

Book Reviews

Jesus, Interpreted: Benedict XVI, Bart Ehrman, and the Historical Truth of the Gospels by Matthew J. Ramage (*Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2017*), 263 pp.

MATTHEW RAMAGE has shown himself to be a formidable exponent of the thought of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. In his *Jesus, Interpreted*, he situates Benedict's exegetical vision alongside that of Bart Ehrman—where skeptic and Pontiff alike receive an eminently fair hearing. By the end of the book, we have encountered not just a dispute over grammar and syntax—over historical inquiry itself—but of philosophical worldview. Ramage deftly brings out the centrality of these meta-questions, going so far as to say they more or less *determine* the exegetical outcome.

The beginning of the book takes one through a tour of how—at least on its face—revolutionary Ratzinger's exegetical project was: Ramage demonstrates the tension between Ratzinger's positions and those seemingly rejected by the Pontifical Biblical Commission at the early part of the twentieth century (27–37). Throughout, one is introduced to Ratzinger's exegetical program—where the emeritus Pope is shown to be at once a practitioner and admirer of modern historical-critical methods, and yet is at the same time their “incisive critic” (57–72, 233). If patristic biblical interpretation tended to focus on the divinity and unity of Sacred Scripture, modern historical methods tend to accentuate the diversity of human voices at the origin of the Bible.

As Ramage well notes, “Spiritual exegesis can go beyond the text of Scripture only after it has gone *through* the text by dealing with its literal sense” (60, emphasis original). If there is a perceived weakness in the patristic method, it is jumping too quickly to the spiritual. But as Ramage explains, Benedict clearly sees deficiencies in the modern approach as well: “Since faith is not a fundamental component of Method B [historical-critical] exegesis, those who employ this method sometimes miss the ultimate end, the very *raison d'être* of Scripture: the opportunity to encounter the living God who teaches man through his sacred word” (63).

The middle section of the book takes one through Erhman's historical-Jesus analysis, detailing and summarizing his arguments principally against the divinity of Jesus and the resurrection (101–44). This

is followed by a survey of Benedict's counter positions, providing what Ramage takes to be a reasonable exegetical alternative (145–93). Ramage distills Benedict's penchant for trying to discern the "core" of faith and his willingness to concede extraneous "accidental" aspects as non-essential—a case in point being Benedict's opting for John's chronology and his rejection of the Synoptic account that the Last Supper was in fact a Passover meal (160–61).

Another key feature that comes out—in contrasting Ehrman and Benedict—is the issue of development. For Ramage, the importance of Newman here could hardly be overstated. Ehrman's position is that Christology had its "Big Bang" within the first twenty years after the death of Jesus—at which point followers of Jesus began to believe in Jesus's resurrection and thereby mythologized the apocalyptic rabbi, setting forth a trajectory that would culminate in Nicea. But for Ehrman, of course, such a trajectory has very little to do with the historical Jesus. And for Ehrman, the whole question of "orthodoxy" has more to do with claims of power than it does truth. Ramage readily concedes development: the question is whether this development is the work of divine providence, leading the Church into an ever-deeper encounter with the truth (see 145).

Ramage likewise provides a similar analysis for the question of Christ's Second Coming. Here, too, Ramage is willing to concede Ehrman's point that the "second coming" is largely the result of a delayed imminent expectation of Christ's coming (198). Ramage takes the reader through Ratzinger's willingness to countenance this basic framework, while attempting to discern faith's essential core: "For Ratzinger this is the critical point: in dealing with the second coming, the biblical authors subordinate the question of timing to the question of how Christians ought to behave regardless of when Christ returns" (217).

Where Ratzinger is especially critical of modern approaches, as Ramage well lays out, is the tendency to disavow God's activity in the world—that is, an *a priori* presupposition that assumes at best deism, if not outright agnosticism/atheism. If one begins with this assumption, then of course one will have to find a merely human/natural explanation for miracle claims and the like (234).

The final chapter of Ramage's treatment is extremely well done: even more than other parts of the book, here he drills down on the essentially *philosophical* cruxes of the issue at hand. And here is where he returns once

again to this conviction of Ratzinger: “The debate about modern exegesis is not at its core a dispute among historians, but among philosophers” (232),¹ citing Ratzinger, “Biblical Interpretation in Conflict,” 19). Ramage follows with a discussion of the possibility of miracles and a fairly extensive treatment of the problem of evil. The latter is relevant because Ehrman notes that it was not historical-critical issues *per se* which led him to reject his Christian past—it was in fact the problem of evil (238). Ramage proceeds to show that the arguments drawn from either naturalism or the problem of evil do not have demonstrative force, though he does concede their *prima facie* cogency (see 251).

Overall, this is a fantastic work: rarely, does one find such theological acumen coupled with such exegetical and historical precision. Ramage is clearly comfortable in the Scholastic world of St. Thomas, as well as the exegetical framework of Bart Ehrman. This dexterity is needed if we are to move the exegetical and theological discussion forward regarding Sacred Scripture—if we are to engage and not ignore the modern question, and if we are to do so in a manner that avoids getting mired in an exegetical paralysis that sterilizes the Word of God.

Here, however, are a few questions: if it is really a matter of worldview first and foremost—as *determining* the position beforehand—then why enter into historical argumentation at all? It seems to me that we argue over things when we assume reason has something to say about the matter; after all, we do not *really* argue over flavors of ice cream (because we realize this is a matter of mere taste). But we do engage in moral argument; and like exegesis, there is wide disparity and seemingly no public consensus. And worldview certainly affects this discussion. But if we attribute the debate entirely to worldview (whether morally or historically about Jesus)—to the mere opting for one worldview over another—it would seem that it is utterly fruitless to enter into public debate and argumentation; it would seem that this debate is (and should be) settled at a non-rational level. Now, this is not Ramage’s position and he does give discussion as to how one might adjudicate between worldviews (see 237ff.); but I wonder if he is conceding too much to the influence of worldview as it concerns historical argumentation. For example, one might say Ramage lets Ehrman off the hook when the latter says the resurrection cannot be proved (see 234). Ramage writes: “This indeed is why we call it faith, not science” (234). Ramage does discuss the Thomistic teaching on external helps (say

¹ Citing Ratzinger, “Biblical Interpretation in Conflict,” in *Opening up the Scriptures: Joseph Ratzinger and the Foundations of Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Luis Sánchez Navarro (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 19.

historical argument here) and internal helps (e.g., divine grace) when coming to faith (235). And he is no doubt correct here.

But—especially as it pertains to history (and especially ancient history)—is the dichotomy between faith and science all there is? In other words, if we mean by “proof” something that might happen in a physics lab (or a philosophical demonstration), then of course there is no “proof” of the resurrection. But if we recognize upfront that historical inquiry (secular or otherwise) is not subject to this kind of “proof” at all—since it is always a matter of taking something on the testimony of another (since we were not there)—then is it not possible that a reasonable historical argument could be made for, say, the resurrection that is just as cogent as one made for some other aspect of ancient history? Just because the non-believer does not accept it does not mean it is a bad argument. And since history deals with particulars, historical “proof” is never demonstrative in the sense of *episteme*, whether sacred or profane.

In other words, if we have a high Cartesian bar of proof, then of course these matters are not subject to proof; but if such a bar is not in any way appropriate to the discipline of history, then historical affirmations about Jesus do not instantly become a matter of pure faith. In fact, perhaps some of them could be reasonably supported—that is “proved” in a manner appropriate to the standard of ancient history (which I would take to be *plausible/reasonable belief*).

Ramage cites Michael Bird, who advocates for a “criterion of historical plausibility” (125); one can find a similar position in Brant Pitre.² Such a criterion lowers the bar of what we mean by “proof”—one which in fact is more realistic with respect to history—in which case we could say that even things like the resurrection might be eminently *reasonable* at the level of historical analysis.

That said, in order to come to saving faith in Jesus, one certainly needs the movement of grace. But perhaps natural reason could aver that it is more reasonable to say Jesus rose from the dead than that he did not. If we do not accept this, then we should stop writing historical treatments on the resurrection and the like; I take it that we continue to do so precisely because we believe reason has something to say on the matter—that it is not *just* a matter of philosophical worldview, and that historical argumentation can be *convincing*.

I do not think Ramage would dispute my point here, but his text does suggest that he is perhaps less sanguine about the enterprise than I might be. He is completely correct to say that if one assumes an atheistic

² E.g., Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 41.

worldview then certain explanations will be a priori out of bounds (e.g., the miraculous). And to that extent, it is a debate about worldviews. But is atheism really *natural* reason's true starting point? As a Thomist, I take it that natural reason can know that God exists—and thence it must be at least possible that he could interact in history in unique, supernatural ways. If that is the starting point of natural reason, then it seems to me possible that a rational defense—even a proof (properly qualified)—for the resurrection could be mustered.

Again, on the whole *Jesus, Interpreted* is required reading for anyone interested in these issues. Its merits lay in a thoroughly charitable and meticulous treatment of the exegetical arguments involved, in conjunction with an in-depth analysis of the philosophical issues at hand. In addition, it is always nice to be reminded what a first-rate thinker our emeritus Pontiff was (and still is)—Ramage displays this nicely! 

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Commentary on Thomas Aquinas's Virtue Ethics by J. Budziszewski
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), xxvii + 295 pp.

J. BUDZISZEWSKI'S *Commentary on Thomas Aquinas's Virtue Ethics* follows his similarly structured 2014 *Commentary on Thomas Aquinas's Treatise on Law*. But while the earlier commentary, over 500 pages long, works straight through all of questions 90–97 of the *prima secundae* and is supplemented by an additional 250-page online commentary, this commentary is shorter, highly selective, and lacks a supplemental online commentary. And since the first half considers selected articles on the virtues in general, while the second half considers selected articles on justice, the *Commentary on Thomas Aquinas's Virtue Ethics* itself feels like a supplement to the earlier law commentary. After describing its overall content and structure, I will comment on how useful it might be for its intended audience: “scholars,” “students” and “even . . . serious general readers” (xxi).

