

Book Reviews

Benedict XVI, A Life: Volume 1, Youth in Nazi Germany to the Second Vatican Council 1927–1965 by Peter Seewald, translated by Dinah Livingstone (*London: Bloomsbury Continuum*, 2020), xi + 500 pp.

WHAT BETTER WAY TO SPEND Pope Benedict XVI's ninety-fourth birthday than by reviewing a Ratzinger biography while having *Apfelstrudel* and some traditional Bavarian beer?

German journalist and author Peter Seewald, who in his many interviews has asked Joseph Ratzinger / Pope Benedict XVI a total of two thousand or more questions (ix), has written a splendid biography that surprises even someone who has already read dozens of books by and about Benedict XVI. Written in an extremely enjoyable style and divided into chapters of just the perfect length, this page-turner deserves the highest praise. It will likely take its place alongside George Weigel's famous (and equally massive) biography of Pope John Paul II, *Witness to Hope*.

The German biography has been divided into two volumes in English (vol. 2 was just published in November of 2021). Volume 1 deals with the years 1927–1965, dominated by two historic "Twos": World War II and Vatican II. Theologically, this is the period of the progressive Ratzinger (regardless of whether he "converted" to a more conservative stance later on), or as Seewald puts it, a man formed by "liberal Bavarian Catholicism" (124).

Seewald provides lots of new and interesting information about Joseph Ratzinger, both bitter and sweet. One example from the early chapters concerns the origins of Ratzinger's mother. It turns out that she was an illegitimate child and not actually from South Tyrol, contrary to what her children had thought. A local historian has discovered that Ratzinger's mother Maria was actually born in Mühlbach "in the district of Rosenheim, . . . in a house that specialized in helping unmarried pregnant women to give birth" (15).

For the romantic, the sweetest story of the book comes when Seewald

pushes the reserved Pope Emeritus to reveal more about the “painful decisions” that the young Munich seminarian had to make in relation to his vocation as a celibate priest. “‘Were you in love with a girl?’ ‘Perhaps.’ ‘So, yes?’ ‘It could be interpreted like that.’ ‘How long did this passionate time last? A few weeks? A few months?’ ‘Longer’” (219). Ratzinger was in love! Or at least it could be interpreted like that! Other heart-warming details include the revelation that Ratzinger’s childhood teddy from Marktl followed him all the way to the Apostolic Palace, as well as the fact that, when his blind brother Georg (now deceased) needed a house-keeper, Benedict XVI personally organized the job interview in the Vatican gardens.

A darker episode, minimized in Ratzinger’s autobiographical memoirs, concerns his role in the radar crew of the German anti-aircraft forces in World War II. The future Pope was entrusted with the task of targeting British bombers. Seewald fills in the narrative: “Ratzinger delivered readings for three guns, . . . The more precisely Joseph measured, the higher the hit rate. As the war demanded” (101). Years later, Ratzinger confessed that these experiences still occasionally gave him sweaty nightmares.

Seewald goes on to describe the exceptional postwar context in which Ratzinger prepared for the priesthood. The future priests knew that they would soon have to hear confessions of ex-Nazis who had shot people in the war (153). Indeed, after the war, many old Nazis turned to the Church and attempted to get de-Nazification certificates. Ratzinger’s parish priest even joked that one day “they will say the only Nazis were the priests” (131).

As did everyone, Ratzinger also felt the effects of poverty in postwar Germany. Whenever a festive dinner had to be given for a visitor at the seminary, “we went hungry on the most meagre rations for four long weeks in order to gather the ingredients” (189). After a short period of pastoral ministry subsequent to his ordination, the stellar theologian went back to the seminary as a teacher. Barely twenty-five-years-old, he was younger than many of his students. Among the seminarians, Ratzinger was not only a popular lecturer but also a popular confessor, because he was so “broad-minded” (262).

Most people are not familiar with the image of the progressive Ratzinger, the liberal Bavarian Catholic. What is a liberal Bavarian Catholic? It is someone who explains the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles (Booths) as “a kind of *Oktoberfest*,” someone who traces the Bavarian yodel to St. Augustine’s concept of *jubilus*. “He introduced things that we had never heard of before,” said one of his students, while a close friend added: “Now at last someone had come bringing a new wind, a new style” (271, 273–74).

Another feature of this “left-wing Catholic” of the time was a “fearlessness about asking questions ‘which no one had dared to ask hitherto,’” especially on subjects such as ecumenism, which were regarded as a “mine-field” (272). In his first published article, Ratzinger stated plainly that the traditional interpretation of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (according to which all faithful Muslims go to hell because they do not belong to the Church) was simply inhuman and impossible to believe (298). Other sobering reminders of the ecumenical position (or lack thereof) of the Church Ratzinger grew up in include excommunication for mixed marriages (444) and (re)baptizing converts from Protestantism (110–11).

Perhaps the most significant contribution of this first volume of Seewald’s biography is that it shows just how influential Ratzinger was at the Second Vatican Council. Even as someone who has written a book about Vatican II and a doctoral dissertation about Ratzinger, I must admit that I had not realized the extent to which Vatican II was Ratzinger’s council. To me, Ratzinger was an important young *peritus*, but not much more than that.

In retrospect, though, it is shockingly simple. To put it bluntly: Ratzinger was Frings; Frings was the majority; the majority was the Council. Cologne’s Cardinal Josef Frings’s vision for the Council, as expressed in the famous Genoa speech, was endorsed by Pope John XXIII in 1962: “You have said everything that I’ve thought and wanted to say, but was unable to say myself” (361). But this speech, like virtually every speech Frings delivered at the Council, came almost “word for word from Ratzinger’s pen” (402). Previously known as a strict conservative, Frings now took on a new role as the leader of the Central European group that became the Council’s progressive majority. In order to get something through at the Council, one had to go to Frings: “To win him over was almost indispensable for anyone trying to organize any action in common” (443).

If there is a case that Seewald makes in this book, it is this: Ratzinger has belittled or underplayed his own contribution to the Council (461). Seewald ends with the claim that there was no “change” from a formerly progressive theologian into a reactionary thinker. “‘The true legacy of the Council lies in its texts,’ Ratzinger would never tire of saying” (463). Reading this, a thought came to my mind: “No wonder—he was behind them.” This is obviously an unjust simplification, and it sounds more like something a one-sided critic (whether Lefebvrist or Küngian) could make use of. But perhaps it is worth thinking about, if only as an objection to answer.

In terms of technicalities, it is natural that any work of this size and scope will have some errors in it. Some of the more frustrating factual

mistakes include calling St. Peter's Basilica a "cathedral" (336, 337, 394—the cathedral of Rome is St. John Lateran), claiming that the relationship between Catholics and Judaism was the subject of the schema *Gaudium et spes* (388; instead of *Nostra aetate*), and attributing Hagia Sophia to Emperor Constantine (197; instead of Justinian).

The English translation is, at least in my opinion, good and readable. Sometimes, there are traces of the German, such as in Francis *und* Dominic (245) and in the original title of Karol Wojtyła's *Love and Responsibility*, which was of course written in Polish (as *Miłość i odpowiedzialność*), not in German (cf. 217). Basic German (and Latin!) is also required to understand some of the young Ratzinger's jokes, such as when he "glanced at the menu and called out: 'Habemus Apfelmus!'" (147).

Having finished my Bavarian beer and Apfelstrudel, I can think of no better way to conclude this review, written on Ratzinger's ninety-fourth birthday, than to quote French theologian Yves Congar's assessment of the German *peritus*: "Fortunately, we have Ratzinger! He is reasonable, modest, unbiased and very helpful" (452). We can say the same about Seewald and his new biography. N.V

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Modernity as Apocalypse: Sacred Nihilism and the Counterfeits of Logos by Thaddeus J. Kozinski (*Brooklyn, NY: Angelico, 2019*), 231 pp.

WHETHER THE NAMES Adrian Vermeule, Fr. Edmund Waldstein, and Sohrab Ahmari provoke anxiety or glee in readers' minds will depend on where they stand on integralism, the brand of Catholic traditionalism that all three have sought to promote through various websites and publications. Presenting themselves as the authentic interpreters of magisterial teachings on church-state relations, the integralists have challenged the long-standing attempt (especially in North America) to combine the Catholic faith with a commitment to political liberalism, natural rights, religious liberty, and state neutrality toward religion. For the integralists, attempting such a combination succeeds only in distorting the Catholic faith and causes us to forget what the Church taught before the Second Vatican Council, which still obliges the assent of Catholics, they claim, and is desperately needed to stand against the onward march of secularism.

