

Book Reviews

Jesus: Essays in Christology by Thomas G. Weinandy, O.F.M. Cap. (*Ave Maria: Sapientia Press, 2014*), ix + 425 pp.

CHRISTOLOGY REMAINS a highly contested subject in contemporary theology. From his initial work published in 1985, *Does God Change? The Word's Becoming in the Incarnation*, Thomas Weinandy has dedicated his entire career to explaining, defending, and preaching the mystery of the Word made flesh. It is eminently fitting, then, that an entire volume be dedicated to collecting and ordering Weinandy's wide-ranging essays on Christology.

Spanning a range of twenty-four years (1990–2013), the thirty-one essays in this volume are organized into four broad categories: (1) Christology and the Bible; (2) historical and systematic Christology; (3) Christology and contemporary issues; and (4) Christology and the Christian life. This organization reflects something of Weinandy's own "Christological method": beginning with the Scripture, he seeks a deep understanding of what the Fathers and early ecumenical councils have taught so that he can engage contemporary theological issues and offer a sound and tested Christology for living the Christian life.

The first two categories of essays are analytical and constructive. Here Weinandy "the teacher" takes us on a tour through the Christian tradition: Ignatius of Antioch, Athanasius, Cyril, the Council of Chalcedon, Thomas Aquinas, and others. But these are not just historical studies documenting what others have said; they are always in search of a constructive and synthetic account of Christ. The next set of essays are critical and polemical. Here Weinandy "the polemicist" engages and critiques various Christological proposals of contemporary theologians (e.g., Roger Haight, Terrance Tilley, John Macquarrie, and others). This critical engagement never descends to quibbling about small matters. Weinandy is concerned about the

great questions and takes issue only with proposals that appear to call into doubt essential elements of the Church's teaching about Christ. The final set of essays is pastoral, ordered toward living the mystery of Christ. Here Weinandy "the pastor," in a simpler idiom applies the truth about Christ to how we are called to live our lives. The sheer panorama of topics treated is remarkable—from dense philosophical theology to a whimsical exploration of Christological echoes in *Huckleberry Finn*. All this shows how deeply Weinandy has explored the mystery of Christ and how deeply this mystery has shaped his own thinking.

Are there certain themes in Christology to which Weinandy consistently returns? Is there a core to his Christology from which the rest emerges and develops? One way to sum up his Christological project is to say that Weinandy is dependent on (and committed to) the teaching of Cyril of Alexandria, the Council of Chalcedon, and Thomas Aquinas. In this sense, his Christology is energized by a *ressourcement* of these (and other) traditional sources. At the same time, he restlessly pursues a deeper penetration into the mystery of Christ and is quite ready to disagree with a traditional position that he deems is not dogmatically defined. In this sense, his Christology is creative and innovative.

The core of Weinandy's thought—and the signature mark of his writing—is what he calls the three fundamental truths of the Incarnation that must be simultaneously upheld: (1) It is *truly the divine Son* of God who is man (full divinity); (2) it is *truly man* that the divine Son of God is (full humanity); and (3) the Son of God truly *is* man (real existence in history as an authentic human being) (see 97, 122, 147, and 302). For Weinandy, the traditional use of the "communication of idioms" is nothing other than an attempt to uphold these three incarnational truths (71). Though he regrets that Cyril's terminology was at times ambiguous, Weinandy recognizes in Cyril's teaching what he calls a "personal/existential" model of the Incarnation: "One and the same person of the [divine] Son comes to exist as man. It is not a compositional union of natures similar to the soul/body, but rather the person of the Son taking on a new mode or manner of existence" (84). Weinandy argues that it is just these three truths received within a personal/existential model of the Incarnation that Chalcedon upheld and that Aquinas so excellently expounded.

If we had nothing other than Weinandy's clear exposition of the tradition's teaching about the Incarnation, we would be in his debt. But there is a searching, restless quality to his theology that is always seeking to explore more fully the mystery of Christ. Throughout his

writings, he puts forward various proposals that either develop or modify what the tradition has said about Christ.

One hallmark of Weinandy's Christology is his insistence that we not sell short the full humanity of Christ. Therefore, he takes with great seriousness the statement in Romans that Christ assumed "the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom 8:3). The divine Son did not take up a humanity that was sealed off from the consequences of our fallen state, but one that fully embraces all that we are, excepting sin: "Only if the Son of God, having become man of the sinful race of Adam, actually experiences the full effects of sin—temptation, suffering, death—and breaches sin's very domicile—hell—can he overthrow it and lift us up into the new abode of heavenly life" (9).

What this means for Weinandy is that the divine Son, Jesus, who now exists fully as a man, does everything in his historical life *as man*, in the humanity that he has assumed: "Within his incarnate state, the Son of God is always the principal actor, but the manner in which he acts is always *as man*, for that is the manner in which he now exists" (192). This claim—that the Son always acts *as man*—is not simply easy to square with the assertion found repeatedly in Cyril of Alexandria that the incarnate Son also acts *as God* when he exercises his divine power (e.g., calming the wind and the waves). Weinandy's answer would be that, even when Jesus acts by the divine power that he possesses as God, he always does so as the man that he is and, so, in a human manner.

Perhaps the most controversial consequence of this principle—that the divine Son always acts in a human manner—is Weinandy's contention that Jesus did not possess the beatific vision as such before his glorification in the Resurrection. In a back-and-forth debate with Fr. Thomas Joseph White (two articles from that debate are included in this volume), Weinandy states his difficulty with the view that Jesus possessed the beatific vision from the moment of his conception: "Such a claim appears to me to be contrary to Jesus's human life as *viator*" (279–280). In point of fact, he considers the question to be poorly framed and would rather ask, "Did the Son of God as man, within his human consciousness and intellect, possess a vision of the Father such that he (the divine Son) was humanly aware of himself as Son and so knew himself to be the Son, consequently perceiving all that the Father willed for him during his earthly life?" (281).

