is not founded on that agent's virtue. "Instead, his account of divine help—in the form of both natural divine application and supernatural, preparatory moving grace—is precisely why he can be so pessimistic about a fallen agent's natural capacities, and simultaneously be so optimistic about every moral agent's ability to live a life of virtue" (247). And this is why Anderson will insist in chapter 10 that Aquinas always and only endorsed one specific definition of virtue, the Augustinian-Lombardian definition: "Virtue is a good quality of the mind by which we live righteously, of which

no one can make bad use, which God works in us, without us" (*ST* I-II, q. 55, a. 4, obj. 1).

In the end, does Anderson succeed in his project? Yes—in spades. In myriad ways he evinces that Aquinas is *not* the “virtue ethicist” that some contemporary virtue ethicists would take him to be.

Anderson’s volume is a remarkable contribution to Thomistic scholarship for which I am personally indebted to the author—so indebted that I struggle to find anything to criticize in this work. While Anderson’s analysis of the necessary questions is painstaking, his style is not tedious. The reader simply needs to be prepared to cover a broad, and perhaps unexpected, panoply of topics, from Pelagianism, to the *De auxiliis* controversy, to Thomas’s natural desire for God, and a critique of de Lubac’s understanding of the same—and much more. This is why I hesitate to suggest that Anderson could have spent a bit more time elucidating the contours of the argument with which his book is most immediately engaged, which is the way in which some philosophers within the recent revival of virtue ethics among especially Anglophone philosophers distort Aquinas’s account of virtue. That Anderson’s book constitutes a corrective to these philosophical interpretations of Aquinas as “virtue ethicist” is evident throughout. Yet Anderson would have done well to spend a bit more time illustrating the nature of those misinterpretations.

So much for a minor quibble with Anderson’s wonderful volume. More importantly, I prefer to dwell on its many merits. Of particular note is Anderson’s comprehensive and holistic presentation of Aquinas’s account of virtue—historically accurate, sensitive in its diachronic development, and inseparable from his account of grace—which should inoculate any aficionado of Thomistic ethics against “Thomistic Pelagianism.” But perhaps more than anything else, this most readable and spiritually sensitive work is informed in every chapter by the author’s own life of faith. Consequently, it wonderfully reveals how Aquinas’s authentic account of grace and virtue can open new vistas for us to understand divine action in human life, aiding us to discover how intensely present God is to us and how involved he is in our lives—far more than one often thinks. And *that* is an immensely encouraging thought. N·V

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Politics and the Earthly City in Augustine's *City of God* by Veronica Roberts Ogle (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021*), x + 201 pp.

POLITICS IS NOT A WORD IN Augustine's lexicon—at least, it's not something he speaks of, in the abstract, in his great work of political theology, the *City of God*. This curious omission from Augustine's late *magnum opus et arduum* has given rise to many a divergent reading of his political thought. Lacking an express account of the very term in question, his politics can seem to admit of a wide range of interpretations. On one side of the spectrum, it has been described as anticipating the religious neutrality of modern liberalism. On the other side, it has been interpreted as consolidating politics *into* religion by transposing political philosophy into the key of ecclesiology and making the Church the new realm of politics.¹ In her elegantly written and insightful new book, which builds on the work of her 2014 dissertation at the University of Notre Dame and on a few published articles, Veronica Roberts Ogle charts a new interpretive path for reading Augustine on politics. She does this by means of two principal interventions.

The first is by elucidating *City of God's* rhetorical purpose, what Ogle calls its “psychagogic character” (6). Psychagogy, “the art of leading [*agô*] souls [*psychai*] to a state of health,” was the rhetorical aim and genre of much ancient philosophy (3). It took its cue from the philosopher's perception that his readers were sick with the disease of unhealthy attachment to the things of the world. Philosophers were physicians of the soul: they applied “the medicinal art of contraries” to their sick patients. This meant that their literary curatives often met patients/readers with the bitter taste of a poison (4). But—and this is the crucial point for Ogle—the poison was given for the purpose of health. What this means for Augustine's *City of God*, Ogle argues, is that we ought not take the work's biting and at-times-venomous rhetoric as evidence that Augustine is trying to poison his reader's vision of politics. Rather, he is trying to cure them of their attachment to the myths and delusions of politics-according-to-Rome and, instead, “to help us see the world, even the political world, anew: as part of a created order that is *good*, but that points beyond itself all the same” (4). Augustine's descriptions of Rome—indeed his frequent equations of Rome with the *civitas*

¹ The list could be long here, and I will not pretend to have read most of them. But, for the former view, see especially Robert A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine*, rev. ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988). For a version of the latter, see John Milbank's provocative engagement with Augustine's *City of God* in the final chapter of his *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), esp. 391–429.

terrena—are indeed meant to shock. But, so Ogle argues, they are meant to shock us *out of* destructive attachments so that we can learn to make the right attachments, first to Christ, and then, through Christ, to our earthly communities as pilgrims. *City of God's* pessimistic rhetoric is not Augustine simply denouncing the natural project of politics. It is a bitter medicine for a people deathly ill with an addiction to earthly glory.