The *Commentary on Thomas Aquinas's Virtue Ethics* includes the text of, and commentary on, eighteen articles from the *Summa theologiae*. Ten articles focus on the virtues in general:

- I-II, q. 55, a. 4 (Whether virtue is suitably defined?)
- I-II, q. 58, a. 4 (Whether there can be moral without intellectual virtue?)
- I-II, q. 58, a. 5 (Whether there can be intellectual without moral virtue?)

- I-II, q. 61, a. 2 (Whether there are four cardinal virtues?)
- I-II, q. 61, a. 3 (Whether any other virtues should be called principal rather than these?)
- I-II, q. 62, a. 1 (Whether there are any theological virtues?)
- I-II, q. 63, a. 1 (Whether virtue is in us by nature?)
- I-II, q. 63, a. 2 (Whether any virtue is caused in us by habituation?)
- I-II, q. 65, a. 1 (Whether the moral virtues are connected with one another?)
- I-II, q. 84, a. 4 (Whether the seven capital vices are suitably reckoned?)

And the remaining eight articles focus on the virtue of justice:

- II-II, q. 30, a. 3 (Whether mercy is a virtue)
- II-II, q. 58, a. 1 (Whether justice is fittingly described as being the perpetual and constant will to render to each one his right?)
- II-II, q. 60, a. 1 (Whether judgment is an act of justice?)
- II-II, q. 60, a. 2 (Whether it is lawful to judge?)
- II-II, q. 60, a. 5 (Whether we should always judge according to the written law?)
- II-II, q. 60, a. 6 (Whether judgment is rendered perverse by being usurped?)
- II-II, q. 80, a. 1 (Whether the virtues annexed to justice are suitably enumerated?)
- II-II, q. 122, a. 1 (Whether the precepts of the Decalogue are precepts of justice?)

The text of each article is presented twice—once in the 1920 Blackfriars translation (now in the public domain and widely available) and once in a paraphrase by Budziszewski. Line-by-line commentary follows each portion of the text and is keyed to the sentences in the Blackfriars translation. Besides the text of the commentary itself, an eleven-page general introduction and an index are included as supporting material.

Budziszewski is most interested in understanding the plain meaning of the text, and in working through Aquinas's sources, and there are almost no comments that engage contemporary scholars or critics of Aquinas. As he says, "Some may think I do not spend enough time quarreling with critics of St. Thomas. My conviction is that before we enter these quarrels, we had better make sure we understand him. If we do understand him, many of the criticisms fall away like dead leaves" (xxii).

Serious general readers will find this commentary very helpful, espe-

cially if they are coming to Aquinas for the first time. Consider this representative passage from *ST* I-II, q. 55, a. 4 that discusses the “matter” of virtues and Budziszewski’s paraphrase (10–11):

Text: [5] *Now virtue has no matter “out of which” it is formed, as neither has any other accident; but it has matter “about which” it is concerned, and matter “in which” it exists, namely, the subject.* [6] *The matter about which virtue is concerned is its object, and this could not be included in the above definition, because the object fixes the virtue to a certain species, and here we are giving the definition of virtue in general.* [7] *And so for material cause we have the subject, which is mentioned when we say that virtue is a good quality “of the mind.”*

Paraphrase: The *material* cause of a thing is its matter, which may be taken in three senses: the matter *of* which it is composed, the matter *to* which it pertains, or the matter *in* which it exists. Now virtue is not composed of anything—it is an “accident” or nonessential property of something else (a mind), and no accident is composed of anything. So matter in the first sense could not have been included in its definition. Virtue does have matter *to* which it pertains—its object, that to which it is directed—but this could not have been included in the definition either, because we are speaking of virtue in general, and the object of virtue depends on what kind of virtue we are talking about. That leaves matter in the third sense, the thing *in* which virtue exists, which is the mind—thus, quite properly, the definition states that virtue is a good quality *of the mind*.

The commentary on the *corpus* explains the four causes in even greater detail, and includes an important passage from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* 5.2 explaining each cause. Then the specific commentary on this passage follows:

[5] Since virtue is not composed of anything, one might be inclined to say that it has no matter. However, it is essentially related to

certain matter, and this is the matter that we call its material cause. One way in which a virtue may be essentially related to matter is that this matter is its *object*. The object of generosity, for example, is the giving of things to others.

[6] However, different virtues have different objects. For example, the object of temperance is not the same as the object of fortitude. So no particular object of virtue is properly included in the definition of virtue in general.

[7] Another way in which a virtue may be essentially related to matter is that this matter is its *subject*—that *in which* the virtue inheres. In what then does virtue inhere? It inheres in the mind. There, the mind is its material cause. To contemporary readers, it may seem strange to describe mind as material, but the puzzle is easily dispelled when we remember that by matter he means anything that can receive a form. He is not using the term “matter” as we do when we say that the brain is material but thinking is nonmaterial but rather as we do when we say that the matter of thinking is thoughts. (12–13)

For similar reasons, this will be a very helpful text for students, especially those who wish to dig deeper into Aquinas’s sources. For example, the *sed contra* of I-II, q. 65, a. 1 (Whether the moral virtues are connected with one another?), includes very short quotations from Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory, and Cicero. Budziszewski’s commentary includes a long quotation from each of them that includes the quotation in the *sed contra* as well as its larger context before and after the quoted passage. This is Budziszewski’s standard practice throughout; he regularly includes longer quotations that give the context of a relevant passage, and sometimes includes a handful of passages from which a more ambiguous reference might have come (as when Aquinas refers in the *sed contra* of I-II, q. 55, a. 4, to Augustine’s *De libero arbitrio* 2.19, and Budziszewski includes eight relevant passages from *De libero arbitrio* in his commentary, only six of which are from book 2, and only two of those from chapter 19).

Its usefulness for scholars, however, is more mixed. If a scholar is coming to these texts without much familiarity with Aquinas, then this will give a good introduction to the main lines of his thought in these articles. The many quotations from Aquinas’s sources are particularly helpful, and Budziszewski is also very good at preventing easy misunderstandings

of the text, such as those that might occur if one were not careful with common medieval figures of speech (such as *metonymy* [xxiii], *synecdoche* [184], and *enallage* [282]); indeed, as Budziszewski says, "Failure to recognize the classical figures of speech is one of the most common reasons for misinterpreting St. Thomas's writings" (184).

But there is much less here for the scholar who needs to go beyond the plain meaning of the text. The contextual quotations from Aquinas's sources remain the most helpful feature of the commentary (and they are a genuinely impressive feature), and there are also some important corrections of the Blackfriars translation. But deeper puzzles regarding what Aquinas is doing, whether they be interpretative questions or substantive issues, remain undeveloped. When Aquinas refers to our natural insufficiency to direct ourselves to our supernatural end, Budziszewski says merely that, "We must be *lifted*. But unless God had *made* man liftable, this could not happen, for not even God can do what is contradictory. Our liftability, then, is a genuine aspect of our created nature. St. Thomas's term for it is the 'obediential potency,' the passive potentiality to receive God's direct influence" (72). There is no further development or reference to other discussions of the topic, or even a hint that this is a difficult matter in Aquinas's synthesis of Augustine and Aristotle. And when Aquinas mentions that virtue cannot be "badly used," Budziszewski says, "To contemporary readers, the claim that it is impossible to put virtue to bad purposes may seem preposterous, but see the Reply to Objection 5" (13). Aquinas's reply to the fifth objection is not particularly helpful, and Budziszewski's comments are too brief to be of much use to "the contemporary reader" to whom it seems obvious that virtuous behavior can be at the service of bad ends (or, in another vein, that exercising one virtue can entail violating another).

Writing for the generally educated reader, the student, and the scholar all at once is a noble and important task. Budziszewski's *Commentary on Thomas Aquinas's Virtue Ethics* succeeds admirably for the general reader and the student, and offers some real benefits for the scholar, especially if he or she is not an Aquinas specialist. And happily enough, the disappointment of the specialist is often a price worth paying. N.V

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A Theology of Grace in Six Controversies by Edward T. Oakes, S.J. (*Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016*), xxii + 248 pp.

THE LATE Fr. Edward T. Oakes's ingenious work reads mostly like a collection of essays in which he draws on a relatively significant array of literature, scholarly and popular (although mostly scholarly), primary and secondary (although mostly secondary), to address some of the most difficult topics in theology from a broadly ecumenical perspective. Six topics are addressed in this order: (1) the relationship between nature and grace, (2) the question of justification, (3) the problem of whether the empirical data of contemporary science and the theological stances of the Catholic Church on original sin may cohere, (4) the debate concerning the nature of human freedom and the divine gift of supernatural life (grace), (5) the *an sit* and *quid sit* of divinization/deification, and (6) whether Protestants and Catholics can agree on the predestination of Mary by divine grace. Although the book's *primary* purpose does not seem to be ecumenical rapprochement, the second and sixth chapters are the most overtly ecumenical. The chapters that most directly concern intra-Catholic debates, but nonetheless certainly have ecumenical ramifications that Oakes does not take the time to explicate, are the first and fourth; there are sections of the third chapter that are also relevant to the fourth (not to mention the relevance of the second to the fourth). As Oakes acknowledges, there is no way for a single book or a single author to resolve all of these debates.