Pushing the question one stage further, Weinandy proposes that there is a human "I" of the person of the divine Son: "Within the Incarnation, there is a human 'I' of a divine 'who.' The identity of that human 'I' is that of the divine Son, but that divine identity is

only consciously conceived and articulated from within the parameters of that human ‘I’ (285). This constitutes a further development of the traditional teaching that there is no distinct human *person* in Christ. Weinandy agrees—the “person” who is Christ is the divine Son of God. But he wants to say in addition that this divine person, because he now fully exists as man, also possesses a human “I” that is now the center of his activity as the incarnate Son of God.

Based on the same principle of giving full weight to the real and true humanity assumed by Christ, Weinandy recommends reversing the terms of Mary’s experience of giving birth to Christ as both virgin and mother. Operating within (and accepting) the dogmatic tradition that Mary did not lose her physical virginity in the act of giving birth to Christ, Weinandy proposes that, rather than claiming Mary gave birth without pain in a miraculous way, it would be better to say that she, in imitation of her Son, undid the curse of Eve “by giving birth in pain, in so doing contributing to humankind’s re-creation in union with her” (186). For Weinandy, the reality of her ongoing virginity should not be the cause of nullifying the full reality of her motherhood: “What was miraculous was not the manner in which Mary gave birth, but the manner in which her virginity was preserved while giving birth naturally. In the act of giving birth, Mary was *by nature* a mother while miraculously remaining a virgin. In the act of giving birth, she was not naturally a virgin while miraculously becoming a mother” (188).

In these “Essays in Christology,” Thomas Weinandy displays just what Christian theology ought to be. Receiving divine revelation in Scripture, in prayer, and humility and through the Church’s dogmatic tradition, he restlessly seeks to clarify and deepen our grasp of the mystery of Christ. Other thoughtful writers anchored in the same tradition will differ with Weinandy and arrive at different conclusions on certain questions. But by probing the mystery of Christ and not settling for easy answers, Weinandy exemplifies the practice of “faith seeking understanding” and shows himself to be a theologian in the spirit of St. Augustine. N-V

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Scholarly Community at the Early University of Paris: Theologians, Education and Society, 1215–1248 by Spencer E. Young (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), ix + 260 pp.

SPENCER YOUNG'S WORK *Scholarly Community at the Early University of Paris: Theologians, Education and Society, 1215–1248* is a historical study of the “*Parens scientiarum* generation” of theologians on the faculty of the University of Paris during the period of the initial development of the institution. The group is so named in light of Pope Gregory IX's bull of 1231 that promulgated statutes for the university contributing to its stability and corporate identity. The theologians highlighted in Young's study include secular masters (such as Philip the Chancellor and William of Auxerre), as well as mendicants, both Dominicans (for example, Hugh of St. Cher and Roland of Cremona) and Franciscans (Alexander of Hales, John of La Rochelle, and Odo Rigaud). The chronological boundaries of Young's work enable it to serve as the definitive sequel to Stephen Ferruolo's *The Origins of the University: The Schools of Paris and Their Critics, 1100–1215* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985) and the English counterpart of Nathalie Gorochoff's *Naissance de l'université: Les écoles de Paris d'Innocent III à Thomas d'Aquin (v.1200–v.1245)* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2012). While Ferruolo's work closes with a discussion of Robert Courson's promulgation of the university's first statutes in 1215, Young's study proceeds forward from this point and investigates the life and challenges facing theological scholars at the nascent institution. And while Gorochoff's work focuses on key individuals, Young's concern is with the overall community of theologians at the university during this time period.

In the course of his examination, Young gives attention to a number of thinkers who have received less scholarly attention in the past. The study contains a valuable appendix that provides a chronological register of the theological masters teaching at Paris during the time period under consideration. In this register, a brief biography of each master is given. Yet, the main purpose of the study is to be found in the community of theologians as a whole, rather than in select masters. Young states, “the principal objective of this study is to uncover how these various individuals related to one another within this community at a time when the very nature of its institutional organization was taking shape” (13).

Young's study is divided into five chapters. The first three chapters proceed with increasing specificity. In the first chapter, Young examines the late twelfth-century and early thirteenth-century context of

the Parisian schools and masters, as well as the initial emergence of the faculty of theologians at the university. Here, Young provides an overview of key events that occurred at the institution during the chronological period under consideration. Such include the arrival of mendicant orders at the university, the Great Dispersion of 1229–1231, the development of the university's first theological curriculum, and the condemnation of the Talmud at Paris in 1248. In the second chapter, Young considers individual scholars on the Parisian faculty in relation to four areas of concern: (i) authority and influence within the community of scholars, (ii) the commitment of individual theologians to the mission of the university (especially in connection with the Great Dispersion), (iii) individual degrees of realization of the theologian's tasks of *lectio*, *disputatio*, and *predicatio*, and (iv) attitudes toward Aristotle's natural philosophy. This fourfold analysis enables Young to discern certain tendencies among faculty members that are reflected in Pope Gregory IX's bull *Parens scientiarum*. In the third chapter, Young focuses specifically upon William of Auxerre and his influence within the theological faculty (examining in detail selections from Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 14726, fols. 194–222). The content in these folios confirms, according to Young, that theologians at Paris were aware of and influenced by one another's work (in this case, Stephen Berout and Peter of Bar were aware of selections from William's *Summa aurea*).