The second intervention of Ogle's book lies in its attention to what she calls *City of God's* "sacramental ethos" (5). This, I would argue, is the book's most important contribution. It is also the insight on which the heart of the book's argument depends. Sacraments, for Augustine, are signs that point us to God. Understood in this broad sense, the whole created order—that is, everything that is not God—has the quality of a sacrament by virtue of its very existence. This is connected closely to Augustine's understanding of evil as *privatio boni*: all that exists, to the extent that it exists, is good; and all that exists is, by nature, a sign (*signum*) pointing beyond itself to the Lord.

These are not new insights into Augustine's doctrine of creation, but Ogle's application of them to the question of politics and the earthly city is suggestive. For what emerges is a new account of the relationship between politics and the earthly city. The whole created order—political life included—is imbued with an original, sacramental meaning: it serves to refer us back to the Creator. "For Augustine," Ogle argues, the hallmark of the earthly city is "its perpetual attempt to edit the original meaning of reality—to erase meanings it does not like, and to reenforce illusions in which it has a stake" (6). Politics, as she puts it with a striking metaphor, is "coveted, besieged, by the earthly city"; the relationship is one of "usurpation" (145). In other words, as Ogle puts it, "Augustine is aware of the earthly city's constant designs on political life, but he does not concede politics to the earthly city, nor does he make the Church the new realm of politics. Instead, the Church *as* sign of the city of God contradicts the message the earthly city sends about politics. It calls the earthly city's claim on politics into question"; yet, it does this "without underestimating the hold the earthly city has on the world" (143). On Ogle's reading, Augustine's view of the earthly city is that it sits illegitimately, like a usurper, upon the throne of politics, coopting and distorting that throne's original proclamation.

In short, the book unfolds these two claims—psychagogic genre and sacramental ethos—in the middle chapters (2–5), bookended by accounts of the earthly city (1) and politics (6).

Chapter 1 lays out Augustine's foundational vision of the *civitas terrena*, focusing especially on books 11–14. The earthly city, Ogle argues, is a parody, a counterfeit, a *simulacrum* of the *civitas Dei*. It is "like a cloud casting

shadows on a world that should be bathed in light" (37). It is animated by *amor sui*, the love closed in upon itself to the exclusion of God and neighbor. Having sketched this fundamental vision, chapters 2–4 then unfold Augustine's "psychagogic strategy" for leading the reader out of the delusions of the earthly city and, through Christ, into the city of God. Chapter 2 is a close reading of book 1 in *City of God*, which Ogle describes as a "microcosm" of the psychagogic argument of the rest of her book. Instead of beginning with the earthly city *in abstracto*, Augustine builds a bridge to his readers and begins with Eternal Rome *in concreto*: the particular community that presently embodies the earthly city's charade. Chapter 3, then, zooms out to look at Augustine's broader argument as it unfolds over books 1–9 of *City of God*. It unpacks Augustine's three false solutions to the problem of happiness: the promise of empire (bks. 2–5); the promise of philosophical politics (bks. 6–7); and the promise of philosophy as a way of life (bks. 8–9). All three miss both the diagnosis and the cure of our problem. Chapter 4 closes the first part of the argument by homing back in on Augustine's books 2–5. Ogle returns to these books in order to show how most of the work of psychagogic liberation takes place in these early books by means of a re-telling of Roman history. There is an important point in Ogle's argument, for, as she notes, these are the books whose pessimism is most frequently cited as evidence that Augustine takes Rome simply and irredeemably as the city of the devil. But, if she's right about the psychagogic aim of the work, there's a different way to take the bitter rhetoric of these early books, "as something akin to the application of contraries, designed to detach his Roman readers from an idolatrous attachment to their earthly *patria*" (97).

Chapter 5 marks an important hinge in the argument. Here, Ogle departs temporarily from *City of God* in order to provide an account of Augustine's understanding of signs and sacrament *not* made explicit in the work itself. It is in this chapter that Ogle unfolds her argument about *City of God's* "sacramental ethos" which I described above. It is a key piece of the argument, to which I will return in a moment. Finally, chapter 6 ("The Status of Politics") closes the book with a re-reading of book 19 of *City of God* in light of the foregoing argument. What is the status of politics in Augustine's *City of God*? In a word: *besieged*—besieged by the earthly city. This new metaphor for understanding the relationship between politics and the earthly city is the punch line and payoff of the book. It is offered as a kind of North Star for navigating a middle course between the proto-liberalism of a Robert Markus reading (politics is neutral) and the almost-Manichean dualism of a John Milbank reading (politics is simply "the realm of sin").²

² Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 411.