In this review I will focus primarily on the chapters that have *indirect* ecumenical import, which concern perhaps the two most contentious and still largely unresolved debates in Catholic theology. Oakes advances in chapter 1 a somewhat surprising solution to the twentieth-century debate between the *nouvelle theologie* and the "Thomists of the strict observance" concerning the relationship between the natural realm of created being and the supernatural realm of participation in the Trinitarian life (i.e., divine grace): the nineteenth-century "romantic" Thomist articulation of the issue by Matthias Joseph Scheeben. Relying on Andrew Swafford, John Courtney Murray, and Aidan Nichols, O.P., Oakes proposes Scheeben as a kind of *via media* between Henri de Lubac and recent defenders of the hardline position of Thomists like Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., principally Lawrence Feingold and Steven A. Long. Most of the time Scheeben sounds more like the latter, but Oakes points to a couple passages where it sounds like he might question the autonomy of ethics as a science apart from revelation (see 42–43)—I think he is actually only minimizing its efficacy—and to his utilization of the metaphor of nuptiality for the

relationship between nature and grace (see 35 and 44). I might argue that this metaphor is more equipped to help illuminate how nature and grace actually interact in the redeemed than to elucidate how they operate as speculative principles in the economy of creation and salvation history. But, certainly, Oakes would have done well to turn to a fellow Jesuit who lived during the heat of the debate, but stayed out of (or stood above?) the fray of the debate, Bernard J. F. Lonergan. Lonergan's precise technical treatment of the natural desire for God would have been a welcome complement to Scheeben's metaphorical-romantic solution. Nonetheless, Oakes demonstrates cogency in a number of theses: (1) that the intrinsic-extrinsicist division of parties in the debate is too easy (see 34 and 43), (2) that Lubac's intention to break down the two-tiered approach was laudable, even if his metaphysical analysis of the question is faulty, but his understanding of the commentator tradition was superficial (see 16–20 and 32n47), (3) that there are sets of texts supporting each school in Thomas's corpus, although the Thomist school has stronger arguments on its side (21n32 and 24–32), and (4) that the Thomists correctly insist that nature and grace must be distinguished properly before they may be united (see 33–35 and 37). I do not think all of this can be taken straight from Scheeben, but Oakes wants to point to a precursor to the debate in order to avoid taking sides, even though it is striking to see a Balthasarian acknowledge the legitimacy of recent criticisms made of Lubac.

In chapter 4, Oakes is right both to find the root of the debate concerning predestination, grace, and freedom in Augustine of Hippo's mistaken interpretation of divine sovereignty in Romans 9 and to seek a resolution to the debate beyond the intractable terms of it set by the Bañezians and Molinists. While referencing the fact that Lonergan understands the latter to have no grasp of Thomas Aquinas (see 156n33), Oakes spends no time with Aquinas himself and quotes much from Barth that seems rather to push the issue off rather than attempt to grapple with it. Barth turns the question of predestination and grace into a question about the salvation of all versus the damnation of most (in Augustine), transforming Calvin's predestinarianism into a doctrine of universal election and singular reprobation (of Christ). It is understandable that Oakes, as a Balthasarian, turns to Barth. But Balthasar was also a professed Thomist, which is why it is disappointing also not to see in Balthasar any serious treatment of Thomas Aquinas on the grace–freedom dynamic. In addition to Lonergan's classic

Grace and Freedom,¹ Michal Paluch's magisterial *La Profondeur de l'amour divin*² would have been helpful in the task of engaging Aquinas on the issue. Finally, Oakes does well to cite repeatedly Dom M. John Farrelly's *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*³ on the parameters and terms of the debate (see 148–49, 154–57), but it is a glaring omission to leave aside all consideration of the notion of fallible or frustrable grace, which is found throughout that work, especially given the context of man's fallen nature set up by the previous chapter.

The most pivotal question left unaddressed in Oakes's magnanimous book is the following: does fallen man have the power to resist grave sin without infallible (or irresistible) grace? In other words, if Augustine's *massa damnata* theory of original sin is mistaken, as Oakes effectively argues (121–35, 171–81), even if not completely accurate on every point (particularly, on 136 and 182), then how badly is human nature damaged by concupiscence: is it impossible for post-lapsarian man to choose the good unless caused to do so by an irresistible divine grace or may God condition his predestining will upon human resistance or lack thereof? Oakes simply does not ask the question.

Francisco Marin-Sola, as Michael Torre has shown, was a master of both Aquinas and the commentator tradition on fallible graces, the conditional divine decrees that bestow them, and their sufficiency for meritorious works. Oakes certainly ran across both Marin-Sola as well as Jacques Maritain and Charles Journet, who popularized this interpretation of Thomas, which says God's antecedent permission of evil deeds is not infallible, since he cites William Most's book on the matter (and favorably! [see 183n79]). Distancing himself slightly from Marin-Sola's articulation, Most focuses on the element of divine foreknowledge (hence his formula: *praedestinatione ante praevisa merita, reprobatione post praevisa demerita* ["predestination before foreseen merits, reprobation after foreseen demerits"]), although he professes essential agreement with Maritain.⁴ One might argue that Oakes did not want to adjudicate the differences between these authors. In fact, Oakes utilizes for his argument authors as diverse

¹ Bernard Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1 of *Works of Bernard Lonergan*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe, S.J., and Robert M. Doran, S.J. (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2000 [repr.])

² Michal Paluch, *La Profondeur de l'amour divin: La prédestination dans l'oeuvre de saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2004).

³ Dom Mark John Farrelly, O.S.B., *Predestination Grace and Free Will* (London: Burns and Oates, 1964).

⁴ See William Most, *Grace, Predestination, and the Salvific Will of God: New Answers to Old Questions* (Front Royal, VA: Christendom Press, 1997), 485.

as Robert Barron, Brian Shanley, Henri Rondet, Denys Turner, and Reinhard Hütter (see 154–59), who each hold slightly different views, all arguably belonging to this emerging consensus of which I speak, but without distinguishing between their differences (perhaps conflating them) and without engaging their common master, the Angelic Doctor. His argument is simply that God's causality of free acts transcends the distinction between contingency and necessity, that God works for the salvation of all, and that the details are beyond us (although he does not spell this last point out). Despite the slight variations between Lonergan (whom Oakes does cite supportively on occasion without engaging in a significant manner), Marin-Sola, Maritain, Journet, and others, the emerging consensus among Catholic theologians on the nature of God's permission of moral evil (against the neo-Bañezian insistence on infallible antecedent permissive decrees) is a development that is pivotal to the question of the relationship between divine grace and human freedom.

The real problem is that, for a Balthasarian, to confront the possibility of fallible or frustrable grace risks leading to a diffusion of the following conundrum: if God's grace is efficacious and God desires all men to be saved, why are not all men saved? Oakes wants to leave the question open-ended, as if it is too high a question for men to address, as Balthasar himself does (even amidst his lofty Trinitarian speculations), but the truth is that many have addressed it in a satisfactory manner, relying on divine revelation—the power of the human being to resist grace does not diminish the efficacy of grace because God has willed to condition his grace upon our lack of resistance, of which we are capable even after the fall, at least, when it comes to grave matters. If we are not to hold a “total corruption” understanding of concupiscence, we have to admit the possibility of post-lapsarian man to yield to fallible grace. And if we admit this possibility, then there is no reason to insist that every grace be infallibly efficacious or that predestination be conceived solely in terms of infallible decrees. Without this Augustinian pre-conception of grace as necessarily infallible, there is no reason to have to choose between a restrictive view of election and a universalism akin to Barth's. Oakes does not address the question of universalism, but it lurks beneath the surface, and I have the sneaking suspicion that he avoids the question of the possibility of fallible grace in an attempt to forge rapprochement with the neo-orthodox.

The theology of grace is at the center of the Catholic–Protestant divide. Part of overcoming this divide is overcoming the problems incumbent upon Augustinian exegesis of Romans. But in evaluating historical reception of the Augustinian hermeneutic, Thomistic developments cannot be ignored. We can all agree that the grace of justification is a *gratia gratis*

data, a phrase conspicuously absent from the book. Nonetheless, for this grace to be received in any sense by the free creature, it must be preserved in existence not only by *gratia operans*, but also by *gratia cooperans*. It is the nature of this cooperation that is most contentious—perhaps a more robust conversation on the perfective relationship between the supernatural and natural orders would be helpful in ecumenical discussions on the question of original sin. Oakes does a decent job of getting beyond Augustine’s exegetical extrapolation of divine sovereignty, but I think he could have also encouraged Protestant traditions to engage twentieth-century arguments concerning the conditional nature of some divine decrees, the fallibility of some graces, and the possibility of fallen man to be moved by them, rather than skirting the issue by focusing exclusively on the transcendence of God and the universality of the salvific will of God. Perhaps, if Fr. Oakes were granted more time on this earth, he would have addressed these aspects of the issue, but without a doubt divine mercy has bestowed on him a vision of these and many other things infinitely superior to the comprehension of this and every reader. Although I have focused mostly on the shortcomings of the book, it is a very interesting read and the secondary literature he cites broadened the horizons of this particular “scholar.” The book is highly intriguing and very much worth thorough perusal by scholar and layman alike. N.V

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Sunrise, FL

The Personalism of John Henry Newman by John F. Crosby (*Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2014*), xxv + 227 pp.

PERSONALISM as a philosophical category is difficult to define. Jacques Maritain noted in 1947 that there are at least “a dozen personalist doctrines, which at times have nothing more in common than the word ‘person.’”¹ Since the designation of “personalism” as a philosophical category was largely a product of the first half of the twentieth century, one wonders how a monograph on Newman’s (1801–1890) personalism is possible without falling victim to anachronism. It is true, as John Crosby demonstrates in the introduction to his *The Personalism of John Henry Newman*, that the theological and philosophical foundation for

¹ Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, trans. By John J. Fitzgerald (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), 12–13.

what would later be deemed “personalism” was laid by nineteenth-century thinkers, such as John Henry Newman, even if Newman and his contemporaries did not use the term to describe their theological schema.

Crosby is careful not to argue for a direct connection between Newman and any known personalist philosophers. To this end, Crosby writes, “I do not mean to say that Newman knew the early personalists and was directly influenced by them, or that he called himself a ‘personalist’” (xxii). Nor does Crosby argue that Newman provides a comprehensive “philosophical account of these ideas, or that each of them can be found in him” (xxii). Crosby’s central thesis is that Newman “was a pioneer, ‘the pioneer of a new philosophy of the individual Person and the Personal Life’” (xxii). Likewise, Crosby sets out to “show that his pioneering personalism coheres entirely with and in fact stands in the service of his radically theocentric religion” (xxii).

Crosby reads Newman through what he deems Newman’s “ethos,” namely that he “seems to understand human things through understanding his own human heart; he knows human beings through the medium of what he himself is” (xxiii). Newman’s “ethos,” Crosby argues, is expressed succinctly in his cardinal’s motto, *cor ad cor loquitur*, translated as “heart speaks to heart.” Thus, what concerns Crosby in this book is “the richness, the fruitfulness of his [Newman’s] personalism and of the unity that it forms with his theocentric religious existence” (xxv).