The final chapters of Young's work then return to a more general perspective upon two scholarly conversations occurring 1215–1248 (one conversation concerned almsgiving, and the other focused on the seven deadly sins). These conversations, according to Young, also highlight the initial reception of Aristotle among the Parisian theologians when such texts were controversial and held under interdict. Young's fourth chapter focuses on almsgiving, a topic that he claims is "situated at the nexus of theoretical and practical theology, offering a host of insights into the potential social consequences of ideas developed within the schools" (17). The fifth and final chapter then considers the seven deadly sins, or capital vices.

Of particular interest for contemporary theologians is Young's treatment of the challenges the Parisian masters encountered when initially developing the theological curriculum of the university. Such challenges included the assimilation of Aristotelian philosophy, the standardization of Lombard's *Libri sententiarum* as a theological textbook, and the introduction of the *quodlibetal* disputation as a form of scholarly interaction (46). On these topics, Young provides a helpful synopsis of contemporary research and effectively intro-

duces his reader to a variety of ongoing scholarly discussions found in secondary literature. Regarding the reception of Aristotle, Young observes that, while members of the arts faculty were proscribed from consideration of the *libri naturales*, such did not apply to Aristotle's texts in logic or ethics and some theologians did not interpret the ban as applicable to the theological faculty (48–49). Young categorizes the theologians of the *Parens scientiarum* generation into three groups regarding their attitude toward Aristotle's *libri naturales*: some opposed Aristotle's philosophy entirely (John of St. Giles and Guiard of Laon), others endorsed a moderate and reflective appropriation in light of revealed truth (William of Auvergne and Hugh of St. Cher), and members of a third group (William of Auxerre, Alexander of Hales, and possibly Philip the Chancellor) campaigned for institutional acceptance of the Stagirite's works (95–99). Young maintains that William of Auxerre may have been instrumental in mollifying Gregory's concerns with Aristotle's *libri naturales*. He argues that the Pontiff shifted from a stance of total prohibition (evinced by a letter from 1228) to the request three years later (in *Parens scientiarum*) for a critical purification of these works (49–52). Young also gives focused attention to the use of Aristotle's ethics in theological works on the vices during this era (190–200).

Speaking generally, Young's work is of great benefit for scholars who research the time period under consideration, as well as for scholars of later Parisian theologians such as Albert, Aquinas, and Bonaventure, since the study explores the proximate communal context in which these thinkers were formed. One may, however, question whether each chapter included in the work contributes to the overall purpose of the volume. Despite the fact that all of the chapters treat topics that fall within the stated chronological boundaries and the fact that the introduction of the volume aims to interrelate all of the content, the unity of the work is slightly strained. The first two chapters of the work best serve Young's stated purpose, whereas the next three chapters (while of high scholarly caliber and containing very useful analyses) could each function as a discrete and isolated investigation. This point aside, Young's study is a significant resource comparable to works produced by veteran scholars researching the same general time period (for example, R. W. Southern, Marcia L. Colish, and William J. Courtenay). N&V

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The Salvation of Atheists and Catholic Dogmatic Theology by Stephen Bullivant (*New York: Oxford University Press, 2012*), xi + 215 pp.

STEPHEN BULLIVANT'S MONOGRAPH offers a welcome contribution to an area in the theology of the Second Vatican Council that continues to require clarification fifty years after the Council. The aim of this work is to elucidate "how, within the parameters of Catholic theology, it is possible for an atheist to be saved" (2). While not intended as an apologetic response to the New Atheism, Bullivant is correct in observing that his work will challenge one item in the New Atheist arsenal, namely the assumption that individuals who happen to lack certain "religious information" are thereby automatically assumed to be damned (12). The primary focus of this study consists in elucidating two poignant sentences of *Lumen Gentium* (LG) §16:

Those also can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience. Nor does Divine Providence deny the helps necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God and with His grace strive to live a good life.

Faithful to the Catholic magisterial tradition, Bullivant makes his first principles clear from the outset: in accounting for how atheists might be saved, one must affirm that the Church is necessary for salvation, that Christ is the unique mediator between God and man, that faith and baptism are necessary, and that a person cognizant of this necessity who refuses to enter or persevere in the Church cannot be saved (9). It is likewise the author's Catholic faith that leads him to suggest early on that the putative salvation of atheists would involve a period in Purgatory (10).

Chapter 1 consists in the prolegomenal quest to understand what atheism is before proceeding to theologize about it. Bullivant departs from the "common-speech McGrathian" understanding of an atheist as one who makes a principled and informed decision to reject belief in God (15). In this monograph, "atheist" simply denotes a person

who is without belief in God or gods.¹ Thus the term embraces both “positive” (believing-not) and “negative” (not-believing) atheists, the former representing those who deny that God exists while the latter includes agnostics as well as logical positivists who deny any meaning to the word “God” (16). This classification is warranted given that *LG* §16 refers not to those who expressly disbelieve in God, but rather more generally to those who have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God (17).

An awkward wrinkle Bullivant pauses to consider concerns the question of atheism in relation to non-theistic religious traditions such as Theravada Buddhism, Jainism, and Confucianism. Members of these traditions are atheists in the sense adopted by the author. However, with respect to salvation, he argues that their situation is “arguably very different” from that of the non-religious atheists upon which the book focuses (28). Bullivant is consistent here in categorizing certain religious adherents as atheists while at the same time duly emphasizing that they may be in contact with a reality that the non-religious atheist is not. This aligns well with magisterial teaching concerning the avenues by which members of non-Christian religious traditions receive grace.²

Chapter 2 focuses on Vatican II’s treatment of atheism and its preconiliar antecedents. Over the course of the chapter, the author interacts with the work of theological giants Blondel, de Lubac, Maritain, Schillebeeckx, Daniélou, and Congar. Of particular importance for Bullivant’s project is the dogma *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, which has undergone “genuine development” through a positive reformulation wherein we now understand the statement not to intend simply that those outside the visible Church are damned, but rather that it is by the Church alone that one is saved (50). Drawing

¹ The author also takes up the question of the “practical atheist” and correctly concludes that, in the sense commonly accorded the term today, such a person is not an atheist at all, but rather a defective form of believer (21). Atheism is near-universally understood as a person’s position relating to God’s existence, rather than to whether one is living in accord with the belief in God he professes (24).