As I have said, Ogle's argument that Augustine conceives of politics as sacramental and of the earthly city as coveting, besieging, even usurping that natural project is the key intervention of her book. What she offers is a reading which simultaneously rehabilitates the natural goodness of politics and treats with sobering seriousness the power the earthly city's myth has on our un-graced vision of politics. In the spirit of testing the strength of her proposal—for it is one I am attracted to but whose implications I am still thinking through—I would like to put some pressure on this joint in her argument. First, can Ogle's reading account for the one passage in *City of God* which comes close to an assessment of politics in the abstract? Augustine writes in 19.15 that originally God "did not want a rational being, made in his image, to have dominion except over irrational creatures: not human over human, but human over beast." This is a clear and strong statement about the original order of social life. It certainly seems to suggest that politics *ipso facto* "is a mark of fallen society."³ Augustine's novel reading of Gen 2:21–22 adds weight to this: Eve was made from Adam's rib to signify not the latter's role as ruler, but "how precious ought to be the union of husband and wife" (*City of God* 12.28). Does Augustine, therefore, envision a transition from social life in Eden to political life outside of it? Ogle thinks not. She concedes, at one point, that "Augustine accepts postlapsarian hierarchy for what it is," and even that "coercive institutions . . . are decidedly postlapsarian" (169, 170). But she maintains (as a reading of Augustine) that "the political project is ontologically prior to both dominion and domination" (169). I do not think this is just a dispute over words—Ogle calling "politics" the life in Eden which others call only "society"—because her argument is that politics, as we know it today, *post lapsum*, is not intrinsically sinful, that we can inhabit it in a way that "resists participating in the economy of the earthly city" (171). But can this reading be squared with the passage in 19.15. Can it be squared even with Ogle's own concessions about the shift effected by the Fall?

Second, does Ogle's reading take seriously enough Augustine's chosen device for telling the story of history: two cities? In other words, is the omission from *City of God* of "politics in the abstract" more deliberate than Ogle's reading allows? As so many readers have noted, Ogle herself included, one of the most striking features of *City of God* is the ruthlessly excluded middle. There appears to be no "natural community" between the diabolical *civitas terrena* and the *civitas Dei*. The choice is between Babylon and Jerusalem. It is significant, in this respect, that Ogle must go outside *City of*

³ John Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 252.

God to retrieve Augustine's sacramental worldview and then bring it to bear on *City of God's* argument. On the one hand, this reading might prove to be contextually sensitive, attentive to the place of *City of God* in Augustine's larger *oeuvre* such that one should read the former in light of the latter. But could it also be that the absence of natural, sacramental middle is deliberate? Could it be that Augustine's telling of history in *City of God* is intentionally binary, and that Ogle's interpretation is, in a certain way, more Augustinian than *City of God* itself?

These questions notwithstanding, *Politics and the Earthly City* is an impressive new reading of Augustine's *City of God*. In addition to what has already been said, the book has the merits of being very well written (not to be assumed in academic writing) and of offering wide coverage of and substantive engagement with much of the *City of God*. Thus, the book would serve very well as a companion to Augustine's text in a seminar setting: it provides commentary on a large swath of the work while also advancing a stimulating argument. The book also attends insightfully—at points even convincingly—to a very Augustinian point: that the earthly city is not something *out there*; it also runs its course right through the heart of the city of God. That pilgrim-citizens of the *civitas Dei* are themselves implicated in the delusions, violence, and suffocating self-love of the *civitas terrena* is a point underappreciated in readings of *City of God*. Ogle's is a welcome correction.

Whether or not her book proves to chart a genuinely new interpretative path, a third way between the extremes, only time and criticism will tell. This reviewer, at least, hopes the book will hold up to both. N·V

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Divine Action and Emergence: An Alternative to Panentheism by Mariusz Tabaczek, O.P. (*Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2021*), xviii + 346 pp.

ONE OF THE MOST CHALLENGING SCIENTIFIC phenomena for metaphysical explanation is the emergence of higher-order properties out of lower-level constituents of a system. This relatively recent scientific observation raises serious questions for metaphysically reductionist materialism and has inspired a great deal of recent philosophical and theological activity,

varying greatly in their level of understanding of the scientific phenomenon itself.

At the same time, contemporary theological discourse about divine action and the sciences has turned more and more toward panentheism as a way to involve God in the scientific workings of the world without disrupting its operations.

Fr. Tabaczek addresses both of these major developments in this volume. For those who do not have the stamina or the interest to dive into his exhaustive analytic treatment of emergence in his previous 2019 volume, *Emergence: Towards a New Metaphysics and Philosophy of Science*, Fr. Tabaczek provides a detailed summary of his findings in the first two chapters of this volume. Rather than repeat the first volume's detailed consideration of different emergent phenomena, Fr. Tabaczek simply identifies different levels of emergent phenomena in inorganic chemistry, molecular biology, fluid systems, macro-organisms, and evolutionary systems before providing a substantial overview of contemporary philosophical perspectives on emergence.