Although Thaddeus Kozinski, former professor at Wyoming Catholic College, may not be one of the more well-known integralists, his latest book presents an interesting iteration of Catholic traditionalism that displays both what is valuable and what is most worrying about contemporary traditionalism. Kozinski's previous book was a closely argued critique of John Rawls and Jacques Maritain using the thought of Alasdair MacIntyre. It built up a cumulative case for the impossibility of resolving the political problem of religious pluralism without moving beyond philosophy by making a decision to reject or accept the political importance of the Catholic Church and its teachings.¹ Although the author's preference for some sort of confessional state was already clear in that book, he preferred not to defend it, but rather to argue that it is impossible to be agnostic or neutral toward the ideal of church–state union. Now he goes on the offensive, presenting in the twenty brief chapters of *Modernity as Apocalypse* his “sundry attempts over the past decade to grapple with the question of modernity” (14). More precisely, he is grappling with the questions of what defines modernity, how we arrived at where we are, and what Christians should do while living in it, particularly in the fields of education and politics.

The two chapters that form the first part (entitled “Modernity”) use Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* to argue that modernity's increasingly pluralistic and secular culture creates “an entirely new incapacity to experience the reality of a particular worldview in a naïve way, that is, without the consciousness of there being other viable options” (37). Yet the problem also reveals a blessing. “Encountering reality through the lens of other perennial traditions can serve to expose that false dichotomy in our minds that leads us to interpret other views as nothing more than full-fledged errors and our own personal lenses as nothing less than the whole truth” (21). Anyone who has read what passes for commentary on websites such as *Church Militant* or *Rorate Caeli* will find that statement surprising and refreshing.

The second part (“Logos”) contains four chapters that lucidly discuss contemporary disagreements in ethics between Kantians and virtue-ethicists, between new natural lawyers and MacIntyreans. Chapter 4 makes an effective and moving argument to read Plato “as a precursor to Faith, and a guide along the way home” (50). There are some brief but suggestive remarks drawing on Benedict XVI's *Caritas in Veritate* in

¹ Thaddeus J. Kozinski, *The Political Problem of Religious Pluralism: And Why Philosophers Can't Solve It* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2010).

chapter 6 to argue that an ethics of gift can enable us to express the moral teachings of the New Testament in terms that are potentially convincing to a broader audience. “Metanoia” is the title of the third part, dedicated to education. Chapters 7–8 and 10 give not very original and yet timely arguments for the importance of the liberal arts, the need for Catholic universities to be institutions that can foster, rather than deform, the practice of philosophy, and the need for pedagogy to be rooted in the transmission of a community’s tradition.²

However, one cannot help but be startled when arriving at this sentence in chapter 9: “Regardless of what the ‘scientific community’ now holds to be indubitable, I have yet to come across any scientific evidence that conclusively proves evolution or an old earth, and even today a serious case can be made for a motionless earth at the centre of the universe” (100).

The impression we get from the previous chapters of the author as a well-read, open-minded traditionalist leave us wholly unprepared for this. The quotation is found in a chapter entitled “Catholic Education and the Cult of Theistic Evolution,” and if Kozinski’s purpose were merely to remind us that the macro-evolution of species is not an a priori fact but a hypothesis that needs to be weighed by the evidence, then I would not object. But high-handedly dismissing the scientific consensus in the aforementioned quotation and making bizarre claims about “the soft blood tissue found in dinosaur bones” (104) without any references or evidence make us think the author rejects what he does not care to understand.

Part 4 (“Keep Yourself from Idols”) begins by rehearsing some useful arguments expressed in Kozinski’s previous book on the impossibility of being agnostic or neutral about “whether God has communicated His will to man regarding the political order”:

The absence of such a judgment on this matter is a judgment. By not prescribing an authoritative role for political theology, both MacIntyrean Thomism and pragmatic, secular liberalism effectively deny that God has spoken authoritatively regarding the proper construction of the political order. (127)

Chapter 12 continues in this skeptical vein using MacIntyre and William Cavanaugh to turn against the American Constitution, attacking

² Regarding the last point, Kozinski echoes some of the same arguments made by Luigi Giussani in *The Risk of Education: Discovering Our Ultimate Destiny* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2019).

it for being an expression of Lockean liberalism from its inception and hence creating a state capable of securing only instrumental private goods, instead of the common good. Kozinski's lack of due proportion in his estimation of the modern nation-state could have been corrected had he read his hero MacIntyre's work more closely. In the following chapter, Kozinski expresses his bafflement at why MacIntyre, the relentless critic of liberal individualism and of the modern state's pretensions, should have defended the nation-state's use of coercion "in the realms of health, education, military service, and public speech" (140) in a plenary lecture at the University of Notre Dame in 2015. Yet, if anyone reads beyond *After Virtue* and *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, as Nathan Pinkoski has definitely shown,³ one can see that MacIntyre tempers his critique of liberalism by recognizing that there are no alternatives to liberal political institutions and that it was right for those institutions to arise to address the "arbitrary coercive power, unjustified hierarchies, and insufficient respect for the individual"⁴ of medieval Europe. Kozinski could also see in MacIntyre's latest book that MacIntyre still believes the good can be pursued within, and under the authority of, modern political institutions.⁵

Unfortunately, the number of unbalanced and even outlandish claims increases in the following chapters. References to "the Rulers in the Deep State" and "official government narratives, such as IXXI" (both 157) in chapter 14 distract attention away from Kozinski's reasonable criticisms of the conservative Christian commentators who turned against Kim Davis. Chapter 15 makes many justifiable criticisms of conservative Catholics for failing to think with the mind of the Church, rather than according to the policy agenda of the Republican Party. Yet one cannot help but be disturbed by that same chapter's repeated criticisms of the official explanation of 9/11 (167) and of Zionism and the State of Israel (165–67). The remaining chapters use Girardian thought to claim that modernity has an apocalyptic quality because we can see developing a subversion of Christianity's defense of victims into an even worse form of scapegoating, which seeks to identify the victims of its violence as putative aggressors. What analytic power this idea may have had, however, is buried under the frankly ridiculous claim that 9/11 was a watershed moment in a global plan "by

³ Nathan Pinkoski, "Why Alasdair MacIntyre Is Not a Conservative Post-Liberal," *The Political Science Reviewer* 43 (2020): 532–64.

⁴ Pinkoski, "Why Alasdair MacIntyre Is Not a Conservative Post-Liberal," 553.

⁵ See especially Alasdair MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity: An Essay on Desire, Practical Reasoning, and Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 176–83, 243–315.

the elitist puppeteers of academia, religion, bureaucracy, and media” (182) or “Western military, financial, and governmental elites” (215). Kozinski’s use of the roman numerals IXXI to refer to 9/11 is telling: a quick search online refers us to countless absurd and predictably anti-Semitic theories using the numerals IXXI as a means to discover the sinister interests orchestrating events behind the scenes. Kozinski even raises the possibility that the widespread incredulity toward certain conspiracy theories could be considered to be a sign of their truth, proving that the culprits have done everything in their power to sow skepticism toward anything that might draw attention to their activity (170). It is disheartening too that these final chapters do not refer to peer-reviewed books or articles in the footnotes as often as to blogs and other internet scribblings.

One could mention other problems, such as Kozinski’s tendency to imitate John Milbank in piling up adjectives, abstract nouns, and –isms one after another, or the lack of an index and bibliography. But clearly the most disconcerting thing about *Modernity as Apocalypse* is seeing how the traditionalist rabbit-hole can lead a well-read, well-educated mind to search credulously for answers in the online swamp. It is true that, like many of the more prominent traditionalists, Kozinski perceptively brings to our attention the need to search more deeply into the Tradition of the Church on church–state relation, and to put liberalism and (ostensibly) secular political systems under greater scrutiny than we have tended to do. Yet I feel a secondhand embarrassment for the eminent scholars, such as D. C. Schindler, Glenn Olsen, and Michael Hanby, who have written endorsements for Kozinski’s book, presumably (one hopes) without reading much of the book. For Kozinski has shown us that, when Christians encounter the horrors of our age and the senseless violence that continues to be carried out in ever-more creative and unsettling ways, they face a choice. One may either take the narrow path of continuing to believe by faith in Providence, in spite of these many signs to the contrary, or one can turn aside to the security offered by the certainties of esoteric conspiracy theories. N.V

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Dogma and Ecumenism: Vatican II and Karl Barth's *Ad Limina Apostolorum* edited by Matthew Levering, Bruce L. McCormack, and Thomas Joseph White, O.P. (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press of America Press, 2020), ix + 369 pp.