² Thus, in *Dialogue and Proclamation* (1991), the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue states, with references to the Second Vatican Council’s *Ad Gentes*: “Concretely, it will be in the sincere practice of what is good in their own religious traditions and by following the dictates of their conscience that the members of other religions respond positively to God’s invitation and receive salvation in Jesus Christ, even while they do not recognize or acknowledge him as their savior” (§29).

on Ratzinger, the author concludes that the primary question for theology now concerns not whether the atheists can be saved, but how the certainty of this possibility is to be maintained alongside the absolute requirement of the Church and her faith (51).

In addition to considering LG §16 at this point, Bullivant rightly draws his readers' attention to *Gaudium et Spes* (GS) §§19–22. In contrast with the tendency of preconciliar theology, Vatican II gives a sympathetic overview of the varieties and causes of modern atheism, with GS §19, going so far as to note that “believers can have no small part” in its rise. Meanwhile, GS §22 arguably contains the most developed conciliar teaching on grace in relation to non-believers, teaching that the Son of God “has united Himself in some fashion with every man” by virtue of his Incarnation. In this same paragraph, the document affirms that Christ died for all men and that “grace works in an unseen way” in the hearts of all who are of good will. The Holy Spirit “offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery,” even as the manner in which this occurs is known only to God.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to critiquing Karl Rahner's theology in relation to the salvation of atheists. The author does not take this enterprise lightly, noting that to cast doubt on Rahner's approach is to thereby cast doubt on the dominant account of the salvation of atheists within Catholic theology (3). Bullivant's critique in this chapter focuses on one key aspect of Rahner's theory: the question of how a saved atheist is to fulfill the criterion of possessing faith (79). Based on the premises that membership in the Church is necessary for salvation and that God wills the salvation of all people (cf. 1 Tim 2:4), Rahner concluded that, somehow, all men must be capable of belonging to the Church even if they have not come to an explicit acceptance of Christ. Bullivant, on the other hand, questions whether salvation requires *membership* in the Church or simply *mediation* by the Church, as in the interpretations advanced by Ratzinger, Congar, and de Lubac (78).

The author detects three major problems in Rahner's concept of implicit faith. First, he questions the cogency of an appeal to anonymous, non-propositional, pre-linguistic faith. Citing John Searle, he contends that Rahner's foundation is dubious in light of the fact that “the notion of the unconscious is one of the most confused and ill-thought-out concepts of modern intellectual life” (99). Second, Bullivant believes that the concept of implicit faith “poses intractable philosophical and theological difficulties” (101), largely due to his having extended the concept of implicit faith “a very long

way from the traditional understanding” (104). In contrast with the Thomistic tradition in which a member of the Christian community who is unable to articulate fully all its teachings may be described as possessing implicit faith, for Rahner, the act of faith itself is thought to be implicit within a person’s thoughts and actions. Thus, Rahner’s articulation of implicit faith is “at the very most” analogical to the Thomistic one (104). A third problem Bullivant identifies in Rahner is the dubiety of his primacy of empirical evidence, in other words the general implausibility of imputing faith to virtuous unbelievers. Although Bullivant takes for granted the possibility of such faith, he believes that such cases are exceptional and likely quite rare (109–10).

The author bolsters his last criticism with a thought-provoking analogy based on the observation that a geocentrist might rightly believe that it is daytime in Britain when it is nighttime in Australia. Though his geocentric reasons for believing this are false, there is no need to impute to him any implicit belief in heliocentrism in order to explain his correct belief in the relative day and night times on opposite sides of the world. In like manner, Bullivant argues, one need not impute any kind of faith to Rahner’s alleged “anonymous Christian” in order to admit that such a person possesses exemplary virtue. Concisely summarizing, he states: “Even though there *is*, in fact, a God, and even *if* morality and meaningfulness are, at bottom, illogical without one, the fact remains that [this] kind of life . . . is perfectly possible without supposing it to demonstrate any ‘existentially actualized theism’” (109).

In chapter 4, Bullivant shifts his attention from critique to proposal, outlining a new framework for interpreting LG §16 through a renewed understanding of invincible ignorance. Throughout the chapter, the author applies his considerations to “Jane,” a non-theistic Buddhist. Adopting the “D’Costan paradigm,” the author identifies Christ’s descent into the abode of the dead on Holy Saturday as the key event that makes possible a resolution to the question of how an atheist may be saved. He rejects Clement of Rome’s suggestion that the dead to whom Christ preached underwent a postmortem conversion (120). Following the interpretation of Bellarmine, he argues that the text describing Christ’s descent in 1 Peter 3 has in its sights specifically those people “in the days of Noah” who drowned in the Flood despite the fact that they had repented (1 Pet 3:20). These were the “spirits in prison” to whom Christ preached (1 Pet 3:18–19). Thus, Christ descended to the netherworld to rescue those who were to be saved, not those who were damned. Nevertheless, these individuals who repented still had to wait in Sheol or the *limbus partum* for the

coming of Christ wherein the process begun in their response while drowning in the Flood would be brought to completion.