Even in this short overview, however, the reader will find mention and references to the fundamental historical figures in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Anglophone thought on emergence, often omitted by contemporary literature, such as George Henry Lewis, Samuel Alexander, and C. D. Broad. The rest of the chapter consists in a concise classification and description of contemporary views of emergence, explaining and illuminating issues with downward causation-based accounts, whole-part constraints-based accounts, and supervenience-based accounts before moving on to spend a significant amount of time on Terrence Deacon's dynamical depth account of emergence. While full-length treatments of each account are provided in *Emergence*, the reader will find herself with more than enough philosophical engagement to understand the different models of emergence and Fr. Tabaczek's explanations of their shortcomings. While also much shorter than in *Emergence*, Fr. Tabaczek's overview of Deacon's account provides the necessary foundations for his Aristotelian synthesis ofhylomorphism and emergence in the second chapter.

The second chapter once more provides a review of *Emergence*, providing a comparison between classical Aristotelian metaphysics and "neo-Aristotelian" metaphysics of disposition. In both the classical- and neo-Aristotelian sections, Fr. Tabaczek shows his competence in chemistry by consistently applying Aristotelian notions of hylomorphic constitution, efficient causality, and final causality to chemical and cellular phenomena. While he criticizes neo-Aristotelianism for its lack of commitment to substantial form, he finds that its dispositionalism grounding act and potency

provides it with a significant advantage over other models when accounting for emergent phenomena. While not fully endorsing it, Fr. Tabaczek's Aristotelian synthesis answers many of the philosophical questions Deacon addresses in his model.

The third and fourth chapters of *Divine Action and Emergence* introduce a much-needed account of the panentheistic turn in recent theology and science literature. Fr. Tabaczek is especially astute to introduce the history of these accounts after the rigorous and sustained questions of the analytic-philosophical analysis of emergent phenomena. After giving a historical overview of the major figures in panentheism—from German idealism through Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne to contemporary theology–science dialogue, Fr. Tabaczek turns his analytic rigor towards dispelling ambiguities in panentheistic claims about God–world relations. Building on the work of Michael Brierley, Fr. Tabaczek argues that the meaning of “en” in panentheism is not a univocal term in the different writings of panentheistic writers, but rather share a Wittgensteinian family resemblance. This disambiguation of the claims of different panentheistic writers throughout history and in theology–science dialogue precedes an overview of the main avenues taken by those writers using emergence in theology–science dialogue before the critical evaluation of these positions in chapter four.

This fourth chapter provides the heart of Fr. Tabaczek's critique of the panentheistic tendencies that have dominated the contemporary theology–science discussion. While chapter 3 provided a concise overview of the major figures, chapter 4 applies the account of emergence to the claims of contemporary thinkers to show that the vague notions of “in” as applied to God cannot be saved by a coherent philosophical account of emergence, demonstrating that the best figures in this dialogue have not avoided the “mereologization and spatialization of theological discourse, as well as the problem of specifying the ontological nature and character of the relation between God and his creatures” (151). After giving rather short shrift to divine immanence, merely defending classical theism against the panentheistic critique of God's lack of relation to the world, Fr. Tabaczek focuses on the problems of divine transcendence in panentheism. Panentheists often attempt to preserve divine transcendence while still attacking divine immutability. It is here where Fr. Tabaczek's work in chapter 3 most clearly supports his criticism of panentheism. Neither philosophical nor theological panentheism manages to escape the consequences to *ontological* divine transcendence in a way that can keep panentheistic interdependence of the world and God while assuring that God remains absolute, infinite actuality

and omnipotence. While still relying on largely classical criteria for divine transcendence, Fr. Tabaczek shows the internal inconsistencies in panentheistic thinkers and that their attempts to avoid this dilemma do not succeed.