IN MAY 1966 KARL BARTH visited Rome. He was invited to reflect on the Second Vatican Council, to ask questions to leading curial figures, and *peritus* theologians, as well as Pope Paul VI. Barth's book *Ad Limina Apostolorum: An Appraisal of Vatican II* contains his questions and an account from Barth of his visit, along with some other important essays. It is still deeply challenging in its incisiveness, despite its brevity. I have always been struck by Barth's Marian criticisms that are so central to his viewpoint about divine agency and human cooperation. These give us an excellent insight into his ecclesiology. They represent the reasons for much of his questioning of various Roman Catholic positions on all sorts of matters. Eberhard Busch's diaries, while Barth's assistant during this period, form a fascinating complimentary account of the visit. These tell of the not-so-fruitful visit to Augustin Cardinal Bea and the great highpoint (for Barth) of his one-hour audience with Pope Paul VI. Barth was impressed by the Jesuits during his visit, but not so much by the Dominicans. He thought the latter had absorbed too many streams of liberal modernity. The two Dominicans participating in this book turn those tides. Indeed, all the authors could be located within the conserving wings of their ecclesial membership, which makes the volume all the stronger in raising serious unresolved disagreements and noting important common ground. It is testimony to Barth's enduring value that this volume seems so timely. The Barth Centre at Princeton and the Pontifical Faculty of the Dominican House in Washington were the sponsors of this collection.

The volume is structured around five of the key documents commented on by Barth, with a Catholic and Reformed voice reflecting on both the particular document and Barth's input (with the exception of Francesca Aran Murphy, who deals with George Lindbeck rather than Barth), thereby simultaneously pushing forward the Catholic–Reformed engagement with the Council and with Barth. There is a preface with a penetrating introduction by Thomas Joseph White, O.P., and an irenic opening chapter by Matthew Levering on biblical renewal at Vatican II. Then follow the twin reflections on the five documents.

First (and rightly so) comes the Dogmatic Constitution on Revelation, *Dei Verbum*. Katherine Sonderegger develops a nuanced reflection on the metaphor of Scripture as mirror of God (found in *Dei Verbum*), showing

a deep appreciation of currents within *Dei Verbum* that Barth had not detected, but which are more connective with his concerns and preoccupations. Lewis Ayres rather impishly takes what Barth saw as the main weakness of the text (its chapter 2: "Handing on Divine Revelation") and makes it the greatest strength. Ayers provides a deeply learned and original exploration of the concept of "tradition" as sacramental. In this duet, Barth comes out looking like he may have missed hearing the melodies while too closely studying the score.

Then follow two profound essays on *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. Christoph Schwöbel builds up a strong Protestant case for the necessary visible ecclesial identity of the Church, thus showing a deep convergence without denying differences that remain. White, in a deeply insightful and probing essay, goes to the heart of the ecclesiological difference between Barth and Yves Congar (and some other key Catholics at the time): the relationship between uncreated divine agency and created human agency, especially within the context of the post-apostolic Church. White suggests that, without some stable ecclesial mediations, there can be no proper relationship envisaged between the transcendent causality of God operating in Christ and the created, active cooperative acts with this grace. While building up both a metaphysical and a theological case against Barth's criticisms, White graciously registers how Barth's worries are a strong reminder to some Catholic interpreters of the Council.

After these two dogmatic constitutions come the Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate*. It is slightly puzzling that the essays in the collection were not ordered as per their importance or their theological architecture. Can a declaration be more significant than a pastoral constitution or a decree? Not according to the bishop's conference attending to the authority of Vatican II documents in 1980 which said that the constitutions should guide our reading of the decrees, and at a lower level of authority, the declarations. Regarding the theological ordering, within the Council, *Lumen Gentium*, a Dogmatic Constitution, treats other Christians first in §15, followed by non-Christians in §16, as both of these topics rely on the nature of the Church in §14. This mirrors Paul VI's *Ecclesiam Suam*, which was the background to §16. Barth's *Ad Limina Apostolorum* respected these gradings and ordering, and the powerful impact of this volume would be better heightened were that ordering followed.

Bruce L. McCormack brilliantly draws out a type of Barthian critique against the assumption that the God of Islam is the God of Christians,

a take-home message often claimed to be deduced from both *Lumen Gentium* and *Nostra Aetate*. “God” does not exist outside the grammar and economy of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and thus there needs to be a much stronger case if it is to be assumed that Muslims are actually referring to the Christian “God,” especially as they explicitly reject the Incarnation and Trinity. It should be noted that Jews reject the incarnation and trinity, so in itself, those are not reason enough to deny the “same God.” Bruce D. Marshall, in the complementary essay, makes a double case, agreeing with Barth—explicitly and implicitly. The explicit agreement lies in criticizing the grouping of Judaism with non-Christian religions in both *Lumen Gentium* and *Nostra Aetate* as if the *sui generis* nature of Judaism did not demand separate treatment. Marshall is aware of the intense political and social pressures on the Vatican from both Arab states and Eastern Christians to derail any separate document on the Jews. This in part explains the conflation of “Jews” and “non-Christians.” It was Paul VI’s genius to navigate the Scylla and Charybdis of, on the one hand, a “pro-Jewish seen as anti-Arab” position, and on the other, the “saying nothing about the Jews after the Holocaust would be a scandal” concern. After Paul VI’s trip to the Holy Land during the Council recess, when the Jewish document was held back because of the dispute, Paul VI had been received warmly by Muslims in the West Bank and Jordan. It is said that he suggested to Bea on his return that, whenever the Jews are mentioned, so should be the Muslims. That way, the document might see the light of day and could not be judged as partial. The implicit agreement with Barth lies in Marshall’s fine treatment of the non-salvific value of “other religions,” while nevertheless affirming that there may be related to the Paschal mystery (*Gaudium et Spes* §22). On this, Marshall adopts the language of Charles Journet, which is indeed fruitful, but perhaps he might have helpfully related it to the language of implicit desire that was the main currency for addressing this question prior to the Council. Marshall rightly criticizes the Rahnerian reading that has often been imposed on the Council documents.

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, chapters display a profound ecumenism—borrowing from each other’s traditions to further plumb the depths of the documents. Reformed theologian John R. Bowlin employs Aquinas to engage with the ambiguous currents running within the pastoral constitution. Bowlin locates human dignity and rights within the natural-law tradition. In doing so he deftly responds to Barth’s questions to *Dignitatis Humanae*. Murphy continues this reading of *Guadium et Spes* through the eyes of Lindbeck—who it turns out, in Murphy’s view, profoundly misread the document. This

continues her long-running battle against narrative theology. The essay could have been tied to Barth to enhance its value in the collection, but it is nevertheless deeply provocative and creative.

The final three pieces of the book turn to ecumenism, the subject matter that perhaps should have followed the doctrine of the Church. These chapters are well worth waiting for. Hans Boersma renews Barth's questions but lets them bite deeper. He wonders whether *Unitatis Redintegratio* can ever deliver if it fails to allow for any real modification of minor doctrines in the hierarchy of truths or grant legitimate plural and even incompatible expressions of them. He argues for an eschatological unity of the Christian churches, as a recognition that the full visible expression of unity is always going to be hampered by human inability and sin. Reinhard Hütter, in stark contrast, shows that all of Barth's questions to *Unitatis Redintegratio* were addressed in John Paul II's *Ut Unum Sint* (1995). Hütter goes further. He suggests that, had Barth engaged with Newman's account of the development of doctrine, he might have seen anticipated the Roman Catholic responses to his challenges. As does White, Hütter develops an acute criticism against another aspect of Barth's presuppositions. Barth falsely presumed that Catholics could not accept that the Church should not serve its own word and cannot seize or possess or control that revelation that is always spoken. In Newman's idea of the development of doctrine, Hütter argues, we find the way Barth's presuppositions are kept intact, but development, not dialectics, becomes the means by which revelation is constantly attested to and safeguarded within the Church. Here, as with some of the other couplet essays, it would have been instructive to have had very brief comments from each Roman Catholic and Protestant contributor on each other's essay. This collection ends with a gem from Richard Shenk, O.P., who has the capacity of historically contextualizing disputes with great penetration.