Crosby’s analysis of Newman’s personalism progresses in seven chapters. Chapter 1, “Theocentric Religion,” begins with an explanation of the relationship between Newman’s dogmatic principle² and what Crosby

² Crosby associates the dogmatic principle with a “zeal for truth” (2). The passage that he uses to explain the dogmatic principle is from Newman’s *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*: “That there is a truth then; that there is one truth; that religious error is in itself of an immoral nature; that its maintainers, unless involuntarily such, are guilty in maintaining it; that it is to be dreaded; that the search for truth is not the gratification of curiosity; that its attainment has nothing of the excitement of a discovery; that the mind is below truth, not above it, and is bound, not to descant upon it, but to venerate it; that truth and falsehood are set before us for the trial of our hearts; that our choice is an awful giving forth of lots on which salvation or rejection is inscribed . . .—this is the dogmatical principle, which has strength” (quoted in Crosby, *The Personalism of John Henry Newman*, 1–2). While Crosby is assuredly emphasizing the objective nature of Newman’s dogmatic principle, there is another important element of the dogmatic principle that is not explained, namely, that, in the passage quoted by Crosby, Newman is explaining that humans can understand revelation, albeit imperfectly: “supernatural truths [are] irrevocably committed to human language, imperfect because it is human, but definitive and necessary because given from above.” See also, Andrew

calls the “radical theocentric spirit,” or the notion that, “the doctrine of the Trinity concerns not only the economy of our salvation, but also, and first of all, God as He exists in Himself” (3). In this chapter, Crosby articulates how Newman avoids the dangers of an overly subjective understanding of our relationship with the Triune God.

Chapter 2, “Imagination and Intellect,” explains the distinction that Newman makes “between the *notional* and *real* apprehension of propositions, and . . . *notional* and *real* assent to propositions” (35). Crosby compares Newman’s notion of God as “outside of me” with Kierkegaard: “both thinkers are referring to a truth that is outside of me, at a distance from me, truth that leaves me cold even when acknowledged” (49). Crosby explains that it is Newman’s real assent, which is akin to Kierkegaard’s existential truth, that “closes this distance” between God and our human heart, “giving me an experiential immediacy to the truth apprehended and enabling the truth to engage me as a whole person” (49).

Chapter 3, “Heart Speaks to Heart,” and chapter 4, “Personal Influence,” investigate the way in which God is present in our human relationships. Crosby writes that “it is important for understanding Newman’s personalism that the abundance of affective life coheres entirely with that spirit of adoration that lies at the center of religious experience” (70). To this end Crosby demonstrates that Newman holds together the importance of the affective aspects of our human existence and relationship with God and the eternal truth described in his dogmatic principle: “He [Newman] knows that theocentric religion engages not only the intellect and the will, but also the heart” (74). Similarly, in chapter 4, Crosby explains “how religious truth is transmitted by personal influence” (111).

Chapter 5, “You Must Consent to Think,” describes Newman’s “personalist account of thinking, of intellectual understanding, and of reasoning” (111). An extended explanation of Newman’s illative sense is included in this chapter, which, as Crosby notes, involves both heart and character. Crosby argues that “knowledge by connaturality” (chapter 3) “is important for personalism because it is knowledge that is gained not just through the intellect but through the medium of one’s whole being and character” (127). For Newman, Crosby argues, “one venerates revealed truth more by apprehending it with one’s whole being than by apprehending it just with one’s intellect. . . . One venerates revealed truth more by a thinking faith than by a narrow-minded faith” (150).

In chapter 6, “An Infinite Abyss of Existence,” Crosby describes the subjective nature of Newman’s personalism and distinguishes Newman’s view of personal subjectivity with subjectivism. As is the case with chapters 2–5, Crosby places Newman’s conceptualization of subjectivity against his notion of theocentricity and concludes that Newman’s notion of “inward infinity resonates with, and awakens in response to the living God” (184–85). In the conclusion of this chapter Crosby notes an insufficiency in Newman’s understanding of the material world, namely that “there is a subjectivist tendency in this part of his thought” (185). However, Crosby concludes that “this lack in Newman” does not “compromise his theocentric religion”; therefore, it is not seen as a grave error.

Chapter 7, “The Creative Principle of Religion,” asks the question: “What is, for Newman, the primordial knowledge of God that engenders and awakened religious existence?” And, more specifically, “what is distinctly personalist about Newman’s conception of our primordial religious knowledge” (186)? The conscience, Crosby argues, is how humans know and experience God: “He [Newman] explains that our primordial religious knowledge arises in our conscience. It is through our sense of being morally obliged that we can gain a real apprehension of the reality of God” (188).

Crosby’s analysis of Newman’s personalism highlights the very aspect of Newman’s thought that has intrigued so many Christian thinkers in the last two centuries, namely, that humans in our very being were created for the purpose of communion with the Trinitarian God, which is known to us through our experience of God. Cardinal Ratzinger, for example, wrote in 1990 that “Newman’s teaching on conscience became an important foundation for theological personalism, which was drawing us all in its sway. Our image of the human being as well as our image of the Church was permeated by this point of departure.”³ Ratzinger succinctly states the significance of Newman’s personalism as relationship between the human heart and God in our conscience, which, as is noted, is not an individualist philosophy: “Precisely because Newman interpreted the existence of the human being from conscience, that is, from the relationship between God and the soul, was it clear that this personalism is not individualism, and that being bound by conscience does not mean being free to make random

³ Joseph Ratzinger, Presentation by His Eminence Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger on the Occasion of the First Centenary of the Death of Cardinal John Henry Newman, Rome, 28 April 28, 1990, www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19900428_ratzinger-newman_en.html.

choices—the exact opposite is the case.²⁴

Crosby's analysis of Newman's personalism is well-written, thought-provoking, and nuanced. As Ratzinger recognized, an unnuanced description of personalism could easily turn into either individualism or idolatry, in which human nature becomes the primary focus, rather than understanding it as oriented toward God in our experience of God in our personhood. Crosby is careful from his very first chapter to situate Newman's understanding of conscience as Theocentric, which keeps the focus squarely on the human experience of God in our personhood.

Crosby's book is "not written just for Newman specialists; it means to serve as an introduction to the intellectual and spiritual world of Newman" (xxv). Though Crosby writes this book for a wider audience than Newman scholarship per se, the book is best served for an advanced undergraduate with professorial guidance, graduate students in theology and philosophy, and professors of theology and philosophy. Crosby's book is theologically deep and often technical in nature, though not overtly jargon-laden. This book comes recommended for those interested in Newman's theology and philosophy, as well as scholars of personalist philosophy. N.V.

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Engaging the Doctrine of Creation: Cosmos, Creatures, and the Wise and Good Creator by Matthew Levering (*Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017*), xi + 372 pp.

IN HIS THIRD CONTRIBUTION in the Engaging the Doctrine series, Matthew Levering tackles the doctrine of creation, which he rightly recognizes to be a neglected and "atrophied" area of Christian theology (20). Levering opens his book with reference to several challenges that modernity has posed to the traditional Christian view of creation, and throughout his book, he displays a keen sensitivity to skeptical challenges that arise, particularly from the natural sciences. At the same time, Levering's work is not driven by a scientific or apologetic concern. Noting Colin Gunton's warning that treatment of the doctrine of creation is often reduced to a discussion of the relation of science and religion (13), Levering instead aims to treat creation theologically, in a way that is ultimately

⁴ Ratzinger, Presentation on the First Centenary of the Death of Cardinal John Henry Newman.

rooted in Scripture and tradition. As a result, *Engaging the Doctrine of Creation* is both conversant with modern concerns as well as rich in the heritage of classical Christian theology. In what follows I articulate three particular strengths of this insightful, engaging, and impressive book.

First, *Engaging the Doctrine of Creation* has a remarkable breadth of scope, ranging from topics like divine ideas (chapter 1) and divine simplicity (chapter 2) to the atonement (chapter 7). Few books about creation treat topics like these, and their inclusion runs the risk of seeming forced or inauthentic; but Levering manages to draw them together into an overall vision of the Christian Gospel as involving, in John Webster's terms, the God who has life in himself and the creatures who have life in him (4; see his summary as well on 315–17). Along the way, Levering displays a curiosity in topics that most books on creation pass over, such as the question of chapter 3, namely, “why a wise and good God willed to create dinosaurs to rule the earth for more than 150 million years and then disappear, to create the sun as merely one among many octillion stars, and to create countless species of which 99.99 percent are now extinct” (110). At the same time, Levering has not attempted to be exhaustive—he acknowledges that his book lacks treatment of, for instance, divine providence, angels, creation *ex nihilo* (though he does engage this topic in relation to divine ideas), and new creation (5–6).

This breadth of vision is not merely an incidental feature of style or thoroughness, but has a material foundation in the doctrine of creation itself. Levering's approach to creation shows the profound interconnection that this doctrine has with the whole range of Christian theology—for instance, in its implication for the Creator–creation distinction (requiring a God who is ontologically unique and yet not aloof from creatures), or in its entailments in the doctrine of redemption (requiring a created order imbued with a relational order of justice). This is a vast improvement from common approaches to the doctrine of creation that seem to draw their energy only from the controversial issues, whether within the church or between the church and the culture.

A second strength of *Engaging the Doctrine of Creation* lies in its impressive command, and judicious employment, of classic theological resources on the doctrine of creation. In treating the nature of the days of Genesis 1, Levering draws from Basil's *Hexaemeron* (128–34); his approach to the *imago Dei* is informed by the perspective of Athanasius (153); the insights of Thomas Aquinas are deployed throughout (most conspicuously in chapters 2, 4, 6, and 7). Along the way, Levering engages respectfully, but not uncritically, with the best contemporary theological work. The footnotes of this book are a tour de force of navigating the world of Christian theol-

ogy. Even readers who do not share Levering's views or are uninterested in his selected topics may benefit from reading this book as a model of doing theology studiously and eloquently.