After briefly treating the problem of evil and the vagueness of the body-soul metaphor in panentheistic discourse, chapter 4 wages a sustained critique of panentheists' use of emergence. Largely addressing Arthur Peacocke's emergent theism, Fr. Tabaczek particularly stresses earlier findings that it is only the diverse and irreducible kinds of Aristotelian causality that make for a coherent account of emergent phenomena. Because Peacocke and other emergentist panentheists rely on insufficient philosophical accounts of emergence, they face the same problems of coherence when applying these accounts to God's interactions with the universe. What they attempted to use as an explanation for their theories only adds to the inconsistencies of their views. Fr. Tabaczek turns his attention in the last chapter to his own account of divine causality and emergence that attempts to synthesize his Aristotelian analysis of emergence with the classical natural theology of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Fr. Tabaczek's last chapter begins by going over rather well-trodden ground for any reader familiar with the natural theology of St. Thomas Aquinas. Careful to avoid the over-generalizations of other interpreters of Aquinas (like Austin Farrer and critics of Aquinas in contemporary debate), Fr. Tabaczek outlines the formal, efficient, final, and exemplar causality of God's interaction with the cosmos. Defending the double-causality distinction against contemporary critics, Fr. Tabaczek follows Fr. Michael Dodds, Msgr. John Wippel, and Ignacio Silva in stressing God's creation of the *actus essendi*, and thereby all actuality of created creatures in the creation and sustenance of the universe. Perhaps most interesting in this initial account is Fr. Tabaczek's emphasis on the exemplar causality of God. Exemplar causality in the divine ideas provides the interconnection between formal, efficient, and final causality in the creation and unfolding of the universe, thus providing the operations studied by the sciences. In a bit of intramural Thomism that becomes relevant to the analytic-philosophical analysis of emergence, Fr. Tabaczek argues that the concept of non-being does not enter into God's knowledge (and therefore the exemplar divine ideas) against Wippel, Chris Branick, and Gregory Doolan. This move excludes non-being exerting a causative role in the phenomenon of emergence, as Deacon's dynamical depth claimed.

Fr. Tabaczek ends by showing that Deacon's version of emergence, modified by slightly more Aristotelian criteria, allows for the full Thomistic view of natural theology to account for creaturely action. There is no need to posit

a causal joint, divine self-limitation, or other panentheistic considerations because of the consonance between emergence as actuality and the metaphysics of divine action in Aquinas.

Overall, it seems that Fr. Tabaczek's latest volume is aiming to be more accessible to a larger theological audience than his much more densely analytic *Emergence*. With the amount of philosophical and theological ground he covers in *Divine Action and Emergence*, this accessibility comes at the price of deeper detail in arguments. While he certainly provides a broader historical overview than is usual in the contemporary theology–science conversation, Fr. Tabaczek alternates between defending classical theism from attacks on its coherence and criticizing panentheistic positions on their own terms. The last two chapters seem to be doing more of the latter than the former, which is rather disappointing, considering Fr. Tabaczek's rigor and the dominance of these positions in the contemporary conversation. The core of his argument seems to be that classic analyses of emergence are scientifically and philosophically inadequate to explain the phenomenon, and therefore varieties of panentheism that rely on these interpretations of emergence are inadequate in their own desire to adequate their concept of divine action to contemporary scientific phenomena. Fr. Tabaczek's overviews and analyses of the history of emergence on panentheistic thought are certainly valuable and broader than most treatments in the wider literature. Nevertheless, it seems that Fr. Tabaczek ran out of either time or space to engage fully with historical figures, as he shows he is capable of doing with Whitehead and Peacocke. Given his scientific, philosophical, and theological abilities, the *Divine Action and Emergence* leaves the reader wanting more of an argument for why St. Thomas Aquinas's position is the one pantheists are desiring and missing through more of an engagement with their internal motivations, rather than the defense of classical theism merged with dynamical depth emergence Fr. Tabaczek gives. There are certainly significant moments of this engagement, such that it is necessary for anyone in the panentheistic school to respond, but there is not a sustained critique of panentheistic thought that renders Fr. Tabaczek's approach the clear fulfillment of what such thinkers are looking for. *Divine Action and Emergence* is a well-argued and coherent defense of St. Thomas Aquinas's metaphysics of divine action in light of emergence in the contemporary theology–science conversation.

As it stands, *Divine Action and Emergence* is greatly beneficial for scholars, both those acquainted with either the literature on emergence or the contemporary dialogue between theology and science (or both). As far as use in graduate seminars, *Divine Action and Emergence* would need to be

greatly supplemented by Fr. Tabaczek's earlier *Emergence* and by significant primary-source readings in the history of panentheistic thought and theology–science dialogue. With the amount of engagement with panentheistic thought already in it, though, the reader will be left wanting Fr. Tabaczek to deliver *the* alternative to panentheism rather than merely *an* alternative to panentheism. N.V

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Thomas Aquinas and the Crisis of Christology edited by Michael A. Dauphinais, Andrew Hofer, O.P., and Roger W. Nutt (*Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press, 2021*), ix + 422 pp.

THIS VOLUME IS A COLLECTION of papers presented at the “Thomas Aquinas and the Crisis of Christology” conference at the Aquinas Center of Ave Maria University in Ave Maria, Florida, in February 2020. Dozens of papers were presented at the conference; this volume contains many of the plenary papers and the two keynote addresses given by Bruce Marshall and Thomas Joseph White, O.P.