This volume is a must for anyone concerned with Barth, Vatican II, and Catholic–Reform dialogue. N.V

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The Trinitarian Christology of St. Thomas Aquinas by Dominic Legge, O.P. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), xvii +261.

DOMINIC LEGGE'S INTERESTING and valuable *The Trinitarian Christology of St. Thomas Aquinas* provides exactly what its title suggests: an account of how Aquinas's Christology is, at heart, Trinitarian. Although certainly not polemical in tone, the book does have what might be called a polemical purpose: Legge wants to push back against authors who see Aquinas's understanding of the Incarnation as divorced from his understanding of the Trinity. But this negative aim is subordinated to the positive, concomitant aim of showing how, for Aquinas, the Incarnation and the inner life of the Holy Trinity are not two separate topics, best given independent treatment in separate "treatises," but instead intimately related. Christology, for Legge's Aquinas, is "Trinitarian theology clothed in flesh" (237).

The book has three main parts. In the first, Legge lays out background material on the Trinitarian missions. Crucial for Legge is to emphasize that, for Aquinas, the missions "extend" the eternal Trinitarian processions into time. Legge strongly opposes any suggestion that, for Aquinas, processions are one thing while missions are another, with any connection between them being at best contingent and accidental. Key points in this section include the following. A mission of a divine person is that person's eternal procession together with a new created effect in a rational creature. This created effect, while caused by the Trinity as a whole, relates the rational creature to the sent person individually, insofar as it causes that rational creature to resemble the Son, by wisdom, or (as the case may be) the Spirit, by charity. Furthermore, such missions not only relate creatures to a divine person but also draw them to that person. All this applies both to the "invisible" missions (invisible because the effect in the creature—e.g., grace in the soul—is not perceivable by the senses) and to the "visible" missions, such as the Son's coming in the flesh.

In the second part, Legge shows how this material applies to the mission of the Son. Much of the discussion here is focused on the question of why it was the Son who became incarnate, and not the Father or the Spirit. Legge is at pains to show that, although Aquinas does allow that a different Person could have become incarnate, we utterly fail to understand Aquinas unless we see that, for him, it was most fitting that the Son became incarnate; furthermore, had it been another divine person that became incarnate, salvation would have taken place very differently. Putting things the other way around, the Incarnation as we have it is thoroughly marked

by the fact that the one who became incarnate was the Son—the one who receives everything from the Father and who sends his own Spirit so as to lead us back to the Father.

In the third part of the book, Legge turns to the relations between Christ and the mission of the Spirit. This material can be divided into two parts. First, there is the mission of the Spirit to the man Christ himself. *Qua man*, Christ is sanctified (ch. 5), he has beatific and infused knowledge (ch. 6), and he acts in a theandric (divine and human) way (ch. 7). All of this, for Legge's Aquinas, is true not merely on account of the hypostatic union, but also on account of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to Christ as man, gifts by which Christ is made internally capable of acting in a supernatural way, and gifts by which Christ is led by a Person distinct from himself, namely, his own Spirit. Second, there is the mission of the Spirit to other humans (ch. 8), ultimately aimed at drawing believers back to the Father. In this mission, the Spirit is sent not only from the Father, but from the Son as well. Flagging a development in Aquinas's thought, Legge emphasizes that Aquinas came to hold that the Spirit comes from Christ not only as God, but also as man. Thus our sanctification is mediated by Christ's.

This book should be no one's first book on Aquinas's theology, and maybe even no one's second. It more or less presupposes that the reader already has a fairly firm grasp on the basics of Thomistic Christology and Trinitarian theology; background explanations are very brief. For example, we are told that "the visible mission of the Son is necessarily accompanied by the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit" (17). For readers who already know about the distinction between visible and invisible missions, saying this is perfectly fine, but readers who do not already know about the distinction will probably find the quoted passage confusing, at least until the point is brought up explicitly (24). Again, a point is made that turns on the distinction between created and uncreated grace (26), but what that distinction amounts to does not start to become clear for a few more pages.

To make another point about the kind of book this is, Legge's account is more expository than critical. The example that most stands out for me here has to do with the very idea that missions are temporal extensions of processions. The broader theological issue can be put as follows: Does the ancient principle that all three Persons act as one principle *ad extra* mean that, in the end, soteriology is best understood in a unitarian fashion? The answer, it seems, has to be "no"; and yet, how are we to distinguish different soteriological roles for the different Persons without abandoning divine simplicity, or even lapsing into full-on tritheism? Legge does a good job of laying out Aquinas's basic claims and relating them to various issues in

Christology, but he might have gone further in working out the details, and in asking whether Aquinas's proposal is satisfactory. I say this not as a criticism of the book, but simply as a description of the type of book it is. The broad question—to the study of which this book is an important contribution—is immensely difficult and in need of much further inquiry, both on the systematic level and in terms of the historical sources. (Scholars may want to put to the test Legge's suggestion that setting Christology in a Trinitarian context is a "unique hallmark" of Aquinas's Christology [14]).

And for a third general remark about the book: it ranges very widely through the Thomistic corpus, including the Scripture commentaries. I found myself wondering at times why so many of the most interesting points seemed to come from the *Sentences* commentary—why, in other words, did Aquinas seemingly not see fit to reassert these points later in his career? But developmental questions such as these are not the main focus of Legge's investigation.

Of all the book's chapters, I most appreciated the fifth. It does a very nice job of cutting through a false dichotomy that has bothered a lot of theologians: does the holiness of Christ *qua* man come (merely) from the union of his human nature to his divine nature, or does it come (instead) from his receiving, *qua* man, the gift of the Spirit? Legge lays out nicely how, for Aquinas, it's an error to choose one over the other. Yes, the gift of the Spirit is required so that Christ's humanity could be elevated in an authentically human way (see, e.g., 168), but the hypostatic union could not have happened without the Spirit being given as well, according to "a necessity that goes beyond fittingness. . . . the Word is never present without his Holy Spirit" (159).

I confess to finding myself frustrated by chapter 6's account of the Spirit's role in Christ's knowledge. If the account of the missions given in the book's first part is to be believed, then it seems we ought to say that Christ's supernatural knowledge is a result of a mission of the Word, not a result of a mission of the Spirit (inasmuch as knowledge would seem to assimilate us to the Word, rather than to the Spirit). Legge brings up this worry himself (179–81), but the response seems to be merely that the Spirit is efficient cause of Christ's knowledge. Drawing on Legge's own presentation (21–23), it seems this would not be sufficient for saying that Christ's having that knowledge is a case of the Spirit's being *sent* to him.

At times, the book's formulations are not as clear as one might have wished. For example, sometimes we hear that a mission involves a creature's being assimilated to the Son or the Spirit *himself* (e.g., 31), but sometimes we hear that a mission involves a creature's being assimilated to *the*

procession of the Son or the Spirit (e.g., 34, 39). For another example, we sometimes hear of Christ's human nature being related to the Son according to personal *esse* (e.g., 108–9), and sometimes we hear of Christ's human nature being related to the personal *esse* of the Son itself (e.g., 111, 112). As illustration of the second case, notice the quick shift in the following: “St. Thomas understands Christ's human nature to belong uniquely to the Son: that humanity has a relation to the Son ‘according to *esse*.’ What is this ‘personal *esse*’ in which Christ's human nature terminates?” (106–7). If we keep divine simplicity in view, of course, we will have to say that the distinction between a Person and his procession is a subtle one, and likewise for the distinction between the Son and the Son's personal *esse*. But that does not license us to exchange terms at will. In places like these, more commentary and clarification would have been helpful.

Let me finish by returning to the big picture. For Legge's Aquinas, the Son's temporal mission as incarnate Logos is not something merely added to, but is rather an extension of, his procession from the Father; it is, in Legge's formulation, “the Son's Trinitarian procession as extended into time” (237). Furthermore, while of course the Spirit's temporal mission (an extension of the Spirit's procession) as sanctifier, illuminator, and so on, is aimed at all humans, it takes a special form in the case of Christ himself: the Spirit is “an indispensable principle of the elevation of Christ's human nature” (6), and it is only as Spirit-filled that Christ sends the Spirit to others for the sake of their sanctification. To repeat, Christology on this approach is “Trinitarian theology clothed in flesh” (237): “The processions of the persons are the *ratio*, cause, origin, and exemplar of both creation and salvation” (228).