Like his breadth of vision, Levering's tendency toward retrieval of the tradition is not merely a stylistic feature, but rather bears upon the whole quality of his work. By approaching the doctrine of creation with an informed respect for the tradition of Christian theology, Levering offers his readers a new framework in which to work through many contemporary challenges related to this doctrine. In many cases, strikingly, those very aspects of a doctrine that contemporary theology sees as a problem, Levering pursues as a solution. This is particularly evident in chapters 1–2, where Levering argues that divine knowledge is not only compatible with creaturely freedom, but establishes it—"the immediacy of divine presencing, therefore, *enables, rather than negates*, created freedom" (71, italics his)—and that divine simplicity is not only harmonious with divine freedom, but its ground: "the Triune God can be freely creative not despite, but precisely because he is simple" (107).

This tendency to turn the tables on the assumptions of modernity leads to a final observation of Levering's work: he engages the natural sciences respectfully, but in the process, does not compromise classic Christian convictions in the doctrine of creation. Levering's interest in engaging contemporary thought is present immediately in the book's introduction, as he broaches the topic of creation with reference to books such as Lawrence Krauss's *A Universe from Nothing*, Stephen Hawking's and Leonard Mlodinow's *The Grand Design*, and Richard Dawkins's *The God Delusion* (13–18). And yet Levering is also concerned that theology not yield uncritically to the dictates of modernity. This is evident in his treatment of various doctrines throughout the book and then reemphasized in the book's conclusion (e.g., 312–13). Thus, Levering's treatment of the image of God traces contemporary evolutionary theories concerning the origin of human consciousness (155–63), but he insists that consciousness is not merely a strictly biological phenomenon, but rather the fruit of rational ensoulment prepared for by evolution (see 153–54). Chapter 5, "Be Fruitful and Multiply," takes current environmental and ecological concerns seriously, but ultimately defends "the generous welcoming of children" on the grounds of the priceless value of the addition of each human soul into the world (226).

In chapter 6, on the difficult doctrine of original sin, Levering recognizes the challenge against traditional understandings of Adam and Eve presented by the paleoanthropological and genetic data, but ultimately defends the notion of a historical fall, whose consequence is human death

as now experienced, namely, the cutting off of fellowship and communion (258–67, 270–71). While he acknowledges that Genesis 2–3 bear differences from ancient and modern ways of narrating history, he nonetheless pushes back against Peter Enns for downplaying the interest of these chapters in questions of human origins and sinfulness (241–49, 267–69). In treating the atonement in chapter 7, Levering takes seriously contemporary objections to the notion of retributive justice, articulated by Nicolas Wolterstorff and others, but defends this notion from Scripture and simultaneously distinguishes it from caricature (277–90).

In these areas and others, Levering's work opens up new avenues of thought for how traditional Christian notions of createdness and fallenness can be reaffirmed in the face of modern challenges. Of course, the book does not resolve every challenge that must be faced. Still, *Engaging the Doctrine of Creation* has set a new standard for Christian engagement with the doctrine of creation, modeling a way of thinking about this topic that is theologically rich, historically informed, critically alert, and wisely reasoned. 

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Theology Needs Philosophy: Acting Against Reason is Contrary to the Nature of God, edited by Matthew L. Lamb (*Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2016*), 325 pp.

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP of human reason to faith? Of philosophy to theology? Essays in this anthology—many of which originated in a conference held at Ave Maria University on February 10–12, 2011, “Philosophy in Theological Education,” and which became owing to circumstances a posthumous tribute to the life and work of Ralph McInerny—explore the “universality of the God-given light of human reason” in its relation to the Catholic faith to meet “the intellectual challenges we face at the dawn of Catholicism’s third millennium” (xi). Matthew L. Lamb’s introductory essay, “The Need for Reason in Theology,” locates the historical root of these contemporary intellectual challenges in fourteenth-century nominalism, which, “in exalting the will over reason, broke all living continuity with the great philosophical and theological traditions of the past” (xiv). In evacuating nature of its intrinsic intelligibility, nominalism brought into play the modern “dualism between mind and body, between subjects and object, between empirical science and theoretical

wisdom" (xiv–xv). And yet, Lamb responds, the "universality of reason is oriented to the universality of being" (xii). This is why, he notes, "recent popes have shown that the intellectualism of an Augustine and Aquinas provides us with ways to correct the distortions caused by nominalism and voluntarism" (xiii). In this vein, the essays in this volume seek to illustrate the important contributions metaphysical realism can make for Catholic theology in the present day.

The essays in this volume are grouped topically into five parts. Essays in the first part seek to illustrate the general need for a sound philosophy interior to theology. Essays in the second part focus on the role of a metaphysics of nature and the natural knowledge of God in theology. Essays in the third part elucidate the relation of human reason to divine revelation. Essays in the fourth part examine the place of philosophy in systematic theology and those in the fifth, moral theology.

Given limitations of space, not all of the many worthy essays in this volume can be mentioned in the course of this review. Nevertheless, the following overview will hopefully serve to provide the reader with a sample of the riches this anthology has to offer.

In the first essay, "All Theologians are Philosophers, Whether Knowingly or Not" (3–18), Charles Morerod, O.P., argues that the rejection of philosophy, tacit or otherwise, is simply impossible for a theologian. Theology is intrinsically bound up with the issues tackled by philosophers, hence the theologian who engages in a program of dehellenization usually ends up swapping out metaphysics for other philosophical commitments, many of which impinge upon the proclamation of the Gospel (4–5). Morerod takes as an example Rudolf Bultmann's deployment of an existentialist philosophy to explain the substance of the Gospel to modern man, who, so Bultmann alleges, can no longer acknowledge miracles (6). For Bultmann, discourse about God must give way to the "personal-existential dimension" (6). "More or less consciously," Morerod notes, "Bultmann is influenced by a Kantian view or, more generally, modern anthropocentrism. Bultmann is clear: What matters is the human being, what *we* do, what *we* are. Not what God is in himself, but how he acts with *us*. *We* are the center" (7). In this way, God is displaced from the center he used to occupy as the traditional center of theology. What particularly concerns Morerod about this procedure is that theologians act so quickly to adopt the philosophies of their age without seemingly "caring about their compatibility with Christian faith" (9). Much the same is true if theologians adopt the philosophical underpinnings of postmodernity. While the benefit of postmodernity is that it undermines the metanarrative that supports atheism, it likewise undermines the meta-narrative that supports Christianity: "interpretation has been substituted for

truth" (10). In sum, Morerod notes, "the point is not whether we are influenced by philosophy or not, but whether our philosophy . . . is true or not" (17). "What can be used is what is true" (18). The question is not *whether* the theologian will embrace some philosophical framework or the other; the question is whether we will embrace one that is compatible with Christian faith and open to the questions it asks and the answers it gives.

In the second essay, "*Videtur quod non sit necessarium, praeter theologiam disciplinam, aliam doctrinam haberi*: Legitimacy of Philosophy as an Autonomous Discipline and Its Service to Theology in Aquinas and Ralph McInerny" (19–40), John P. O'Callaghan tackles the role of philosophy in the service of the faith. O'Callaghan's title, "It Seems That It Is Not Necessary to Have Another Doctrine, beyond the Theological Discipline," is a playful reworking of Thomas's defense of *sacra doctrina* in *Summa theologiae* [ST], q. 1, a. 1, where the *onus probandi* was on Thomas's defense of the existence and necessity of a theological discipline beyond the philosophical ones. Today, the burden of proof has shifted, and theologians are more often than not skeptical of the contribution that Greek philosophy—particularly if it is of an Aristotelian bent—has to make to theology. Accordingly, O'Callaghan wishes to make a case in this essay in favor of the abiding place of the *philosophia perennis* interior to theology. Granted that the Church in her pronouncements does not adopt existing philosophical "systems" in their entirety, she does nevertheless adopt "philosophical claims about the world and human nature" (36–37), and to deny this is to evacuate many of the Church's pronouncements on revelation of their essential content. To illustrate this idea, O'Callaghan has reference to the Council of Vienne, (1311–1312) and its rejection of Peter Olivi's anthropology, during the course of which the denial that "the rational or intellective soul" is the "form of the human body" is condemned (23). In light of this, O'Callaghan asks what it means for the soul to be a "form"? Although the language of forms is important in Platonic philosophy, this obviously is not Platonic usage, otherwise the Council would be affirming that "there is only one soul for all human beings" (24). Is the term then meant in an Aristotelian sense? O'Callaghan's answer is "broadly," but even here, not without qualification (25). After all, there are ambiguities in Aristotle's writings as to whether there are, again, numerically one form for a species, or else a distinction between *nous* and soul that could lead to the conclusion that there is only one intellect for all human beings (25–26). Rather, what we seem to have is a medieval Christian modification of Aristotle that draws out how the Church understands Scripture's designation of the human being as *imago Dei*. As O'Callaghan rightly notes, "The medieval aristotelian position was a philosophical understanding of human nature that had

been a hard won *theological* victory in the thirteenth century" (28). Or, as he again notes, "the background of the conciliar acts is precisely a positive movement of *sacra doctrina* to inquire into the meaning of Revelation" (29).

O'Callaghan then goes on to contrast this medieval appropriation of the classical metaphysical tradition (that combined insights of Aristotle and Plato by building on the backbone of the Augustinian patrimony) with the modern *historicization* of the theological project. Many modern theologians, he notes, aver that "we must learn to live with the shifting historical categories of experience" and thereby "banish all philosophy from theological understanding . . . to retrieve the purity of the Gospel" (36). Or, more precisely, we must "banish all philosophy, except that philosophical position that holds that all experience is conditioned by historically contingent categories that are in some sense wholly dependent upon the immanent mind" (36). However, as O'Callaghan also notes, "Epistemological skepticism or Kantian and post-Kantian epistemological critique are no more immediately biblically grounded than are Greek metaphysical categories, and they are no less innocent of philosophical presuppositions generally than is Aquinas's medieval aristotelian anthropology" (37). Rather than "theology employing philosophical metaphysics of a Greek sort," it instead substitutes a "philosophical epistemology of a more modern and broadly European sort" (37). Either way, however, theology cannot avoid employing or presupposing some kind of philosophy, even if only negatively.