The title, especially the term “crisis,” has multiple meanings in the essays. On the one hand, some of them address the crisis in contemporary Christology. For example, Michael Dauphinais draws on Aquinas's theology of participation to pose what he sees as a better alternative to Richard Rohr's *The Universal Christ*. As Dauphinais shows, Rohr's popular Christology conflates Incarnation and creation as one and the same reality. Through careful exegesis of Aquinas's *Commentary on John*, Dauphinais argues that the Incarnation must be distinct as a unique act of God, and thus decidedly not the same as creation (253). On the other hand, as J. Augustine DiNoia observes in his foreword, the term “crisis” comes from the Greek *krisis*, or “judgment” (ix). Christ's judgment of all human beings emerges as a persistent theme in the volume. So Andrew Hofer's introduction explores Aquinas's teaching on Christ's judgment of teachers of the faith, noting the implications for theologians who hold the office of teacher. Marshall's and Daria Spezzano's essays are powerful accounts of Christ's role as judge. Both diagnose contemporary crises of faith over which we will be judged and remind us that the Lord Jesus judges to save those who love him. These essays read almost like sermons, and they deserve careful attention when

Christ's judgment seems irrelevant in an age when God can only be thought to be winsome and nice.

Some of the essays contribute to ongoing Thomistic scholarly debates. The vexed question of how to understand the *esse secundarium* in article 4 of Aquinas's *De unione verbi incarnati* receives two essays: one by Roger Nutt and the other by Steven A. Long. Nutt argues that Aquinas did not reverse his teaching on the single *esse* of Christ in the *De unione*. He observes that Aquinas uses the terms *principale* and *secundarium* to manifest "the ultimate unity of composite realities," and thus *secundarium esse* is not "second *esse*" in the order of being (87). Like Nutt, Long argues that Aquinas is consistent in his position on Christ's singular *esse*. He invokes a wide array of interpretive and metaphysical arguments in a mere nine pages. Though they do not resolve the problem (at least in my view: how could an *esse* distinct from another *esse* be numerically the same *esse*, as they would have to be for Christ to have one *esse*?), they are useful contributions to the ongoing interpretation of Aquinas on this point.

Similarly, Christ's human knowledge in Aquinas's theology and Catholic doctrine gets two essays. White expands on prior work on this topic and argues that Christ maintained consciousness of his filial identity prior to the resurrection. As usual, he does careful work deploying the insights of Catholic doctrine in conversation with biblical studies. Simon Francis Gaine expands on his argument in *Did the Saviour See the Father? Christ, Salvation and the Vision of God* by arguing that a divine person does not need to have the beatific vision to be incarnate. He contrasts metaphysical necessity with soteriological necessity; Christ needed to have the beatific vision to give it to us, but he did not need it as a necessary consequence of being incarnate. It would be interesting to see Gaine and other Thomists interact with John Duns Scotus's argument that Christ could be incarnate without the beatific vision, or highest possible grace (*Ordinatio* III, d. 13). Scotus, in my view, puts the issues at stake clearly, and it would help Thomists expand on Gaine's thought about what should be said here.

Some of the essays are master-classes in theological exposition of features of Aquinas's Christology. I will mention three that fall in this category. First, John Emery persuasively argues that "communication" is a controlling concept in Aquinas's Christology. It holds together the multiple ways that Scripture speaks of Christ's act of saving us. For Emery, Christ chiefly communicates his charity to us. Christ communicates it in multiple different forms of causality: exemplary, moral, instrumental, and meritorious. Second, Gerald Boersma's essay on Aquinas's Christology and the spiritual senses illuminates the connection of these topics. As Boersma shows, Aquinas uses

the psalmist's terms "taste" and "touch" in his religious epistemology. For Boersma, this realistic, tactile experience of God is rooted in the saints' union with Christ as his mystical body; we participate in Christ's superabundant taste and touch of the divine essence. Finally, Guy Mansini's essay beautifully intertwines the themes of Christ's authority and charity in Aquinas's theology. This essay alone is worth the price of the volume; it is a wonderful portrayal of Christ, the Judge who loves without bounds.

The conference was a rich time of spiritual and intellectual reflection. As one who attended, I believe that what happened was important in the life of the Church: Catholic and Protestant theologians came together to reflect on the mystery of the Incarnation with Thomas Aquinas guiding the proceedings in a sense. For that reason, I wish more of the papers could have been included to reflect on the ecumenical character of this event, especially those of the eminent Protestant evangelical theologians who presented: Oliver Crisp, Steven Duby, and Fred Sanders.

Nevertheless, the conference and this volume that came from it are a testament to the enduring spiritual power of Aquinas's theology over the whole Christian church. Why? I suspect it is because Aquinas wanted to lead his students (including us) not to his own opinion about the mysteries of the faith, but to the feet of our Lord Jesus, who will judge us all with upbuilding love at the end of time. N.V.