From this perspective, Christ's preaching to the spirits in prison is understood as the announcement that what the deceased had secretly desired while on earth—their redemption—is now here in Christ. In this way, the explicit "epistemological relationship to Christ" required for salvation is rectified for an atheist in the event of Christ's descent (122). If Bullivant is correct, then there are epistemologically and ontologically millions of unevangelized in the same state as those were in the *limbus partum* before Christ's descent. For the pre-Incarnation just, Christ's coming was necessary both to open heaven (objective aspect) and to bring these just into an epistemological relationship with himself (subjective aspect), whereas an atheist saved today may subjectively exist in the state of those who entered the limbo of the just even though, objectively speaking, the gates of heaven have been opened by Christ (123).

At this point Bullivant turns directly to LG §16 for evidence in support of his position. In speaking of those who have "not yet accepted" (*nondum acceperunt*) the Gospel, the Council implies that everyone who is to be saved must at some point explicitly accept the Gospel. Given the possibility of a saved atheist, it follows that "[s]ome manner of *post-mortem* solution thus seems to be required by LG 16" (126). This inference is the linchpin of Bullivant's argument, and his responses to possible objections are well-reasoned. However, even after reading his presentation, one may still wonder whether the author is reading too much into the Council's intention with its use of *nondum* rather than the simpler *non*. For this interpretation to be conclusive, evidence from interventions by the Council Fathers on this point would need to be adduced.

A final intriguing feature of this chapter is its recourse to "sociology of knowledge" in accounting for the widespread phenomenon of atheism in our day. An evangelist's mere assertion of Christ's existence is clearly not sufficient to oblige consent on the part of an atheist. What is more, in a pluralistic society that makes all truth claims relative, it may be that many people are never confronted with a plausible presentation of the Gospel. In this connection, Bullivant goes so far as to say that one could even be brought up nominally as a Christian without ever truly hearing the Gospel (145). Adapting a metaphor from Richard Dawkins, he observes that people may be inoculated against the "virus" of Christianity by being subjected to

small doses of “dead” Christianity in their youth (145n21). In other words, the misconduct of Christians may so defame Christianity as to cause invincible ignorance in would-be believers. Given this scenario, the author believes that we have a strong theoretical foundation for a “presumption of innocence” or “salvation optimism” (73 and 146). All the same, Bullivant hastens to add an important qualification from GS §19—namely, that those who willfully drive God from their heart and refuse to follow their conscience are “not devoid of fault” (139).³

In chapter 5, the author rounds out his solution to the problemata of previous chapters by means of a specific interpretation of Matthew 25:31–46. In brief, Bullivant proposes that atheists can be saved in accordance with what they have done to Christ’s “least ones.” Thus, the title of the chapter: *extra minimos nulla salus* (“apart from the least ones, no salvation”). Whereas the dominant strand of Patristic exegesis saw these *minimi* as Christ’s disciples, Bullivant advocates an “unrestricted” understanding of this class of individuals (153). Conceding that this reading does not represent “the overwhelming witness of the tradition” and that it might not capture the evangelist’s intention, the author argues that it does resolve two problems in D’Costa’s account: the impossibility of postmortem conversion and the atheist’s lack of opportunities for encountering grace.

In a move all-too rarely made in contemporary theology, Bullivant offers hagiographical evidence to corroborate his claim. After a delightful analysis of how his paradigm is reflected in the lives of St. Benedict and St. Martin de Tours (155–56), the author dwells at greater length on the theology of Blessed Mother Teresa, who taught that Christ is present “in his distressing disguise” in the poor themselves (162). If this presence is as the saints describe it, then moral atheists not only act under the influence of grace but also have an objective encounter with Christ himself when performing corporal works of mercy for his “least ones” (165–67). Echoing D’Costa, Bullivant thus argues that the atheist already in this life

³ In his conclusion, the author likewise makes it clear that he is not proposing universal salvation, although he does follow Balthasar in stating that it is possible to hope that all might be saved. For an insightful critique of Balthasar’s position, see Ralph Martin, *Will Many Be Saved? What Vatican II Actually Teaches and Its Implications for the New Evangelization* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 129–90. In this work, Martin also poses a thoughtful challenge to Bullivant’s assumption that Vatican II’s theology reflects “salvation optimism” or entails a “presumption of innocence” (*ibid.*, 55).

has an “ontological relationship” with Christ, whereas the requisite “epistemological relationship” with him will only be rectified post-mortem (173). None of this, he argues, requires that we attribute to the atheist implicit or anonymous faith; rather, in this case it is *Christ* who is anonymous. Briefly stated: “Anonymous Christs do not entail anonymous Christians” (172).

In conclusion, Bullivant’s postmortem resolution in light of Matthew 25 is plausible and well-argued. For this reader, a significant remaining objection concerns how he seems to imply the presence of charity in an atheist while denying that this virtue is accompanied by at least implicit faith. It is difficult to see how the salvific grace an atheist receives in his encounter with Christ’s “least ones” is not accompanied by some noetic content. Perhaps it is worth exploring a possible reconciliation to this problem in the encyclical *Lumen Fidei*. Insisting that “love requires truth,” co-authors Benedict XVI and Francis invoke the biblical and Patristic tradition in teaching that love itself is “a kind of knowledge possessed of its own logic.”⁴ Regardless of whether this last suggestion proves fruitful or whether one is convinced of Bullivant’s claim that the standard Catholic understanding of how atheists might be saved is untenable, his book deserves a careful reading. The work succeeds in its quest for “creative fidelity” and, accordingly, merits both admiration and emulation. N·V

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Living the Good Life: A Beginner’s Thomistic Ethics by Steven J. Jensen (*Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2013*), ix + 205 pp.

