

*Key Terms* an entire page; ‘agnosticism’ in the first is half a column; in the second a page. Some essays, for instance, the ‘*Kalam* cosmological’ argument runs through four pages. A *Dictionary* tells how the term ‘ontological argument’ is used; in *Key Terms* there is a seven page discussion of the idea. The books, then, serve very different purposes as do dictionaries and encyclopaedias. Several essays in *Key Terms* are in themselves interesting and illuminating contributions to contemporary debate, some are closer to being simply definitions (the entry on ‘Omnipotence’ is close to being a definition of the term with an addendum about God’s foreknowledge and freewill) but the entire collection is an excellent introduction to, and discussion of, contemporary questions in the philosophy of religion.

GARRETT BARDEN

**NATURA PURA : ON THE RECOVERY OF NATURE IN THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE** by Steven A. Long, *Fordham University Press*, 2010, pp. 282, \$65.00

Henri de Lubac’s hugely influential *Surnaturel* served to turn up the volume in the twentieth-century on what has been a perennial discussion in Christian theology, namely the relation of grace to nature and its amalgamate theological excursus. Prof. Steven Long argues that, contrary to the thesis of de Lubac, there is for St. Thomas, in addition to the supernatural end of beatitude, a natural end that defines the species of human nature. *Natura Pura* is a loaded and immediately controversial title; Long grabs the bull by the horns in arguing the thesis that pure nature discloses ‘the proximate, proportionate, natural end from which the species of man is derived’ (8), and also that the human person could without injustice have been created for this natural end alone, in a state of pure nature. For Long, the necessity of this thesis arises from the intelligibility and integrity of the natural order in its own right. The Thomist tradition has always, maintains Long, insisted that the gift of creation has its own theonomic character considered in precision from grace.

The book proceeds in two movements: the first chapter calls attention to the teaching of St. Thomas regarding the theonomic character of nature and the natural law. The following three chapters head off significant challenges to the author’s thesis regarding the intelligibility and integrity of *natura pura*. The created order, maintains Long, discloses real knowledge of God as cause and first principle of being. The denial of *natura pura* – that the gift of nature has an integral intelligibility and proximate end definitive of the species – reduces nature to an empty limit concept, an autonomist jurisdiction, unintelligible apart from grace; this denial results in a veritable ‘ontological evacuation of nature’ on the part of theology and philosophy (43). Long writes, ‘Once this theonomic character of natural order and natural law are lost, then sustaining the distinction of nature and grace simply formalizes the boundaries consequent upon the loss of God’ (43).

First, Long argues against an understanding of nature as a ‘vacuole for grace’. Interacting with Balthasar’s *The Theology of Karl Barth*, Long maintains that the account of nature rendered by Balthasar lacks ontological density; it is ‘the equivalent of a theological vacuole or empty Newtonian space, a placeholder for grace’ (55). Balthasar found the doctrine of *natura pura* both unhelpful and insufficient; for him an account of nature outside of the precincts of grace was purely hypothetical and unintelligible because *natura pura* is not the ‘concrete nature’ we experience. *Sed contra*, maintains Long, pure nature is a necessary and valid theological abstraction similar to other theological abstractions that Balthasar was quite comfortable employing (such as the real distinction between

essence and existence). *Natura pura*, while an abstraction, still does constitute real knowledge. Indeed, the Nicene doctrine that Christ assumed a human nature requires precisely such an abstraction: 'The mode of being of human nature is distinct in Christ, and in St. Peter, but the definition of human nature as such is not' (87). There is an intelligible ontological density in nature that is equivocally expressed in the Nicene definition and understood by its proximate natural end. Nature's further ordering in grace does not connote losing its initial natural ordering. Thus, the recurring motif in this book is St. Thomas's principle: 'Nature, and natural ends, do not suddenly vanish upon the promulgation of the *lex nova*, because grace does not destroy, but perfects nature (i.e., nature and the hierarchy of natural ends actually exist)' (80).

The loss of a realist ontology within the philosophy of nature has resulted in a vacuum in the contemporary philosophical guild; amongst many philosophers analytic thought is seen as the rightful heir to classical Thomism. In the third chapter Long questions whether analytics is really able to fill this gap. Logic in analytic thought substitutes for a metaphysics of *esse* and as such is not equipped for the task of a philosophical advertence to the real. Analytic thought is propaedeutic to philosophical method, maintains Long; logic is not in of itself a method, nor does analytic thought have a monopoly on logic, which, rather, is preliminary to every science. Long writes, 'Logic is not ontology, but rather it receives its first principle from metaphysics, and the whole subordinate realm occupied by logic is only intelligible owing to its ordering and relation towards the real' (124). As an example, Long points to a number of contemporary analytic attempts to offer an account of analogy. These frequently involve an effort to produce precise univocal mathematical formalization. Long counters that rigorous logic alone cannot provide an understanding of analogy that abstracts to differing relations of proper proportionality - which are admittedly always imperfect, as classical Thomism has advanced.