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Engaging the Doctrine of Israel: A Christian Israelology in Dialogue with Ongoing Judaism by Matthew Levering (*Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2021*), 547 pp.

ENGAGING THE DOCTRINE OF ISRAEL not only presents an interesting take on an old and complex problem but also is intriguing in its basic thesis and overall development. In this book, Levering attempts, and succeeds, to marry a scripturally grounded dialogue with ongoing Judaism with the necessary presuppositions of Christian dogmatics. He does so in order to understand the central realities of God's biblical people Israel and to shine a light on how these realities must inform Christian thought (3).

Such a volume fills a gap in research, since Christian dogmatic studies

often suffer a lack of appreciating just how important understanding “Israel’s covenantal life” is for Christian doctrine (3). Thus, while Levering tells us that this book is “the dogmatic sequel” to his *Engaging the Doctrine of Marriage* (1), the content of the book cannot be divorced from its scriptural foundation, nor from a contemporary dialogue with Israel.

After an ample introduction (1–47), Levering begins his treatment of the matter by explaining the necessary hermeneutical framework in which such an engagement can take place (48–109). This foundational chapter not only provides the grounding for the chapters that follow but also examines the pitfalls to avoid in dialoging with ongoing Israel. In particular, Levering finds a balance in the need for both Christians and Jews to retain core beliefs and a recognition that both sides have suffered from unnecessary and painful biases that have hurt dialogue in the past (52–53).

Since Levering is writing from the point of view of a Christian, he is right to point out that a healthy and fruitful dialogue with Judaism in the present moment requires both a solid foundation in Christian doctrine and an acknowledgement of how the New Testament has been misused to reject and subject the Jewish people to injustice over the centuries. Thus, in agreement with the author, I too think that Christian–Jewish dialogue plays a vital role not only in healing such biases but also in bridging needless gaps between the two groups (108–109).

This crucial chapter is followed by an examination of six different areas (110–443) in which Levering engages with Israel’s doctrine through a Christian lens. In each case, a similar format is found in the sense that Levering first introduces the topic and then engages with different Jewish and Christian scholars in order to elicit a more robust space for dialogue to happen. Each topic of study, then, is brought to a conclusion wherein Levering explicates both the pitfalls to be avoided and what truth can Christians glean.

The first area to be discussed is creation (110–46). In this chapter, Levering examines why is it important for both Jews and Christians alike to affirm that omnipotent God created creation *ex nihilo*. The author is right to point out that if God did not create creation out of nothing, then God is not omnipotent but rather merely a “powerful finite being” (111).

While I would have like to see a more robust exegetical analysis on Gen 1:1–2 (especially with regards to *bərē’šīt*, since it is not so certain that this prepositional phrase should be interpreted temporally), the author is right to move beyond the metaphysical question of creation *ex nihilo*, to point out that creation is “also rooted in God’s speaking, and thus his Word,” since creation must be understood as the way in which God establishes “a dialogic communion” (124) with creation. After all, it is the Word which is

fundamental; God speaks and practically invites creation to take its place amongst the grooves that God has made.

What is more is that this Word, as Levering acknowledges, is both divine and human, since it is the Word of God written in human language. Thus, in Scripture, we cannot escape the “divine–human collaboration” (145) that is willed by the Creator. At the heart of this collaboration, we find the “theo-drama of intimate (marital) love” through which the more meta-physical notion of creation *ex nihilo* makes sense (145), since God did not create creation arbitrarily, but rather with the intention to bring about true dialogue that leads to relationship, rooted in the Word (145).

After creation, Levering moves on to consider the Exodus (147–93). Here, after emphasizing the paradigmatic and normative nature of the exodus motif in both the Old Testament and New Testament (148–49), Levering makes clear that this chapter is really focused on understanding the inherent meaning of not only the exodus itself but also the new exodus wrought by Jesus (149).

In his focus on the exodus itself, Levering rightly contrasts how the Creator God redeems his wayward people from bondage with how, due to constant rebellion, the people still suffer (155–65). Within this section, I thoroughly agree with not only how the author unites God’s identity as Creator and Redeemer—God can redeem because he is the omnipotent Creator God—but also how, in rebelling, what really happens is all-out civil war between the people and their sovereign God.

Levering then enters into a dialogue with Rabbi Sacks (165–76) and especially develops the undercurrents of the Book of Exodus, theocentrism, and covenantal partnership, in order to emphasize the significance of nationhood, since the nation’s purpose is to embody God’s presence (174).

The chapter ends with a discussion on the new exodus in Christ (176–88). Here, the author understands the first coming of Christ as the one which inaugurates the kingdom and initiates the journey for all Christians to the promised land, the consummation of the kingdom (176). What is interesting here is that Levering builds on Sacks’ understanding of nationhood, and thus kingdom (177), wherein the perfected land would entail the perfection of communal life of believers in the long-awaited final temple in its eschatological form (177). In this way, Levering is right to assert that, for any Christian interpretation of the exodus motif to be correct, it *must be* grounded in the very Jewish idea of nationhood (178).