IN *LIVING THE GOOD LIFE*, Steven Jensen attempts to elucidate Thomas Aquinas’s basic moral philosophy and, along the way, refute several prominent objections (both scholarly and popular) to this philosophy. Inasmuch as this book is an introductory text, Jensen succeeds in summarizing a number of the foundational principles underlying Thomas’s ethics while at the same time showing the reader that Thomas’s understanding of ethics is true and of perennial value.

Jensen begins by noting that the modern world is in need of moral wisdom and that the ethical system of Saint Thomas of Aquinas is a

⁴ Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei* (2013), §28.

good starting point because it presents many relevant ethical truths with very few errors (3). Jensen intends this book to be an introduction to the thought of Thomas and not a detailed account of his ethical system. Nonetheless, he asserts that the little that is presented will show how Thomas's ethical thought is "intricately ordered and systematic" in nature (6).

In chapter 2, Jensen introduces the primary theme of the book by asking whether the just man or the unjust man is happier (8–9). He notes that all people do seek to be happy but most people do not see the connection between ethics and happiness. He then explains that ethics is the science of determining which actions are fulfilling (lead to true happiness) and which actions are not (11). To look at which actions are truly fulfilling, we must look at the authentically human capacities of reason, emotions, and will (13–14). This interior teleological approach to ethics will undergird the rest of the book as Jensen examines the traditional Thomistic powers of the soul (the intellect, will, and emotions) and shows how virtues perfect these powers to perform authentically human actions that result in happiness.

The third chapter addresses the relation between reason and the emotions. He notes that many people believe that if something feels good, then it must be good. In other words, if they want something, then it must have value (19). However, Thomas says the opposite: if something is good, then we should want it (20). Jensen notes that people often want things that are bad for them and that humans should order their emotions so that true values shape their desires (21). Human reason perceives the true good and evil in the world and should direct the emotions to those things that are truly good (22 and 27–30). Jensen concludes that, to live a life of fulfillment, reason must direct the emotions so that they are truly humanized. In other words, the emotions should be true human desires and not just animal impulses (30–31).

The fourth chapter seeks to explain the necessity of moral knowledge to live a happy life. It further refutes the view that to do right actions humans need only to do what they believe is right (in other words, follow their conscience). By means of a discussion involving a number of different distinctions between the voluntariness and involuntariness of actions, Jensen concludes that humans must follow their conscience, but they must first inform it (45). He explains that the happy life requires that we seek the truth about what is good and evil (46).

In chapter 5, Jensen seeks to refute the view of deterministic behaviorism (that there are no free choices) and to explore the nature of human freedom. He goes on to give a few arguments showing that humans are capable of determining their own course of actions and are thus free (49–52). Up to this point, he has examined the emotions and reason, and he now introduces the will in order to explain the notion of freedom. The will is a spiritual capacity that is like the emotions in that it is a loving or desiring power, but unlike the emotions, the will is the appetite of reason. The emotions can be led by anything known or sensed, but the will requires reason for it to be stirred into action (56). The love within the will is deeper than the love found in the emotions, and to be fulfilled, humans must seek to satisfy the desires of the will—for, in the will, more lasting satisfaction can be found (53–55). Hence, humans can freely choose certain actions because the reason can determine that certain things are good and the will can choose them.

In opposition to Kantianism, the sixth chapter notes that Aquinas believes that the truly fulfilled person not only does the right action but emotionally desires the right action as well. Emotions can be controlled to a certain extent by reason directing them, and if they cannot be directed by reason, then the will should overcome contrary ones (67–68). When reason repetitively redirects the emotions, or the will repetitively overcomes contrary emotions, good habits are formed that dispose the emotions to act in a certain way (69). Thus, although emotions will not always desire the true good in the present, they can often be redirected, and in the long run they can be more completely transformed through habits allowing humans to not only do good actions but also desire good actions (73–74).

The seventh chapter shows that virtues within the emotions are essential for the life of happiness. Using a number of virtues as examples (e.g., moderation, courage, generosity, patience, and humility), Jensen shows that virtue exists in the emotions when the emotions desire the proper amount and type of good, not too much (excess) and not too little (defect). Because the emotions can influence the judgment of reason, judgment often depends on a person's disposition. Hence, virtues in the emotions are necessary for the intellect to judge properly (91). Thus, happiness requires that the emotions are transformed with virtues so that they participate in reason. Happiness is not found in what people can imagine will make them happy (following uncontrolled emotions) but in truly human activities (93–94).

In chapters 8 and 9, Jensen explains the virtue of justice and the vice of injustice. Justice perfects the will to treat others equally, unlike utilitarianism, where others can be mere instruments (102). Jensen then speaks of different types of equality by explaining commutative, distributive, and political justice (102–07). Whereas acts are just when others are treated equally, acts are unjust when people are not treated with the proper type of equality (114). He states that acts such as robbery, destroying another's reputation, and harming the lives of others are unjust actions (115 and 119–120). In opposition to these unjust actions, justice safeguards the fact that the human good is found in union with others (108). He further notes that the just action takes into consideration that all humans are an essential part of an ordered common good (107 and 116). Based on this understanding of the role of humans within the common good, Jensen notes that suicide and euthanasia are not allowed but that capital punishment and war can be licit in some situations (117–118). Justice as perfecting the will directly affects actions leading to happiness. Injustice cannot cause true happiness, but it can cloud our understanding of it.