This book is an extremely useful contribution to our understanding of Aquinas's Christology and his Trinitarian theology. No doubt many will continue to say that, for Aquinas, Trinitarian theology exists in a hermetically sealed realm, never to be joined to the salvific life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. But now that we have this book, their ignorance will be culpable. N.V.

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What Does It Mean to Believe? Faith in the Thought of Joseph Ratzinger by Daniel Cardó (*Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2020*), xv + 116 pp.

FATHER DANIEL CARDÓ'S BOOK *What Does It Mean to Believe?* is a concise and penetrating synopsis of Joseph Ratzinger's theology of faith, especially "faith as an act" (7). As any reader familiar with Ratzinger knows, the subject of faith or belief is the very axis on which his theology turns. Ratzinger identifies this question of belief as the impetus of his theological research: "I chose fundamental theology as my field because I wanted first and foremost to examine thoroughly the question: Why do we believe?" (13). Cardó has thus chosen the perfect topic to introduce readers to Ratzinger who might otherwise be too intimidated by the Pope emeritus's countless homilies, lectures, and writings. Yet, Cardó has not merely provided us with another introduction to Ratzinger; rather, we may justly apply the author's words regarding Ratzinger to this book and say that its "simplicity almost hides [its] erudition" (3). In this book, Cardó assembles what might be compared to a medieval *catena* or *florilegium*, as he gathers excerpts from a wide variety of Ratzinger's works and conveniently organizes them for the reader.

From the outset, Cardó contextualizes his book by presenting faith in God as the only adequate response to the contemporary scandals within the Church. In this way, he aligns his position with Ratzinger's 2019 essay on the sexual abuse scandal, wherein the Pontiff writes: "Only where faith no longer determines the actions of man are such offenses possible. . . . Ultimately, the reason is the absence of God" (5). Thus, the origin of this book, explains Cardó, is his conviction that "understanding more deeply the richness of the *act of believing* can help renew our faith" (6). Following his introduction, Cardó divides his book into three parts, each a different angle of approach to the act of faith.

The first part situates the act of belief in the context of two contemporary challenges, agnosticism and relativism, and explains how doubt (not as an act of defiance but as the experience of uncertainty) is a necessary, rather than incompatible, component to trust in God. In this section, Cardó draws heavily from Ratzinger's *Introduction to Christianity*, which remains an accurate assessment of faith's place in a secular society a half-century after it was first delivered as a series of university lectures. Moreover, Cardó summarizes Ratzinger's argument that we must reclaim a notion of faith not as a subjective feeling or opinion, but as a mode of accessing and entrusting oneself to a reality that transcends the human

capacity to examine empirically or recreate it and is for this reason the only sure ground on which to base one's life. Agnosticism and relativism, the twin diseases of our era, deprive humans of their only reliable existential footing. Cardó writes: "Without truth, it is impossible to believe with certainty in anyone or anything. The common inability to trust and to have deep interpersonal relationships . . . are some of the characteristics of a society that believes that one cannot believe anymore" (34).

In the second part of his book, Cardó considers the act of faith both as given by God and as received by humans. Just as God cannot be confined to human *techne* or *faciens*, neither can the act of faith be reduced to human effort; rather, Cardó writes, "faith is a gift that God gives to us, . . . [and] God's giving of the gift takes precedence over human initiative" (36). Faith, according to Cardó, is an "act that has the character of an answer: that is, it is a response to the initiative of God" (35). Cardó characterizes this response as encompassing the entirety of one's daily existence, which is carried out on the foundation of a *logos* that both causes and transcends human reason.

The third and final section of the book describes faith as personal, integral, and ecclesial. In short, faith in Christ is an encounter with a divine person that takes the form of friendship rather than philosophical theory. For this reason, the act of belief is integral, involving not just the intellect and the will but also the affective dimension of the human person. In other words, the whole person is involved in the act of faith, which draws man into a relationship with God. Lastly, Cardó explains that faith is not only an exchange between God and the individual; rather, faith is offered through a community, the Church, and incorporates the believer into a wider body of other Christians, both those still on earth and those who, having gone before us, walk alongside the Church today even in death (96). Cardó writes: "The Church is an environment of unity of faith, in which the 'I' of the believer is converted from a private to an ecclesial 'I'" (94).

In this unassuming book, Fr. Cardó lucidly introduces Ratzinger's theology of faith in a manner that demonstrates both the author's clarity of thought and his command of the vast body of Ratzinger's work. If Cardó were to extend his book, a section devoted to applying Ratzinger's diagnosis of the modern world to the unique challenges that faith faces in the twenty-first century would be appreciated. This suggestion, of course, detracts nothing from the work, as it is beyond the book's intended scope. Instead, and to his credit, Cardó takes a step back and allows the

reader to come into immediate contact with Joseph Ratzinger's answer to the question "What does it mean to believe?" NEV

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The Light that Binds: A Study in Thomas Aquinas's Metaphysics of the Natural Law by Stephen Brock (*Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2020*), xv + 277 pp.

HOW DOES THE NATURAL LAW fit the definition of law? Opinions clash among different interpreters of Saint Thomas Aquinas. Stephen Brock's book provides both a magisterial and a definitive answer to this question.

Like fine wine, this book has been fermenting and maturing for almost thirty years. Originally a doctoral dissertation, this recently published work has been rewritten, and to a certain extent, reworked by the author with respect to some of its content.

Without disregard for nuances, the first chapter introduces the reader to four different groups of Aquinas's interpreters. The first two groups question the full legal character of the natural law in its dependence to the eternal law. The third one questions its naturalness. The fourth group, instead, upholds both the divine origin of the natural law's full legality in its dependence on the eternal law, as well as its natural character.

Brock places Dom Odo Lottin, Wolfgang Kluxen, Germain Grisez, and John Finnis in the first group. They maintain that the natural law is a law only in a qualified sense and that it does not entirely fulfill the definition of law. The natural law would provide an intrinsic morality. It should be treated independently from the eternal law. The second group is composed by authors such as Frederick Copleston, Alan Donagan, or Gregory Stevens. Similar to the first group, they argue that the natural law is an autonomous self-standing law, legislated by human reason. Thus, it should be treated independently from the eternal law, except to point out its ultimate origin.

The author who exemplifies the third position is Ernest Fortin. Reacting against Finnis, Fortin's position jeopardizes the natural character of the natural law. In his view, the legal force of the first principles of practical reason is not fully actualized until one recognizes the divine institution sanctioning them.

All the authors of the fourth group uphold that the natural law is fully a law on account of its divine origin and that it is also entirely natural insofar as it is naturally known by human reason. Herein Brock places commentators of Saint Thomas such as Francisco Suarez, Dominic Farrell, Lawrence Dewan, and himself. He also includes in this last group other philosophers such as G. E. M. Anscombe and Peter Geach. In the course of his whole study, Brock shows how Aquinas's true position differs from the other members of this group. Special attention is given to the differences between Aquinas's true mind and the interpretations offered by Suarez, Farrell, and, to a certain degree, even by Dewan. In order to better appreciate the depth of this process, I have found it very helpful to read Farrell's *The Natural Law According to Aquinas and Suarez* in conjunction with Brock's work.

The second chapter targets the natural law's legal character in its dependence to the eternal law. It proves that Thomas provides a strict definition of the natural law when he says that it is nothing but a participation of the eternal law in the rational creature. This chapter opens with a historical study concerning the influence of the *Summa Fratris Alexandri* in the *Summa theologiae* (*ST*). Aquinas's understanding of the dependence of the natural law on the eternal law turns out to be more systematic and refined. It is based on a fuller comprehension and development of what law is (the *ratio legis*).

The remainder of the second chapter consists in a superb commentary regarding *ST*, I-II, q. 91, a. 2, on whether something existing in man is fit to be called a natural law. Promulgation is the element of the definition of law that specifies the different kinds of laws. Hence, the natural law is differentiated from the others by its *natural* promulgation, namely, by the act through which the order of the eternal law (already instituted by God) is transmitted to the rational creature. Natural reason shares in the rational character of the eternal law, thereby retaining the full form of law. Additionally, natural reason is natural to man. Therefore, it can be called "natural law." In this way, the natural law is not independent from the eternal law. The latter is a formal component of the definition of the former. Consequently, the natural law is "an ordination of divine reason, for the common good of the universe, promulgated to man, through the instilling of the natural light of his intellect, by God, the author and governor of the universe" (61).