The last essay I would like to survey, from the fourth part on the role of philosophy in systematic theology, is the fine essay by Gilles Emery, O.P., "*Ad aliquid*: Relation in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas." In this work, Emery surveys the role of the philosophical category of relation as utilized by Thomas Aquinas in properly theological treatises. In its philosophical use, the category of relation is one of the ten predicaments "into which Aquinas divides extramental being" (177). Relation is an unusual predicament, not being a quantity or a quality. Rather, it describes something that "inheres in the subject 'not absolutely but in connection to something else'" (178). Thus, although Aquinas "places relation among the accidents which affect the subject 'intrinsically'" (179), nevertheless, it "does not posit anything in the subject" (180, citing Aquinas, *In I sent.*, d. 26, q. 2, a. 1, corp.). This is why Thomas, following Augustine and Boethius, is willing to posit relation as a mode of predication proper to God in addition to substance (183).

Having discussed the basic category of relation in Aquinas, Emery next turns to an analysis of Aquinas's distinction between real relations and relations of reason. Real relations are those that are founded on either quantity (double/half) or action/passion (e.g., father-son) (185). Relations of reason obtain, on the contrary, when either the correlative terms in the relation

are not really distinct (a thing's relation to itself, e.g., something is equal to itself), if one of the pair lacks objective reality (e.g., a horse is like a unicorn), or if the foundation in quantity or action/passion is lacking. From these two types of relations, three possible combinations emerge as employed by Aquinas (188). The first is bilaterally real relations (e.g., father–son); the second is bilateral relations of reason (e.g., the relation of a thing to itself); the third is a relation which is real in one term and of reason in the other (189–90). Emery then observes that the first kind of relation is employed to account for Trinitarian relations, especially under the heading relative opposition (194–95), and the third for relations between the Creator and creatures, in which the relation is real in the creature but of reason in God (196).

Although I have only had space to survey a handful of the fine essays collected in this volume, they are exemplary of the quality of the whole. Taken in its entirety, *Theology needs Philosophy* represents an outstanding contribution to the ongoing recovery of the place of metaphysics interior to theology for contemporary theological renewal.

N.V.

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Aquinas and the Theology of the Body: The Thomistic Foundations of John Paul II's Anthropology by Thomas Petri, O.P. (*Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2016*), xiii + 338 pp.

THE OFT-QUOTED “TIME BOMB” prediction of George Weigel appears to have come true, at least in the United States: John Paul II's theology of the body has exploded into prominence, from the obscure topic of impenetrable audience talks to the foundation for sex-ed curricula. Along with this higher profile has come criticism, in particular of its perceived over-sexualization of anthropology. More measured voices have been in play, but a critical mass of careful scholarship had not arisen to nuance the popular paradigm very substantially.

In the last five years or so, the scholarly treatment of the theology of the body has finally caught up with its popularization. The volume under review by Thomas Petri, O.P., is just one of several published by Catholic University of America (CUA) Press alone, which is situating itself as the foremost Anglophone publisher of monographs on John Paul II. CUA Press books tend toward contextualizing the thought of the Pope within its scholastic matrix. Along these lines, Petri states his thesis forthrightly: “An authentic understanding of this ‘theology of the body’ relies on an appreciation of the intersection of the thought of John Paul II and Thomas

Aquinas" (1). In an insightful and original move, Petri finds this intersection particularly in the Pope's idea of the "spousal meaning of the body," the realization that our bodies testify that man is made for self-gift.

Before turning to his elaboration of this point, it is necessary to see more clearly why this intersection is not obvious. The first reason is John Paul II's prose, which lacks the limpid clarity of Thomas Aquinas and is heavily salted with neologisms of a phenomenological flavor. Garrigou-La-grange, he was not, even if he was the former's student. More significantly, the English translation of Wojtyła's philosophical magnum opus, *Osoba i Czyn* (translated as *The Acting Person*), deliberately obscured his dialogue with the metaphysical tradition by phenomenologizing his language even further. The most egregious example is the word *suppositum*, left in the Latin in the Polish original. The English translation indefensibly translates the subtitle "Man as 'Suppositum'" as "The Person as a Basic Ontological Structure." This rendering leaves the reader confused. What exactly is a "basic ontological structure"? Why "basic"? How "ontological"? All this is a wholly unnecessary distraction, given that Wojtyła was in fact developing a metaphysical tradition, not recreating one from scratch.

Given this avoidable complication, Petri's book is most welcome, and he is correct to argue that an understanding of Thomas is necessary for grasping Wojtyła. Petri's secondary, unspoken goal seems to be to evangelize the untutored reader in Thomas's thought itself. He does this in a serene and comprehensive style that echoes his master. Along the way, the reader encounters ideas that are not, strictly speaking, necessary for the argument, such as a few pages here on the virtue of hope or there on the agent intellect. Without these digressions, the book might be a hundred pages shorter but also poorer, for the way in which Petri inserts the reader into the beauty of Thomas's comprehensive world-view is one of the many delightful experiences of this lovely book.

The introduction and the first two chapters provide a detailed theological context for Wojtyła's thinking on sexual ethics. Chapter 1 contrasts Wojtyła's methodology with that of the neo-Scholastic manualist tradition by ably summarizing the historical scholarship exemplified by Servais Pinckaers, O.P. If the reader finds this approach persuasive, then this chapter will illuminate. But for any reader already unconvinced by Pinckaers's genealogy, the book does not provide any new evidence. Chapter 2 lays out the twentieth-century debates on contraception within Catholic theology, focusing on the question of the end(s) of sex and marriage: procreation and/or unity? The historical works he utilizes center around the debates within Catholicism, and this reviewer wished for some broader context. For example, the Rockefeller-funded and eugenically oriented Population Council quietly provided

funding for symposia at Notre Dame in the 1960s, with the goal of altering Catholic teaching on contraception by encouraging theologians to dissent. Hence, the picture of a spontaneous Catholic awakening concerning the legitimacy of contraception is not supported by the facts. Few histories of twentieth-century Catholicism advert to this broader context, however, so the book cannot be reasonably faulted for this omission.

Petri next devotes three chapters to the work of Wojtyła, first on his moral theology (ch. 3), then his sexual ethics (ch. 4), and finally (ch. 5) his concept of the spousal meaning of the body in the mature work of the theology of the body. These chapters are, for the most part, clear and reliable syntheses of difficult primary texts. The book shows that Wojtyła's early work (in the 1950s, in his Lublin Lectures and his earliest essays) deploys Aquinas as a corrective for the errors of modern ethical systems. Yet his essays beginning in the 1960s highlight some lacunae in Thomas that modern approaches fill (albeit deficiently), in particular the themes of consciousness and the subject. These are the precise areas in which Wojtyła will bring a Thomistic metaphysics into conversation with modernity. Further, in these pages, Petri grasps what some commentators miss, namely, that the body's role as the visible expression of the person—and not sexuality—is the “overriding theme” of the theology of the body (147). Ultimately the book arrives at the “spousal meaning of the body,” which Petri defines as the “drive for the other, the capacity for love and self-giving” (175).

The last three chapters of the book before the synthetic conclusion are dedicated to an elaboration of the thought of St. Thomas, moving (as did the chapters on Wojtyła) from the more general to the more specific: his anthropology (ch. 6), his treatment of love (ch. 7), and his understanding of marriage and the conjugal act (ch. 8). Each of these chapters could serve as a stand-alone introduction to their respective topics for a graduate course. A few key ideas emerge for the purpose of the argument of the book: the importance of the hylomorphic constitution of the human person; the nature of love as an appetite for the good; the perfection of appetite in virtue; and marriage as the greatest friendship. Each of these ideas undergird or explicitly appear within the theology of the body. Along the way, Petri gives an honest treatment of the less appealing aspects of Thomas's theory of sexual difference, although this reviewer would have liked to have seen more recent treatments of the theme (such as the dissertation by Pia de Solenni published in 2000) utilized.

The book concludes with a brief synthesis of Wojtyła and Thomas. He does not tie together all the loose ends of the previous chapters, instead allowing each of the systems to stand on their own, while reiterating that the theology of the body both presupposes and develops Thomas's anthro-

pology. So while we never learn if Wojtyła agrees with, for example, Thomas's explicative sense (ch. 6), such a point-by-point treatment does not seem to be the volume's purpose. This open-ended exploration is a stimulus to thought, but some readers might be frustrated by the lack of closure.

I agree with the book's exegeses, but I have both a substantive and a methodological concern. First, the substantive: Petri conflates the spousal meaning of the body with Thomistic appetite. For example, he states, "The spousal meaning of the body is the capacity to express the persons' gift of self to another human person and, ultimately, to God" (197). Not quite. The body has a spousal "attribute" (this is the category in which appetite would fit), but the spousal *meaning* of the body is not a capacity or an appetite. John Paul II defines "meaning" as the subjective comprehension of the objective truth of a reality: "*Meaning*' is born in consciousness *with the rereading of the* (ontological) *truth of the object.*"¹ Meaning, in other words, is not a property of bodies but the achievement of a knower. What John Paul II wishes to say in the theology of the body is that (objectively) our bodies express a truth—human beings are made for self-gift—and we are capable of understanding this truth—meaning. A few times, the book notes that meaning occurs within a subject, but more often the spousal meaning is presented as a bodily attribute or appetite.

If grasped, the subjective location of meaning casts further light on the twentieth-century debate concerning the end(s) of sex and marriage summarized in chapter 2. *Humanae Vitae* deftly side-stepped the question of whether sex has one end or two by referring to both procreation and unity as *meanings* of the conjugal act. John Paul II understands this to say that persons have the responsibility to "reread" the truth of the conjugal act in both its meanings. Thus, both *Humanae Vitae* and the theology of the body remain neutral on the ends question but reframe the ethical question to emphasize the need for persons to be thoughtful and responsible agents engaged with reality. By identifying the spousal meaning of the body with appetite instead of understanding, Petri overlooks this larger point.

The methodological concern: the focus of the book on Wojtyła's scholastic background is both a strength and a limitation. I have noted how it contributes to a needed renewal in appreciating Wojtyła's Thomism. Yet this lens also obscures, because it brackets realities that would help answer the book's broader questions. Early on, Petri notes that the scholastic debates he so ably summarizes could not approach sexual ethics

¹ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, ed. and trans. Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2006), no. 119, §1 (p. 620; italics original).

with methods adequate to the modern challenges. Yet those challenges are presented in the book primarily as inside baseball—an intra-ecclesial crisis, responding (to be sure) to an external crisis but yet one whose main players are operating within a Catholic context. Thus we learn how Wojtyła's ideas respond to both overly objective and solely subjective moral theologies, but it is less clear how he is in dialogue with the larger culture. Yet his questions were driven as much by the pervasive technological reduction of sexuality to utility as by theological error.