The third topic is the Torah (194–261). The central point of this chapter is the problem concerning how there seems to be much antagonism between

Jews and Christians regarding the law, even though both agree that the Torah is “authoritative divine revelation” (200).

Christians, of course, believe that Christianity is “a messianic fulfillment and reconfiguration” of the Torah (201). However, from the Jewish perspective, the fact that Christians claim that Jesus is the Messiah and God incarnate is problematic, since it is possible to interpret Christianity as “having retrogressed and returned to pagan idolatry” (210). On the other side, Christianity, based on a supersessionistic hermeneutic, has often claimed that Jews have “fallen into talmudic legalism” (210).

Echoing what is said in chapter 1, Levering rightly states that, even if both groups cannot completely bridge this gap, it does not mean that dialogue on the nature of the law is not worthwhile, because precisely here is where not only can we learn to appreciate each other but also Christians can recognize exactly why “Christ *is* Torah” (211).

The rest of the chapter is divided into two: a presentation of the Halakhic man of Soloveitchik (215–27) and its Christian application (227–56). While the Christian application could have perhaps been more succinct, the author presents an admirable and, to my mind, quite original application that has the scope of illustrating that we can indeed find many common points between Jews and Christians.

Fourthly, we find an examination of the Temple (262–321). As in the previous chapter, the point in question here is supersessionism (262–63), especially with animal sacrifices (even within Judaism) and the implementation of laws, such as those found in Pope Eugenius IV’s bull *Cantate Domino* in 1442, which forbid the practice of Jewish rites (263).

Levering, in this chapter, correctly walks a fine line in the sense that he is right that Christians must be supersessionists of a kind—because Christians cannot behave as if Christ did not come—but not supersessionists who despise the temple cult or the ongoing Jewish people, since any understanding of Jesus as the eschatological temple is thoroughly founded upon the theological framework of the temple and the history of Jerusalem (266).

To do this, Levering gives a good analysis on the biblical reflection on the temple, first in its Old Testament (266–79) and then in its New Testament context (279–91). At the heart of this analysis is that the temple really implies God’s presence among us (268, 271), a presence that, from a Christian perspective, is now found fully in the person of Jesus Christ (280).

However, I do have one point of contention here. On 281, while Levering is correct to point out the significance of Acts 21: 27 as the point where the “the temple is essential left behind,” one should not forget the importance of Paul’s second narration of the Damascus event since, in Acts 22: 17–21,

where Jesus appears to Paul in the very temple of Jerusalem. For this reason, I am inclined to see Luke's interest in the temple in Acts much more than a "cultural significance" (281); rather, it points to how the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus reconfigures the theology of the temple—Paul sees the face of God, the face of Jesus, in the very place that so many psalmists desired to see the same face of God.

The chapter ends with an articulate examination of the contemporary Jewish and Catholic critiques of animal sacrifices wherein the author rightly shows how to both appreciate the deeply positive theology behind the use of animal sacrifices and how contemporary Jewish and Christian authors have illustrated that both sides have moved beyond them (293–321).

The last two topics are the land (322–94) and the significance of the role of the king (395–443). In the former, Levering rightly states that, while a "Christian Israelology must affirm the eschatological fulfillment of the land promised by Jesus Christ," this affirmation needs to incorporate a theological commitment to supporting the Jewish people within the context of the two-state solution (343). This stance precludes the hatred towards Jews that has been sadly witnessed in Christian communities in the past. In the latter chapter, the author examines Davidic kingship and the abuse of power by both kings and popes. He shows here how abuse of power is regrettable as it is not the will of God.

These last two chapters are perhaps the weaker ones in the book. In the chapter on the land, while Levering rightly examines the importance of the land (and a precise territory) for both ancient and ongoing Judaism, discussion on the exile is conspicuously missing. I think that, since Second Temple Judaism is borne out of the exile, it is very difficult to fully appreciate the importance of the land without tackling not only the thorny issues that arise from the exile but also the theological developments that occur.

The weakness of the last chapter is especially witnessed in those pages that concern the Edgardo Mortara case (415–27). I do understand the reason behind such an examination of such a regrettable event, but I think it is out of place in a volume so grounded in scriptural analysis and real dialogue between Jewish and Christian authors.

The work itself ends with an appropriate conclusion (444–66) wherein Levering brings the book to a fitting end by extrapolating the implications inherent therein. This is followed by an ample bibliography (467–540) and index (541–47).

Overall, notwithstanding any observed weakness, such a volume is certainly praiseworthy and to be recommended. As this work presupposes

a good background on the various topics of discussion, such a volume is especially ripe for doctoral studies and further scholarly development.

N.V.

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