Chapters 3–5 provide an affirmative answer to the following question: is man's natural practical knowledge sufficient to account for the natural promulgation of the natural law? Chapter 3 opens with a discussion on the

natural knowledge of the precepts of the natural law. All people understand its common principles. Yet, not all people know God's existence and attributes. Hence, the natural promulgation of the natural law must not entail the advertence of God. To follow Brock's argument, it is indispensable to distinguish the natural law functioning in man from man reflecting on it and calling it a "natural law." His argument is that the advertence of God is not needed in the first scenario.

These clarifications are followed by a detailed analysis of question 94 in *ST* I-II. The second article is left for a more extensive analysis in the following chapter. Nevertheless, Brock already explains the general outlook of the whole *quaestio*: it is a discussion on how natural law is a *natural perfection* of the intellect.

The notion of natural promulgation is further illustrated by comparing and contrasting the first precepts of the natural law with the precept of faith to believe in God. The infusion of the intellect on the rational creature is sufficient (natural) promulgation of the first precepts of the natural law: "The first impression of the command of the eternal law is a rational conception of the very order contained in the command, together with a natural inclination to act according to this conception" (77).

The first precepts of the natural law are grasped as rules and measures *ex ipsa ratione boni*. God alone has the power to give the natural law its natural force and remain its origin. God remains the source of the precepts of the natural law and of their binding force. He makes them binding in a *natural* way. Their *intrinsic* binding force is their *truth*. But the source of that truth does not presuppose it. Such a source is none other than the eternal law, viewed as a full-fledged law.

Thus, for instance, sins are bad because they are forbidden by God, not the other way around (see *ST* I-II, 71, a. 6, ad 4). "The command by which things are brought into being, God's creative fiat, must be understood not only as the work of an artist or a maker but also as the work of a governor and legislator" (92). Nevertheless, Thomas would hold that no knowledge of God being the source of the precepts of the natural law is needed for their binding force to be experienced, that is to say, for the natural law to function in man.

The reader familiar with the writings of Brock will realize that chapters 4–5 have been reworked in light of some articles written by the author after his dissertation and before the publication of the book. They can be divided into two main sets. The first set of articles concerns the famous text from *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2, on the precepts of the natural law and the natural

inclinations. The second set concerns the moral significance of the principle “art imitates nature.”

In contrast with other interpreters, Brock explains that the natural inclinations mentioned in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2, are inclinations of the human will which *result* from the natural knowledge reason has of their goods. Moreover, Brock explains the moral significance of the principle “art imitates nature,” pointing to the divine pedagogy and dispelling any fear of physicalism. God is the Author of the natures of irrational beings. Understanding how he guides them to their end is a good lesson for us to learn how to conduct ourselves toward our own due acts and end. We learn best, after all, from the nature of material things. Since they are the proper object of the human intellect, they are a very suitable pedagogical tools used by the divine teacher.

Chapter 6 offers a detailed argument concerning the binding force of the natural law apart from the explicit knowledge of God as its author. For the most part, the book concentrates on Aquinas’s mature views, expressed in the *Summa theologiae*. However, the main text commented on in this chapter is from *De Veritate*, q. 17, a. 3. Conscience binds with the force of a divine precept. And it does so through our knowledge of the precept (“in spiritualibus praeceptum non ligat nisi per scientiam”). But the precepts and their truth, or binding force, can be known even when the person does not yet know God as the ultimate source of those precepts.

Chapter 7 closes the book with an evaluation of the different positions within the fourth group of commentators in light of the analysis carried out in chapters 2–6. Special attention should be drawn to the evaluation made of Dewan and his apparent affinity with Suarez’s claim that an explicit knowledge of God is needed for the natural law to function in man.

In conclusion, Brock’s work is a definitive and mature demonstration of the legal character of the natural law and of its naturalness. Its aim was not to show the internal development of Aquinas’s thought on this subject matter. Yet, I believe that it would have been beneficial to do that, on one specific point: the “natural” knowledge we have of God (*In I sent.*, d. 3, q. 1, a. 2, ad 1; *De veritate*, q. 10, a. 12, ad 1; *Summa contra gentiles* I, ch. 11; *ST* I, q. 2, a. 1, ad 1; etc.). Perhaps, this would have contributed to shedding even more light on Dewan’s *apparent* affinity with Suarez. N.V.

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Modern Biblical Criticism as a Tool of Statecraft (1700–1900) by Scott W. Hahn and Jeffrey L. Morrow (*Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2020*), 312 pp.

ALMOST ANYONE WHO HAS SUFFERED through a course in biblical studies at a secular (or, increasingly so, Christian) university, read a book, or heard a lecture from one of its scholarly progenies is acquainted with the litany of hermeneutical absolutes. Among the *factum historicum* are the following certainties: the Enlightenment rescued the Bible from the Dark Ages; the Old Testament was shaped out of the mythical clay of Hellenism; Israel's priesthood was a lamentable development that hijacked an earlier, socially oriented love-of-neighbor religion, replacing it with its blood-thirsty, sacrificial cult; the Documentary Hypothesis is not merely a theory, but the scientific truth of how the Pentateuch emerged; one must separate the Jesus of history from the Christ of faith; Peter and Paul clashed over their dueling Christianities; and above all, historical criticism is the only reliable lens by which the Bible is to be studied.

In *Modern Biblical Criticism as a Tool of Statecraft (1700–1900)*, Hahn and Morrow expose such positivisms as the outflow of Europe's secularized universities over these centuries. Not only did politically motivated institutions seek to diminish the theological truths of Scripture (and sadly, were often successful at it), but they eventually repurposed the Bible as “a work of historical fiction,” such that the Sacred Page was “to be studied like other ancient myths and fairy tales; it is one fairy tale among many” (24). The authors present a thoroughly researched and meticulously detailed study of the period, and throughout the book amply demonstrate that the aforementioned tropes (and numerous others), no matter how often or how confidently recited, are merely one slant on “the story of biblical criticism” in the modern age.

Taking their lead from the lead of Pope Benedict XVI, Hahn and Morrow provide a much-needed critique of historical biblical exegesis and its “appearance of quasi-scientific certainty.”¹ These salient words of the biblical-theologian Pope, articulated in a variety of contexts (e.g., *Verbum Domini*), provide the jumping-off point for this robust three-hundred-page voyage. And it is a journey through *a divided and secularized Europe*, with notable stops in England, France, and above all, Germany. This “divided” Europe, the authors explain, was not a result of the Protestant

¹ Pope Benedict XVI, *God's Word: Scripture—Tradition—Office*, ed. Peter Hünermann and Thomas Söding, trans. Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008), 100.

Reformation, nor of the so-called “war of religions” that sprang from it—no. The divisions run much deeper still. Drawing upon Andrew Jones’s important *Before Church and State*, Hahn and Morrow rightly lament the societal competition that developed within late medieval Christendom between church and state.²

Building upon Jones’s work, the authors rightly stress that there indeed existed “a unified medieval worldview wherein what we might think of as temporal authorities and spiritual authorities were united in a single purpose—the extension of the kingdom of God—and this was the background that unified Christendom” (3). As Jones point out, this earlier period of European history “was a world not of the religious and the secular, but of the New Testament and the Old, of virtue and vice, grace and law. . . . *It was an integral vision which included all of societal reality.*”³ Sadly, the reality of “sacramental kingdoms,” in which there lived a reciprocal respect and vision of unity between throne and alter, was torn asunder long before the 1700s, the time at which the present volume commences. Over time, this formerly unified European world gave way to the very complicated, deeply skeptical, and highly politicized world of nation-states. And biblical criticism (along with many other worthy and creative endeavors), became deeply mired in “statecraft.”

Here, it is worth mentioning that the book should be approached as the rightful heir to an earlier volume (which involved one of its authors, Hahn), *Politicizing the Bible*.⁴ While *Modern Biblical Criticism* may be intelligently read upon its own merits, the reader would do well to pick up the earlier volume. One of the many contributions of the well-written earlier book is that it directs the reader’s focus back about four centuries. Whereas most studies of this sort discuss the birth of biblical criticism in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, *Politicizing the Bible* digs deeper, into the soil of thirteenth-century Europe, and much nearer to the burgeoning fissure between church and state (see above).

Behind *Modern Biblical Criticism*, then, is the groundwork laid in the earlier volume. As mentioned, Jones’ *Before Church and State* provides an additional pillar of historical support. Yet, undergirding both of these

² Andrew Jones, *Before Church and State: A Study of Social Order in the Sacramental Kingdom of St. Louis IX* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2017).

³ Jones, *Before Church and State*, 3 (emphasis added).