In chapter 10, Jensen talks about how the good or evil of a particular action can be identified. He asserts that, in order for an action to be good, one must consider the action itself, the circumstances, and the motive (130). Some actions by themselves are always good or evil apart from the circumstances (130). However, either the circumstances or a bad motive can make a good action or an indifferent action into an evil action (131). To be good, the action itself, the circumstances, and the motive must be good, but to be evil only one of these has to be bad (132).

Having looked at the virtues in the emotions and the virtues in the will, Jensen now focuses on the virtues in the intellect in chapter 11. He talks about virtues both in the speculative intellect (understanding, science, and wisdom) and in the practical intellect (art and prudence) (139–43). He notes that the intellectual virtues (with the exception of prudence, which will be treated in the next chapter) give the capacity to act well but do not actually move one to act well (141 and 144). Hence, someone can have these intellectual virtues and not be a good person and vice versa (146). Nonetheless, because these virtues give the capacity to act well, the good person will desire these intellectual virtues as appropriate (148).

In chapter 12, Jensen treats prudence. He notes that prudence bridges the boundary between mental judgment and the affective desire found in the will and emotions (151). To be prudent, one must

both have right desires and be good at taking counsel, judging, and especially commanding the proper action (151–53). Furthermore, since prudence applies moral principles to a particular situation, the prudent person must also know moral principles (155–56). Finally, he notes that prudence directs the moral virtues by determining the proper object and amount of desire (160).

Having introduced the fact that we need moral principles to be prudent, Jensen goes on in chapter 13 to tell how humans come to knowledge of these principles. He notes that this knowledge generally first comes from parents or other mentors, but as people grow intellectually, they are eventually able to understand the principles themselves (167). To understand these principles themselves, they seek to determine what is the “human good, which [they] grasp by realizing [their] human capacities or inclinations” (180). When humans realize that they are more than just animals and should act rationally, they realize that their good “involves understanding the truth and sharing the good with others” (180). From this knowledge, certain natural desires of the will arise, and ultimately humans realize that they should pursue these goods desired by the will (180). Finally, further reflection helps humans discover other moral principles to guide their lives (180). These moral principles are called natural laws. Jensen notes that, since humans can discover these truths by looking at human nature itself, morality is not some external burden arbitrarily legislated from another, but “it springs from our very nature” as a guide to human happiness and fulfillment (181).

During the last chapter, Jensen presents the conclusion toward which the entire book has been building: the study of ethics is the study of actions that lead to true happiness. However, some people misunderstand the nature of true happiness and think that happiness can be found in attaining whatever they desire (186–89). Jensen reminds the reader that, over and over throughout the book, he has demonstrated that true happiness comes only from fulfilling truly human capacities of reason and will (184). Ultimately, happiness is found in God, who fulfills one’s truly human capacities (194 and 199). The will seeks the infinite, and only God satisfies this desire (199). Jensen concludes that the life of virtue is the happy life (196).

The primary message of this book—that ethics is the study of guidelines, actions, and habits that lead to true human happiness—is a very important message in the current milieu. Furthermore, the supporting arguments throughout the book are very helpful. As with any text that covers so many different points in an introductory

manner, some points are better explained than others. I thought Jensen did a particularly good job explaining the role of the emotions in keeping people from recognizing true happiness and explaining how virtue does make people happy. On the other hand, I found the chapters on freedom and justice to be less helpful. Also, because Jensen will often introduce Thomas's view by treating particular objections, readers who are already convinced of the truth of Thomas's ethics will sometimes find it burdensome to get to the main point of the chapters. On the other hand, other readers will probably find this pedagogical style particularly appealing. On the overall, Jensen has done a fine job of writing a book that is sophisticated enough to capture the nuances and teleological structure of Thomas's ethics yet clear enough that nearly any educated person would benefit from reading it. N&V

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Lying and Christian Ethics by Christopher O. Tollefsen (*New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014*), xii + 209 pp.

CHRISTOPHER TOLLEFSEN'S NEW BOOK, *Lying and Christian Ethics*, is a significant contribution not only to the literature on lying in general, but also more specifically to the Thomistic-Augustinian perspective about the morality of lying. Tollefsen's main thesis is a defense of the absolute view that lying is always wrong. In light of the unpopularity of his view, even in Catholic circles, and widespread criticism from other scholars, Tollefsen is to be commended for standing behind his arguments and charitably addressing opposing concerns. This book is the culmination of an intense debate that raged a few years ago in the journals *Public Discourse* and *First Things* on this very issue: Is lying always wrong? Tollefsen's book is his magisterial answer to that query: One ought never to lie. For these aforementioned reasons, Tollefsen's book belongs high on the list of books about lying, even though his core argument seems lacking.

Tollefsen's assessment of arguments against the absolute view can be divided in general into two types: 1) those who outright reject the absolute view and 2) those who do not outright reject it but wish to modify the definition of lying so as to allow for you to do what you normally could not do under the traditional absolute view. Regard-

ing the first, Tollefsen gives an insightful analysis into the Christian case against the absolute view. John Cassian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Reinhold Niebuhr are the key Christian proponents of the view that lying can and needs to be done in certain difficult situations. Yet, what perhaps has gone unnoticed by many, including myself, is that these Christians who defended lying still admitted that lying is an evil action. In difficult circumstances, one may be permitted to lie and one even should lie, yet lying still remains as evil as ever before. "In the tradition of which Cassian is an important representative . . . there are genuine cases of necessity in which one must act in a way that is imperfect, guilty, sinful—yet nevertheless to repeat, one *must* act in this way" (62). Bonhoeffer also holds that, though one may lie, one still "bear[s] guilt for charity's sake" (70). Niebuhr holds a similar view that, in some situations, evil must be done. Tollefsen's analysis here serves as a poignant reminder to any Christian who wishes to defend lying: many Christians who denied the absolute view admitted that a lie was still a lie and that one incurred guilt in telling it.