So, when the conclusion of the book argues that Wojtyła's distinctive approach was intended to meet modern challenges, those challenges are only vaguely sketched. Had he looked beyond Thomism, Petri could have specified one extra-ecclesial factor: materialism, found both in consumerism and in the Marxism that surrounded Wojtyła for decades in Poland. The paradox the book addresses in the conclusion, that of a Thomist often sounding quite un-Thomistic, is lessened when one sees that Wojtyła is using Thomas to respond to Marx (among others).

More: while Thomism provides the necessary matrix for the categories of Wojtyła's thought, he is not driven by classically Thomistic questions. Rather, his questions are prompted by the mission field. Thus, as Marx challenges private property, Wojtyła responds with an account of the person that places "self-possession" at the forefront—a move that simultaneously rejects the Marxist materialistic framework and also situates private property within a larger anthropological context. More relevant to Petri's theme is Marx's treatment of interpersonal interaction within capitalism, which reduces all relationships to exchange and possession. John Paul II's response is, as we have seen, the spousal meaning of the body as the fulfillment of the person in self-gift (an impossibility for Marx before the communist eschaton). Seen this way, the theology of the body is particularly useful for narrowing the gap between sexual ethics and social justice. Alluding to this larger context would help to move scholarship to what may be its next frontier, namely, connecting the theology of the body to John Paul II's thought on freedom and Catholic social doctrine.

Expecting a book to break ground on multiple scholarly fronts is churlish, of course, and these weaknesses do not considerably subtract from the achievement of this valuable work of scholarship. It will become a standard because of its illumination of the scholastic horizons of John Paul II's thought.

N.V

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Justice as a Virtue: A Thomistic Perspective by Jean Porter (*Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016*), xiii + 286 pp.

STUDENTS OF Thomistic moral philosophy will be grateful to Jean Porter for her contribution to conversations regarding justice's place in both the virtue ethics tradition and modern liberal thought. It is gross understatement to say that justice is complex. But the complexity is amplified in our context, where justice is imagined as fairness in the organization of institutions and distributed goods. Add to this the effort one must spend when we attempt to speak in Aristotelian terms of the mean or when we try to describe justice as a personal perfection of the will, and one discerns Porter's motivations in offering us a Thomistic account of justice. Porter expounds Aquinas's account of justice as a virtue perfecting the will and rightly ordering our social relations. The upshot of this analysis is a rich treatment of justice as both an external moral ideal and the relationship of that ideal to the perfection of the person's will.

Porter's objective in chapter 1 is twofold. First, to demonstrate the coherence and relevance of Aquinas's account of the virtues. And second, to set up the problem animating her inquiry: the fact that justice as a virtue stands apart from the other cardinal virtues, especially as an ideal. We typically conceive of virtues as habitual dispositions, internal to the agent and judged praiseworthy or blameworthy according to a "rational mean" that, while potentially functioning normatively, is also internal to the agent and her circumstances. Thus, the courageous or temperate person acts courageously or temperately according to very specific—maybe even unrepeatable—contingencies that require prudence, practice, and knowledge of what other courageous or temperate persons have done in similar situations. But when it comes to justice, we judge agents and their acts according to the "real mean" of the right (*ius*), which is necessarily external to the agent, her circumstances, her knowledge, and so on. In other words, the tension between justice's relationship to a "real mean" and the other virtues' relationship to a "rational mean" seems to throw us into unhelpful binaries: law/virtue, rules/ideals, universals/particulars, and the right / the good. But as Porter demonstrates, the tension between these binaries lessens when we recognize that the tension is not between two different ways of evaluating action. Rather, the divisions characterizing these binaries "track the fundamental division between the virtues of the passions, which observe a rational mean only, and justice, which observes a real mean" (41). The concept of a rational mean guiding our evaluation of courage and temperance is relatively straightforward (as a concept!), and is squarely at home in a conventional account of virtue. But the concept of a

real mean guiding our evaluation of justice is decidedly more complex and requires careful attention to the faculty perfected by the virtue.

Thus, chapter 2 exposit the Thomistic doctrine of the will as the causal principle of voluntary action. The hope here is that if we adequately represent the faculty of the will, then we will have some insight into the virtue that is supposed to perfect it, even if that virtue seems oddly out of place among the rest of the perfective habits. Aquinas's account provides valuable insight into the rational agent's participation in the appetitive orientation of all natures toward their perfection. But in humans, we see this appetite exercised in a distinct way that makes action susceptible to personal and social reflection and evaluation. Human actions are susceptible to such evaluation because they are voluntary—the result of complex processes of deliberation and choice among myriad goods proposed to the rational appetite. At this point, Porter considers whether the will is completely subject to the dictatorial intellect. Her treatment of the issue unsurprisingly defends the liberty of the will. But in attempting to make this case without recourse to theology, one may wonder about the significance of her contribution to the infinite regress inherent within the question.

Porter then asks: why must the will be perfected if it is already naturally oriented to the universal good? Porter reminds us that the will must be inclined to the good in some determined way that makes action possible; and she further notes that one may *know* the good conducive to one's happiness and still freely choose otherwise. Thus, as the will works on the passions to order them toward the agent's happiness, so there must be a way in which the will, free from compulsion, can work on itself in order to direct itself toward the same happiness. Porter states that "we naturally desire life and effective operation in accordance with the structuring principles of our existence" (100). Porter's work here, as elsewhere in her body of work, raises a cluster of contentious issues, at the center of which are the following questions: by what standard is the "ideal of rationality" set? Is it, as Porter claims, set by "mature, self-reflective" agents who enjoy "autonomy and self-command" (97)? Or is such an ideal only describable in theological terms? Whence "structuring principles"? And are the authorities that commend the principles to us external or internal? Porter favors an inductive approach that emphasizes the prolonged, complex, and reflexive process of developing the capacity to recognize how one's "overall ideal is exemplified by particular actions, or perhaps undermined or contradicted" by them (103). At this point, Porter has poised us to appreciate the way justice works with other virtues to expand and develop the will in accord with the unique nature of the rational animal. The egoism and relativism that seem ingredient to her inductive account of human desire

indeed loom large here. But Porter has only prepared us for appreciating the complex relationship between justice as a personal, internal perfection, and justice as an objective, external ideal.

In chapter 3, Porter returns us to the externality of justice as an ideal that can be described in terms of an internal perfection of the will *and* in terms of a real mean relevant for objective standards of action in relationship to other rational agents. Porter untangles the complex relations between natural law and natural right in thirteenth-century Scholasticism generally and Aquinas's thought particularly. She successfully accounts for the sometimes confusing moments in Aquinas's improbable, but ultimately successful, synthesis of Aristotelian concepts of just exchange, Ciceronian concepts of just relations, and Roman legal traditions of rights claims at law. Porter's achievement is impressive in this chapter, for she shows how Aquinas integrates the notion of *jus naturale* with the moral and legal ideal of equality among persons, created in the *imago Dei*. Furthermore, she convincingly shows that Aquinas's integration is possible because it is rooted in a "referential realism" that grasps not only the first principle of practical reasoning, but also the specification of this principle in other-regarding relations. The spontaneous grasp of others' rightful claims suggests to Porter that, on a deep and thorough reading of Aquinas, we can say the following regarding the perfection of the will and justice as a mean: The will requires unique habits to orient the agent's natural desire for self-perfection toward the further capacity to regard others as ends in themselves. One's desire for happiness and perfection is not going to naturally become just regard for the claims of others simply on account of one's innate and spontaneous recognition of those claims. Rather, justice, as a perfection of the will, introduces "a distinctively new orientation, implying a normative standard that cannot be derived from the natural inclination of the agent toward its own perfection" (157). This chapter's emphasis on natural rights, equality, and justice is a sophisticated response to conventional criticisms of the Thomistic social vision as oppressively hierarchical, static, and organicist. Though some might accuse her of anachronism, Porter's read of Aquinas puts him at the center of important modern conversations about freedom, authority, equality, order, rights, and the duties incumbent on rational agents pursuing common life.

Chapter 4 is an insightful examination of how we can speak accurately about the application of the precepts of justice. The chapter addresses a number of contemporary controversies about the structure of the act, the role of intention in determining the moral character of an act, the role of practical reason in the moral life, and whether there is such a thing as an intrinsically evil act. Porter provides a concise account of Thomistic philos-

ophy of act in order to clarify why Aquinas appears to us to be impractically strident when it comes to determining the morality of an act. As Porter helpfully points out, the foundation of Aquinas's supposed inflexibility regarding intrinsically evil acts is the dignity of those (including the agent's self) who will suffer as a result of our evil acts. The high dignity of the human person is sufficient ground for rejecting two popular accounts of moral justification: emotivism and (for lack of a better term) prudentialism. Porter soundly dismantles the suggestion that we may justify our acts by recourse to our visceral moral emotions; but she performs this dismantling without jettisoning the passions. Indeed, she provides us with an insightful grammar for speaking about the relationship between subjective passions and objective justice. Similarly, Porter dismisses the disproportionate confidence contemporary moral philosophers have in the creativity and flexibility of practical reason. Instead, she places the reality of moral discernment within the broader matrix of human nature and the myriad actions we spontaneously recognize as conducive to the flourishing of ourselves and others. Moral discernment certainly retains a pivotal place in the moral life, but we must keep at least two things in mind when speaking about discernment: 1) discernment is not itself a perfection of the will and so cannot stand in for justice, which is unique in its ability to perfect the will's disposition toward the other; and 2) the necessity of discernment is secondary to the requirements of justice as a type of universal love.