The charge most frequently levied against an account of *natura pura* is that it results in a type of inveterate Pelagianism. If nature has an integrity and intelligibility even in precision from grace, will nature not be putatively understood as 'perfectly fine', resulting in secular minimalism in which public discourse is hermetically sealed off from theological involvement? Long's last chapter, 'Natura Pura: not a secularist stalking horse for secularist minimalism or Pelagianism', argues to the contrary. The proportionate teleology of nature towards its proximate end, argues Long, invites speculative inquiry into the real created order that stands under the dictates of divine governance and providence. Thus, the intelligibility of nature is charged with apologetic leverage. Nature is impressed not just with a power or capacity, but contains a genuine *motio*, an authentic, inexpugnable *actus* towards its end. This proximate natural end that defines an act discloses specific moral norms even when abstracted from revelation. Nature, therefore, serves as an intelligible ground to the further ordering in grace and as a consonant foundation to the gift of revelation. Nevertheless, the actual conditions of the wayfarer after the Fall is such that although the natural law is knowable, its full existential application necessitates the further ordering in grace and the *data* of revelation.

*Natura Pura* makes a convincing case that the natural *praeambula fidei* need to receive much greater theological and philosophical contemplation than is currently afforded them. The created natural order is the 'crucial middle term in the dialogue of the Church and the world' (198), which is ignored to our detriment. Far from leading to secularist minimalism, Christian involvement in this middle term offers a rational interaction in the speculative truths of theism, it offers real knowledge regarding the ends of nature and the moral order, and informs practical matters such as ethics, politics and law. The gravamen of Long's effort is to argue that the failure to interact with this common middle term shared by the Church and

the world, i.e., the rejection of *natura pura*, gives license to a secular agenda intent on banishing Christian interaction in public life and relegating religion to the purely private, emotive and subjective realm.

*Natura Pura* is a unique, foundational and crucially important text. Long demonstrates that discussions surrounding *natura pura* are not to be considered the purview of arcane, scholastic riddles about a hypothetical, but are a necessary philosophical and theological abstraction offering insight into creation, providence and the real order in which we find ourselves. An account of *natura pura* informs metaphysics, natural philosophy, anthropology, and ethics. When we ask, 'Who is Christ?' the answer is, of course, 'God and Man'. But, what is man? And more importantly, asks Long, *quid sit Deus?* He writes, 'To deny the role of natural knowledge here would appear suicidal for Christian truth' (210). The author succeeds in his goal of offering a Thomistic *vade mecum* for the foundational place of speculative inquiry into the 'whole ontological density of nature' as essential to the theological and philosophical task.

GERALD BOERSMA

**JESUS OF NAZARETH: PART 2. HOLY WEEK: FROM THE ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM TO THE RESURRECTION** by Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *CTS*, London and *Ignatius*, San Francisco, 2011, pp. xvii + 362, £14.95 hbk.

In this second volume of his *Jesus of Nazareth*, Pope Benedict, writing in his personal capacity as Joseph Ratzinger, turns his attention to the events of Holy Week and Easter. It is an ambitious project, which he carries out with characteristic clarity, simplicity and profundity.

His overarching purpose – reflecting a motif expressed in speeches and writings over many years – is to offer an exegesis which 'without abandoning its historical character' (p. xiv) has nonetheless rediscovered its identity as a theological discipline. Yet Benedict is subtle enough a thinker, and receptive enough to historical-critical questions, to recognize that this is not a straightforward procedure. It is an 'art' as much as a 'science', and an artist needs insight and imagination in order to accomplish his or her task effectively. Thus, while the reader will certainly find careful discussions appropriate to a more scientific analysis, there is far more to enthuse the soul, and indeed the mind, in an account which refuses to treat Jesus of Nazareth simply as an object of historical curiosity.

The book traces the events of the Passion from the triumphal entry to the crucifixion and burial, and from there to the Resurrection, with an epilogue exploring the meaning of the Ascension. From a historical perspective, this structure is enabled by the fact that the chronology of the gospel passion narratives is much more stable than for other parts of the Jesus tradition. Where they are at variance, as on the date of the crucifixion, he follows a good number of recent scholars in opting for the Johannine chronology.

Nevertheless, even in the details of the narratives, Joseph Ratzinger exhibits a preference for what Luke Johnson calls a 'hermeneutics of generosity or piety' over against a 'hermeneutics of suspicion'. This does not mean that he underestimates the historical difficulties of the gospel traditions. Again and again, he shows awareness of the complexity of the text's tradition-history, and of particular redactional emphases. Thus he describes Jesus's eschatological discourse as 'woven together' from individual strands of tradition. He notes that Matthew is 'certainly not recounting historical fact' in asserting that 'all the people' called for Jesus to be crucified (Matt. 27:25), but offering a theological aetiology to account for the tragic events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem. Indeed, his subtle