⁴ Scott W. Hahn and Benjamin Wiker, *Politicizing the Bible: The Roots of Historical Criticism and the Secularization of Scripture, 1300—1700* (New York: Herder & Herder, 2013). Hahn and Morrow indicate that a third volume is planned, presumably from 1900 to the present day.

formidable foundations is none other than Joseph Ratzinger / Pope Benedict XVI. It was indeed the prodigious Pontiff who lit the torch now carried by Hahn and Morrow (as well as by Hahn and Benjamin Wiker in the earlier volume). In this wider context, then, *Modern Biblical Criticism* is not only a grand achievement as a stand-alone study, but the next worthy installment in the ongoing and essential critique of biblical criticism.

Modern Biblical Criticism is eight chapters in length and includes both an introduction and a conclusion. Chapter 1 lays out the necessity of the study and the complicated nature of the task. Here, the authors summarize the main findings of *Politicizing the Bible*. It is far from redundant and not to be skipped over, even for those who have read the previous work, as it provides the proper historical backdrop to the present volume. Familiar figures dot the landscape of the earlier period (1300–1700), like William of Ockham, John Wycliffe, Martin Luther, and René Descartes. Hahn and Morrow unpack their key contributions, and along the way, introduce the reader to some lesser-known and surprising players, such as Marsilius of Padua, John Toland, and Niccolò Machiavelli—the last being a key influencer of the Henrician reform back in England. Although this chapter is something of a review, there is gold in its hills, and mining it is well worth one's time. It is presented in a straightforward, and even personal way, as Hahn and Morrow take turns in synthesizing the earlier work, commenting on it from their own angle of vision.

Chapter 2 begins the long ascent up the mountain of fresh, fascinating figures, along with socio-political developments, twists, turns, and surprises. There are several major take-aways here. The first is a finding which seems to have alluded most others: the changing nature of scholarly patronage in this period. This is no small detail. In fact, the “transformation of patronage” (30)—away from individual patrons of wealth and nobility to state-sponsored universities—resulted in the increasing weight and power of “the state,” and so exerted its influence upon biblical interpreters. In an eye-opening discussion, the authors carefully document the story and the “why” beneath it. The reader will appreciate the analysis of how modern biblical criticism found its initial footing in England, and not Germany as one might have believed.

Nevertheless, something innovative soon began in Germany that decisively swung the pendulum back in its direction. Specifically, German biblical critics found financial support from a new type of patron: the state-sponsored and state-controlled university. This had far-reaching and long-lasting implications such that “one is even tempted to quip that

Gottingen laid the egg that [the University of] Berlin hatched" (3).⁵ The second key insight in the chapter dispels the notion that there was anything like one, monolithic Enlightenment. Following Colin Brown, Hahn and Morrow explain the complex and multifaceted nature of Europe's *numerous enlightenments*. The chapter closes with an important exposé of the so-called dark(er) ages as anything but (through the looking glass, indeed).

Chapter 3 deepens the discussion begun earlier, and a particularly pivotal figure that emerges here is Johann Semler, one of the architects of modern criticism. Semler placed inordinate weight upon the faculties of reason to explain the Scripture. Yet, he went beyond other figures of his time by advancing the idea of mythological "condescension." As the authors explain, "thus, truths could be couched in mythology in order to facilitate their appropriation by the ignorant" (64). Semler proposed that Jesus himself engaged in such condescension, knowing "full well that there was no such things as demons. Rather [for Semler], Jesus behaved appropriately for that cultural context *in order to teach the deeper truths of God*" (64; emphasis added).

Chapter 4 goes on to explain the shifting nature of university studies. Included here is a helpful narrative about the "Academic Bible Versus the Scriptural Bible" (78–83), along with a review of Johann David Michaelis, who advanced the idea of Hebrew as a dead language. In chapters 5 and 6, the theme of a rising anti-Semitism (especially in Germany) begins to take on fuller force. In these later chapters of the book, Hahn and Morrow provide clear evidence that a "re-purposing" of the Bible was under way at Protestant, state-controlled universities. From the beginnings of Old Testament source criticism (Johann Eichorn, Jean Astruc) to its full flowering (Wilhelm de Wette, Julius Wellhausen), the authors describe the secularization and historicism of the Sacred Page which was playing out *en masse* across Germany and, more broadly, the European continent.

In chapter 7, the story of New Testament source criticism is by no means neglected, as Hahn and Morrow narrate the story of how the roots of Markan priority and the Q source lay in Wellhausen's presuppositions about the Old Testament. They walk the reader through the radical re-thinking of the "myth" of the Gospel (Heinrich Holtzmann, Hermann Reimarus) and conclude with David Strauss's attempts to demolish "the historical facticity of the Gospels" (180).⁶ By the end of chapter 8, Hahn and Morrow bring us

⁵ Citing Thomas Howard, *Protestant Theology and the Making of the Modern German University* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 88.

⁶ Citing Suzanne L. Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750–1970* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 221.

to the end of the nineteenth century, and to the undeniable anti-Catholic / pro-Prussian atmosphere of Otto von Bismarck's *Kulturkampf*. Unveiled here in all of its horror is what was allude to at the beginning of the book: "Far from emerging as a neutral and objective scientific method to get at truth, uncovering what really happened in the history the Bible tells us, modern historical-biblical criticism emerged from the work of multiple scholars over a period of centuries, each of whom were influenced by specific philosophies, theological leanings, and political motivations. . . . The biblical scholarship that emerged at the universities had state interests in mind" (23).

This richly informed volume is a pleasure to read. Hahn and Morrow take an objective, scholarly approach to the topic. A lesser volume might have felt cursory, dry, bookish. Though the text is accompanied by ample annotations and followed by a considerable bibliography, it never feels arid. The authors keep the story moving, and there is indeed a narrative structure to the book. *Modern Biblical Criticism* is lively and fresh in its presentation, and the authors' critiques land in a fair and charitable manner. Finally, while this book will be of particular interest to scholars and students of Scripture, Hahn and Morrow have made the volume accessible to a larger audience without compromising the immense value of its content. **N·V**

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John the Theologian and His Paschal Gospel: A Prologue to Theology
by John Behr (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019*), xv + 388 pp.

FATHER BEHR'S BOOK defies summary. Its ambitions span several fields—patristics, contemporary biblical scholarship, speculative systematics, phenomenology—and Behr has controversial proposals in each. The book is not (expressly) a work of systematic theology, but its speculative *élan* and its ambition to give a normative account of Christian theology's beating heart is unmistakable. If a vice of the book is vagueness on questions of burning Christological, protological, and eschatological interest, among its virtues is the verve and vividness with which it provokes such questions to begin with. Behr has written, not a book on John, but a Johannine manifesto on theology.

The book is a “symposium” in three parts, each inviting a different kind of reader of John’s gospel. The first is predominantly “historical” (the early Fathers of the Johannine school, reconstructed by modern scholarship), the second predominantly “exegetical” (contemporary biblical studies), and the third “philosophical,” with a single guest in Michel Henry. The book’s heart is an argument about what “incarnation” means. When it comes to the Incarnation, we labor, Behr says, under what Quentin Skinner calls a “mythology of doctrine,” the hermeneutical fallacy of projecting onto a tradition’s classical writers positions and whole doctrinal categories developed only later (6–8). The mythology of doctrine Behr opposes is, in fact, a mythological notion of the Incarnation as “an episode in the biography of the Word” (a phrase from Rowan Williams), the episode when a “pre-incarnate Word” is born as Jesus (3, and throughout). To break the ice on this mythology, part 1 reconstructs an original milieu for John’s Gospel—a school of John the Evangelist, centered upon an original Pascha celebration—in which “becoming flesh,” “Word,” and “human being” mean something other than the dogmatic meanings we project back onto them. This Johannine school is not the Johannine “community” posited by historical-critical studies, but the school of John’s “hearers” that J. B. Lightfoot traced from Polycarp of Smyrna, Ignatius of Antioch, Papias of Hierapolis, and Melito of Sardis down to Irenaeus (30–31). Behr’s reconstruction makes the following proposals. Our evangelist is John the Elder, the beloved disciple, not the Synoptics’ son of Zebedee. This John was plausibly an eyewitness to the crucifixion—alone among the evangelists. He authored both the Gospel and the Apocalypse bearing his name, according to near unanimous second-century tradition (76). The Apocalypse was possibly written before the Gospel, perhaps before the Temple’s destruction. John the Elder originated the yearly Pascha celebration, and it remained peculiar to his school until the second half of the second century. This feast originally celebrated the crucifixion, burial, resurrection, ascension, and Pentecost as the single event of the Passion, just as in John’s Gospel Jesus’s ascension (12:32), glorification (13:31–2), and “handing down the Spirit” (19:30) are identified with the crucifixion. Only later was the Passion’s simple white light refracted into the liturgical cycle’s rainbow of distinct feasts (91–92, 243).