The final chapter ties up an important loose end regarding the challenge of properly ordering our love for others and our love for comprehensive goods ingredient to happiness. Porter describes the challenge as a perceived tension between our duty to others and our desire to give ourselves to higher pursuits and/or communities, (E.g., I love my family *and* I desire to enter the Catholic theological tradition. These two loves require a moral negotiation that transcends mere scheduling conflicts or questions of productivity and multitasking). The chapter returns to our spontaneous grasp of first principles and the commonsensical admission that we do not praise humans who forsake all others in pursuit of more comprehensive goods. Instead, we praise those humans who, through practice, induction, course-correction, and learning come to pursue happiness without egoism. Such persons creatively synthesize the particular claims of others with the general claims of truth, goodness, and beauty on human agents in such a way that general and particular justice mutually reinforce one another. These moral exemplars have achieved a special type of love that truly is a perfection of the will even as it is an external ideal rooted in the transcendent dignity of each human person.

Porter's book is a welcome companion for those of us concerned

about human dignity, the origins of human rights, political discourse on liberty, equality, and autonomy, intrinsically evil acts, and the role of practical reason in the moral life. Critics of Porter's past work on natural law will continue to be challenged by her incisive work with Aquinas. Those suspicious of Aquinas's relevance within secular liberal discourse will be challenged by her careful attention to rational psychology and its irreducible necessity in the defense of human dignity. As with Porter's previous works, *Justice as a Virtue* presents philosophers and theologians with many new ways to critically dialogue about the transcendent vocation of the human person. N.V.

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The Sermon on the Mount and Moral Theology: A Virtue Perspective

by William C. Mattison III (*New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017*),
xiii + 279 pp.

WILLIAM MATTISON'S *The Sermon on the Mount and Moral Theology* endeavors to remedy the lack of sustained engagement between theological exegesis of Matthew 5–7 and the tradition of moral reflection grounded in the virtues. In short, it argues that the convergences between the Sermon and virtue ethics prove mutually illuminating. Reading the Sermon on the Mount through the lens of the virtues casts light on the structure and content of Jesus's words, while the vision of the Christian life presented in the sermon both refines and reorients a classical understanding of the virtues.

Mattison explicitly situates his project within the trajectory of moral theology advanced by Servais Pinckaers (5). This claim is substantiated by his insistence that a shared understanding of morality as the pursuit of happiness rather than the fulfillment of duty undergirds the fruitfulness of the engagement between the Sermon and virtue ethics. Moreover, drawing liberally from the treasury of patristic and medieval (especially Thomistic) commentary on the scriptural text, Mattison's exegesis of the Sermon reflects an evident concern for the sources of Christian ethics. This approach is bound to generate valuable insights, of course, given the congeniality of those commentators to an approach rooted in the virtues. At the same time, he also refers to a plethora of contemporary biblical scholarship in order to highlight the commonalities between more recent research and the tradition. Nevertheless, readers seeking a historical-criti-

cal examination of Matthew 5–7 will be disappointed, for despite his facility with the literature, Mattison's is decidedly a work of moral theology, and his engagement with contemporary exegesis is at the service of that aim. Indeed, his strategic deployment of biblical commentary—ancient and modern—constitutes one of the book's key virtues.

The structure of the book follows, for the most part, the order of the biblical text. The first chapter examines the beatitudes and argues for an "intrinsic relationship" between "the characteristics of the blessed and the rewards they attain" (17). This relationship holds that there exists a continuity of activity between the qualifying condition declared blessed here and now and the reward promised to those who embody those qualities. Mattison surveys each of the beatitudes in order to illustrate this point, showing how, for instance, there exists, contrary to expectations, profound continuity between "refusing to find relief in worldly comforts" which characterizes those who mourn, the qualifying condition, and those who receive "the comfort of eternal reward" (29). This analysis aims to illustrate the connection between ethics and eschatology by demonstrating the beatitudes' simultaneous promise of God's future deliverance and exhortation to a particular way of living here and now.

A potential weakness of Mattison's approach, however, is that emphasis on the continuity between the qualifications and rewards of the beatitudes overshadows the discontinuity between the content of the beatitudes and the powers of this world. In the process, Mattison overlooks an opportunity to consider how a virtue-based analysis of the sermon might prove useful not only for personal holiness but also for social transformation. Mattison offers the beginnings of such an analysis in his treatment on the "utterly ecclesiological" verses about salt and light, but a more extended discussion of this matter would be helpful (55).

Chapter 2 considers the six antitheses of Matthew 5:17–48 in order to determine how Jesus can be understood to fulfill the Mosaic Law in both its moral and ceremonial dimensions. Mattison argues that the foundation of the new law's fulfillment of the old resides in their possession of a common *telos*, namely, bringing about the kingdom of God. Consequently, the new law can be understood as "enjoining prudent activity that constitutes a more perfect participation of the person in the ultimate end sought" even when it commands different material content than the old law (85). Moreover, the new law, as the grace of the Holy Spirit, fulfills the old law by endowing human beings with the capacity to live according to the law in ways that were previously impossible. Mattison argues that a similar dynamic applies to the new law's fulfillment of the ceremonial law, for "by sharing in the same *telos* and engaging in new law practices instituted by

and directly reflective of what the old ceremonial law prefigured, the new law fulfills the old" (101). It is precisely because the ceremonial rites of the old law prefigure Christ that these rituals can be brought to fulfillment in the sacraments of the new law.

The third chapter takes up questions surrounding intentionality and moral formation by examining Jesus's admonitions against hypocrisy. Mattison argues that Thomistic action theory and virtue ethics enhance our understanding of these passages by showing how the proximate and remote ends of human action relate to one another. Clearly, one's further goal is significant for moral evaluation of an act, but Mattison also proposes the moral object, the immediate goal chosen "from the perspective of the acting person," is also crucial for ethical assessment. In fact, he argues it is precisely the incompatibility of one's immediate and further goals that gives rise to the hypocrisy that Jesus condemns. Mattison also suggests that this section of the sermon offers practical advice for growth in virtue by including hyperbolic metaphors about prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. These, he argues, are themselves suggestive of additional concrete actions and practices one could perform in order to cultivate good moral habits.

The fourth chapter argues that, contrary to the common interpretation among biblical scholars, Matthew 6:19 – 7:12 possesses a thematic unity governed by Jesus's injunction to "seek first the kingdom of God" (6:33). He argues that the single-minded pursuit of this ultimate goal "functions not only as one's highest priority, but also and perhaps even more significantly as shaping or 'in-forming' all of one's more proximate actions" (166). In particular, the Sermon on the Mount reorients classical virtue ethics by revealing that humanity's ultimate end is not an abstraction but the heavenly Father, a personal and provident God. Mattison further argues that this knowledge of the last end "has a transformative impact on practical decision-making" with respect to temporal goods (180). Faith in God's "provident gratuity" excludes both excessive worry about temporal security and also presumptuous inactivity (183). Likewise, in the realm of interpersonal relations, the injunction to seek first the kingdom "invites us to adopt . . . God's generous and merciful standard," leaving behind pettiness, vengefulness, and even concern for our own security (189).

Chapter 5 considers the concluding portion of the Sermon with its emphasis on the final judgment, and it contends that reflection on the virtue of hope is instructive for understanding these passages. Mattison submits that the intrinsic relationship between the life of grace and heavenly reward allows one to hope not only in God as a means of enduring life's trials but also "to hope in temporal goods as ordered to eternal happiness" (221). More illuminating, perhaps, is Mattison's suggestion

that the vice of presumption can identify the faults of those who fail to attain eternal life in Matthew 7:13–27. He argues that those who fail to enter through the narrow gate and those who build their houses on sand “presume . . . eternal life will be attained without living accordingly in this life” (230). Similarly, those who cry out “Lord, Lord!” in Matthew 7:22 are turned away from the kingdom because they are guilty of another kind of presumption insofar as they “think they can secure eternal life on their own by their actions” (235).

The book’s concluding chapter argues that the Lord’s Prayer “can be accurately understood as a request for the seven foundational virtues of the Christian life” (240). Mattison here proposes a novel alignment between the Prayer’s seven petitions and the seven foundational virtues of the Christian life. He correlates the first three petitions, which ask that God’s name be hallowed, God’s kingdom come, and God’s will be done, with the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, respectively. He then aligns the last four petitions, asking for “our daily bread,” forgiveness of sins, strength again temptation, and deliverance from evil, with the infused moral virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude.

In contrast to the two other sets of parallels—between the beatitudes and virtues in chapter 1 and between the sacraments and antitheses in chapter 2—that Mattison offers with some degree of tentativeness earlier in the book, this alignment lacks any sense of being “forced” and is therefore not only novel but also illuminating. The parallel between the petitions of the Lord’s Prayer and the virtues has the benefit both of respecting the traditional grouping of the petitions into those concerning God and those regarding temporal matters and of aligning each of these with the traditional sets of virtues which take as their objects God himself and “matters of this life,” respectively (268). Furthermore, examining the Lord’s Prayer as a request for the virtues underscores the fact that “happiness does not simply happen to us” (268). Rather, it is an activity in which human beings are called to participate, even as that participation is itself a divine gift facilitated by the infused virtues.

Mattison’s exegesis of the Sermon on the Mount is comprehensive and treats, with greater or lesser detail, every verse of Matthew 5–7. In the course of his exegetical analysis, Mattison touches on a number of other ongoing theological and ethical controversies: the relationship between Christianity and Judaism, the structure of the moral act, the role of the infused virtues, and relationship between eschatology and ethics. He deftly appropriates the resources that emerge from these conversations and incorporates them constructively into his own argument. As a result, his analysis is marked by both penetrating depth and incisive clarity. Perhaps surprisingly, however,

Mattison offers little by way of extended discussion on certain controversial topics constituting the ethical *materia* of the Sermon, such as marriage or the use of force. Rather, his focus remains fixed on how a virtue-based analysis might illuminate the *forma* of the sermon as a depiction of the Christian life as ordered to happiness, even as the Sermon transforms virtue ethics in light of the revelation of humanity's ultimate end as eternal union with "our heavenly Father," and this is precisely the book's chief accomplishment (127). By adopting an exegetical approach which identifies and analyzes the convergences between the Sermon on the Mount and virtue ethics, Mattison has offered a valuable contribution—both in method and in substance—to the renewal of moral theology. N.V.

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