The second view, those who wish to hold to the absolute view but yet redefine lying, Tollefsen adeptly addresses in Chapter 1. One way around the traditional absolute view is that, for example, since the Nazis have no "right to know" whether you are hiding Jews, you may tell them "I am not hiding Jews" without lying. For a lie is only a lie to one who has the right to know. Tollefsen points out various problems with this view: "A stranger has no right against you for the truth about what you had for breakfast. . . . But it seems manifestly a lie to assert that you had something other than what you did in fact have" (29). The "right to know" view is also against the magisterium. Catholic tradition has held for over a thousand years that lying (as understood without the "right to know" qualifier) is always wrong. Further, the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, as the *editio typica*, has no such "right to know" qualifier. Lying is always wrong, full stop. This *editio typica* requires pious assent. Various other excellent arguments are leveled against the "right to know" view. His criticisms are quite compelling; if you wish to continue to hold to the "right to know" redefinition do not read this book.

Chapters 7 and 8 are particularly helpful in assessing more practical objections to the absolute view: for example, if you cannot lie, then what exactly can you tell the Nazis at the door? Does the absolute view entail that one must tell the Nazis that one is in fact hiding Jews? Not at all, says Tollefsen. One may never lie, but this does not mean one is bound to do nothing. One may keep silent. One may

evade by creating a distraction such as asking, “Why do you think I’d be so stupid to do such a thing?” One may equivocate saying “These are all my children.”

Tollefsen rightly insists that not all deception is a lie. “Our mistake is not in thinking it was permissible to use codes in World War II, or to make it seem as if the Normandy invasion was to take place elsewhere, but to think that these were instances of lying” (187). Tollefsen is right here. What makes a lie a lie is that one is asserting something as if it were true when in fact one believes it is not. One is not making any such assertion in using codes, nor asserting that one is going to invade by merely putting more tents on a particular border. The details are too much to go into here, but Tollefsen is absolutely right that not every instance of deception is a lie. Though Aquinas himself condemns certain forms of non-linguistic deception as lies in the *Summa Theologiae* (hereafter, *ST*) II-II, question 111, this does not mean that all forms of non-linguistic deception are lies. Many things in war are not lies, but merely deceptive tactics.

Despite such praise, there are some areas of the book with which I take issue. His main argument against lying is that it violates the basic goods of personal integrity and sociality. Tollefsen comes from the “New Natural Law” persuasion and, so, rejects the classical natural law tradition (and so, in effect, parts of Aquinas’s thought). Basic goods are “basic underived aspects of human well-being and fulfillment, such as life and health, knowledge, friendship and so on” (109). Tollefsen is certainly right that life, health, and so on are all goods and are aspects of human well-being and fulfillment. But to say that these goods are underivable or simply grasped through insight is questionable. Health is good for man, but it is not through a simple act of insight that one grasps this fact. One can reasonably wonder why health is good for man. One may reason to this fact through reflection upon human nature and man’s *telos*. Something that is ordered toward its *telos* is good (cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.7.1097b–1098a). Health is very important for ordering man to his *telos*. So, health is a good. Further, Aquinas himself does not hold to the underivability of basic goods, but rather says they are derivable from our inclinations (*ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2). Though Tollefsen would likely reject these arguments here, it is important for the reader to keep in mind that basic goods are not a universal position among Catholic philosophers and are in fact the subject of considerable debate.

Tollefsen is also not entirely clear as to what exactly he takes Aquinas’s argument against lying to be. At times he is very careful

not to put the language of basic goods into Aquinas's mouth, but at other times, he seems to think that Aquinas's argument against lying depends upon a notion of basic goods: "False assertion . . . really does damage [the liar's] integrity [which is a basic good] in a way that, I shall argue in Chapter 5, is always a deliberate sundering of that integrity and thus is always wrong. And this thought appears to be present in Aquinas's treatment as well" (54); and "[Aquinas's] argument is not based on any idea of the thwarting or perverting of the natural function of something, whether speech or tongue. It is grounded in human good" (56). Tollefsen is right that Aquinas's argument is grounded in the human good, but he goes too far in holding that the human good is a basic good and that Aquinas's argument against lying is that it violates a basic good. On the contrary, Aquinas's argument against lying is thoroughly teleological: "For since words are naturally signs of understanding, it is unnatural and undue that one signify by word that which is not in the mind."¹ Aquinas's argument here is not about teleology of bodily organs or that it is always wrong to violate some teleology. It is about the natural teleology of assertions. Any action not ordered to its natural end is a disordered action. In asserting what one does not believe (which is by definition a lie), one is engaging in an action (of asserting) for an unnatural end (telling an untruth). Aquinas's argument against lying does not depend upon some notion of basic goods, but is intimately bound up with teleology. Tollefsen seems to miss the point of the Thomistic argument and, instead of exegeting Aquinas, appears to be doing an eisegesis.

In the final analysis, this book still deserves high praise. Tollefsen has charitably examined the major opposing arguments in enough (but not overwhelming) detail to give the reader a sufficient grasp of them. He has skillfully shown how the opposing arguments fail. He has presented many examples of what one can do instead of lying to the Nazis. He has explained why many non-linguistic deceptions are in fact not lies. This is an excellent book in spite of my disagreements. I highly recommend it—and that is not a lie. N·V

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¹ ST II-II, q. 110, a. 3: "cum enim voces sint signa naturaliter intellectuum, innaturale est et indebitum quod aliquis voce significet id quod non habet in mente" (the Latin of this text is given from the Leonine edition and the English translation is my own).