This reconstruction is explicitly speculative. Its purpose is to enliven our imaginations about what the evangelist’s vision may possibly be. If the mythological picture of the Incarnation is easily recognized as false, our theological traditions still have not entirely exorcised it from their standard narration. Behr proposes a Johannine narration untroubled by this

mythology. The Incarnation is not a novelty occurring for God at some moment. No previously fleshless divine agent undergoes change to become flesh at some time. The Incarnation must instead be understood “apocalyptically,” as the eternal mystery of Jesus Christ being revealed for us in time (256–57). The Incarnation is Jesus’s eternal identity as the Word being revealed and wrought in time and *pro nobis* by the Passion (24, 29, 257, 130). John’s Gospel should be read, in John Ashton’s words, as “an apocalypse—in reverse, upside down, inside out” (4, 99, 108–9). This inside-out apocalypse aims not at unveiling a heavenly vision, but at unveiling Jesus the Crucified as the Son of Man uniting heaven and earth. This Son of Man sends the Holy Spirit to open the disciples’ eyes to see how “the formerly closed book” of the Scriptures and of Jesus’s life all speak of God’s eternal victory in Christ, the Apocalypse’s slain lamb (122; cf. 111–12). For John, the Cross is the “apocalypse of God” par excellence, and so this apocalyptic Gospel is a “paschal gospel”: the Passion reveals and accomplishes this eternal victory in time. Following Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, the Passion is “the ‘assumption’ or ‘ascension’ (ἀνάληψις) of Christ’s human nature into the divine reality, so that,” like iron white-hot in the fire, “it is no longer known by the properties of the flesh, but rather is thoroughly permeated by, and only known by, the properties of divinity,” even while “remaining the human flesh that it is” (29). Though we once knew Jesus according to the flesh, after “the transformative event of the Passion,” we know him thus no longer: he passes out of bodily sight, and we no longer know him as the son of Joseph from Nazareth, but as the divine Word and Eucharistic flesh of the Son of Man, invisible, living flesh available across time and space (26–27, 328; 2 Cor 5:16).

The Incarnation, then, is more about flesh becoming Word (in the Passion) than Word becoming flesh (29). The Passion deifies Christ’s humanity. In time, it reveals him to be the God-human he atemporally is. But his divine-human identity is not chronologically before or after his temporal becoming; it is not chronological at all. The *archē* of creation is precisely “the crucified Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ” (196, 264n63, 255–56; Rev 1:5, 3:14). The crucified and risen Lord Jesus, the divine-human Word, stands in no chronological relation of “before” or “after” vis-à-vis the order of temporal becoming. He is atemporally the *principium* of the whole order of temporal becoming (its exemplary and final cause, in language Behr does not use). His eternal identity is ontologically superordinate to his becoming in the world, so that, by his becoming (by what he does in the order of *oikonomia*), we come to know his atemporal identity (in the order of *theologia*) as God of God, the Word (248;

cf. 259–60). Although it pivots on the Cross rather than the annunciation, this picture of the Incarnation has nothing adoptionist about it, since the atemporal identity of Jesus as God of God is not in question (25–27).

In all this, Fr. Behr offers considerable grist for the mill for those strains of theology for which protology and eschatology are one and the same science, for which the *archē* of all things is their final end. “What we will be” is what we are in our first beginning, and creation is only completed at eschatological consummation. I suspect this basic vision is what motivates some otherwise puzzling arguments, like Behr’s insistence that early Christians positively did not understand the Passion as the culmination of a narratable, linear salvation history in any sense. The originary patristic impulse, Behr says, is to see the Scriptures (our “Old Testament”) not as a linear history, but as a “mosaic” whose tiles are arranged so that the glory of the crucified may shine in the Scriptures (125, 128). The eternal Gospel, Behr says, is “veiled under” the canonical Gospel narratives as a non-narrative exhortation which causes hearers to be reborn as Christ’s members (111–13). Certainly, reading the Scriptures theologically means seeing that they are not stories distinct from the Gospel, but rather encryptions of the Passion “unlocked” by the Cross (130). And one can surely say, as Behr understands Irenaeus, that the Scriptures are merely “myths” (even if historically true), so long as they are not read as the glorious Passion veiled under narrative (124). But a both-and position is possible here. One may both hold that the crucified and resurrected Jesus is the final and exemplary cause of the whole order of temporal becoming (and so hold that history’s “end” is its “beginning”) but also hold that there is a narrative order intrinsic to the gradual rendering-intelligible, in time, of that supra-temporal *archē*. This *archē* never comes to be in its eternal truth, but it still comes to be in time and *pro nobis*, and there must be an intelligibility to that coming-to-be.

In any event, chapters 3 and 4 give us an anthropology proportionate to this Johannine vision. It is a Christological, or “martyric,” anthropology. What is “finished” (John 19:30) in the Passion is God’s intention announced in Genesis 1:26: to make human beings in his image. The Incarnation in its widest scope is God’s creating the living human being—“the glory of God” (Irenaeus)—when, through our sharing in Jesus’s martyrdom by Eucharist, baptism, and discipleship, our flesh is joined with, and suffused by, Christ’s Spirit. Only when we pass (as Irenaeus says) from mere animated life to spirit-vivified life has the enspirited, enfleshed human being finally been completed in God’s image—in the image of Christ crucified, of whom the temporally prior Adam is the unfinished sketch (202–3,

211n33, 216). This martyrdom is the completion of the eschatological Temple (chapter 3): the ongoing enfleshment of God in those who “take up the cross to become his witnesses, born of God in their own martyrdom and born into life as living human beings” (5). Behr ends his exegetical part 2 with a rereading of John’s Prologue, the *locus classicus* for the mythological view he rejects. The Prologue is a “paschal hymn,” Behr says, a chiasmic summary of the Gospel’s narrative of Jesus on his way to glorification on the Cross. Verse 14 speaks not of the Word’s birth from Mary, but of the crucified and risen Jesus’s enfleshment in “all who received him,” tabernacling “in” them by baptism and Eucharist (v. 12).

Part 3 turns to the French phenomenologist Michel Henry. Behr finds in him the same unity of eschatology and protology. For Henry, what we are supratemporally is sons taking flesh in the Son. We are invisible flesh engendered in the arch-flesh—“the Arch-*Pathos*”—of the First Living One (279–80, 312). We come into true life only by returning to what we always are in our transcendental birth (316). And we make this return by undergoing the Son’s Passion as our own *pathos*, so “becoming flesh” with Christ and returning to this invisible life. The Word’s historical Incarnation in a visible body reminds us that our beginning and true birth is in this Word’s invisible flesh (302). Behr shows Henry to be suggesting something like what Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Maximus mean with their distinction between our creation by God (γένεσις) and our generation in the womb (γέννησις). In a “temporality. . . not of this world,” we are brought into life as flesh in the Arch-*Pathos* of the Son (our γένεσις) (295, 315–16). But in this same supratemporal moment, we reject, or “forget,” the Life into which we are engendered, and turn instead toward the world of appearances. We succumb to a “false egoism, in which the Ego considers itself to be the ground of its own life,” turning “from the source of life, Life itself.” We forget our true, filial self, grounded in the Word’s taking-flesh, and project into the world a paltry, egoistic “I,” absorbed in appearances (286). So says Maximus: Simultaneous with coming-to-be, the first human being turned the mind’s natural desire for God toward taking unnatural pleasure in perceptible things, and so brought about birth (γέννησις) as the entirely simultaneous consequence.¹ The material body is the “reflection or . . . projection” of our invisible flesh. For Henry, “there

¹ *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 61 (Behr, 319); see also *Ambigua ad Iohannem* 42.3–7, in *On the Difficulties in the Church Fathers*, ed. and trans. Nicholas Constas (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 2:124–34.

is no flesh without body,” but it is our flesh that is immediately vivified by God (295).

This vision is sure to find critics, and the systematic details of Behr’s proposals are not always clear. What is clear is that Behr makes a *tour de force* case for this vision being an *Ur*-form of Christian theology. N.V.

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