

Despite Balthasar's conviction concerning the impossibility of a standpoint outside the divine and historical dramas (cf. p. 70), Kilby asks if Balthasar himself plays the role of 'an actor *within* the drama' or rather 'of the theater critic – and perhaps also a theorist of drama' (p. 65). Thirdly, the other recurrent patterns in the work of the Catholic theologian (the 'fulfillment' and the 'circle') also manifest his peculiar point of view 'from *above*'. On one hand, Kilby stresses that Balthasar presumes to have a global cognition of the totality that allows him to judge the inadequacies of the other standpoints compared to the fulfillment in Christ. On the other hand, in the very clear words of Kilby, "Balthasar does not offer any kind of account how the historical thought-forms from the 'midpoint which is beyond history' [...]; rather, he makes reference to the common derivation from a transcendent center precisely to *reject* the need to give any particular account of the relationship between them' (p. 88). How can he practise a humble theology – as the Swiss theologian recommends – and, at the same time, presume this kind of higher point of view? Fourthly, the Trinitarian theology of Balthasar, thinking the mystery of the Cross in the kenosis of the Father that empties Himself in giving all to the Son beyond 'the usual bounds of theology', also shows that he seems 'to know more than can be known' (p.114) – a tendency that is united to the danger, in the field of the hermeneutics of evil, of sliding into a sort of divinization of the tragic.

Leaving to readers the detailed chapter on 'the gender' and 'the Nuptial', I wish to devote a few words to the conclusions of the book. From Kilby's perspective, the work of Balthasar depends too much, on the one hand, on his own brilliant personality and, on the other hand, on sources that are 'not available to the rest of us' (p.157), probably drawn from Adrienne von Speyr's extraordinary experiences. Perhaps for these reasons, unlike Aquinas or Barth, Balthasar was not careful to safeguard his theology 'against the presumption of a God's eye view' (p. 162). Despite the difficulty of the enterprise, the book risks resolving itself in a learned *argumentum ad personam*, lacking a deep criticism of the main weaknesses of Balthasar's theology such as those, for example, indicated by John Milbank in *The Suspended Middle* (pp. 62–78).

MARCO SALVIOLI OP

**C.S.LEWIS – THE WORK OF CHRIST REVEALED by P.H. Brazier, *Pickwick Publications*, Eugene, OR, 2012, pp. xx + 299, \$ 35, pbk**

This is the second of four books in a series entitled *C.S. Lewis: Revelation and the Christ*. The author, Paul Brazier, is an independent scholar living in London. He is the full-time caregiver for his wife, Hilary, who has epilepsy and to whom the series is dedicated.

The volume under review is divided into three parts. In the first part, Brazier looks at the relationship of scripture, revelation and reason in Lewis's thought. In the second, he gives an instructive assessment of the 'Lord, liar, lunatic' trilemma which famously features in *Mere Christianity*, though also, as Brazier shows, in at least another twelve places across Lewis's corpus over a period of twenty-four years. And the third section addresses Lewis's changing attitude towards Christological prefigurements in pagan myths.

The series aims to provide a 'systematic study of what Lewis understood about Jesus Christ, and the revelation of God, who is at the heart of orthodox, traditional, theology'. Brazier considers Lewis's concept of 'mere Christianity' to be 'the faith set out in the creeds and explained by the church fathers', a faith

which was ‘not his own personal religion, or his own personal selection from Christian theology and church history’. It is, rather, a presentation of ‘the basic core of the Christian faith’:

Evangelicals may not like the way Lewis subscribed to what can be considered a traditional Catholic position on the sacraments and purgatory, but he held these beliefs for good reason. And Evangelical readers would do well to think why he did. Likewise Roman Catholic readers would do well to see how Lewis could get beyond the external structure of religion to appreciate the immediacy of relationship any believer can have with the Lord Jesus, which in some ways by-passes the structures and authority of the church(es). (4)

Brazier evidently admires what Lewis’s former pupil, John Betjeman, called (in his poem ‘May-Day Song for North Oxford’) ‘the wide high-table *logos* of St. C.S. Lewis’s Church’, though he does not say whether Catholics can by-pass the authority of *this* church if they want an immediate relationship with the Lord Jesus.

Lewis, of course, never intended the non-denominationalism of ‘mere Christianity’ to become its own denomination. ‘Mere Christianity’ is more like a legal fiction, possessing a certain evangelistic utility, but without permanent ecclesiological significance. Unlike Brazier, Lewis knew very well that he was indeed making a ‘personal selection from Christian theology and church history’ in the doctrines he chose to foreground in *Mere Christianity*, and it is a careless elision to conflate the title of that book with Lewis’s theology in general. Yes, Lewis believed in purgatory, but he never mentions purgatory in *Mere Christianity*, and for deliberate reasons.

*C.S. Lewis – The Work of Christ Revealed* (an ambiguous title, when one thinks about it) is written, Brazier says, ‘for academics and students, but also, crucially, for those people, ordinary Christians, without a theology degree who enjoy and gain sustenance from reading Lewis’s work’. The broad-based audience that Brazier has in mind perhaps accounts for the varieties of tone he adopts. Much of the time he speaks in a voice that is careful, scholarly, literary. Sometimes the style becomes tortuous (viz. the sentence beginning ‘The value he accords to reason’ on p. 71). And sometimes he will suddenly shift into a much more chatty, casual manner, full of rhetorical questions, lecture-room wit, and personal anecdote. In the section on the trilemma, he lists all the synonyms for *lunatic* (‘crazy, daft, gaga, bonkers’ *et cetera*). He relates a prophetic dream his wife had about 9/11. He reprints a full-page ‘pen-and-ink drawing by P.H. Brazier’ of ‘the young and mature Lewis, with George MacDonald in the centre’. These different registers and the awkward transitions between them leave the reader feeling perplexed and unsure about just what kind of volume this is meant to be.

And indeed, when one presses the book it shows itself not to have great substance. It is lengthy, has many details, and contains passages that are useful, but overall it lacks reliability and heft. The chapter on Lewis’s theory of ‘transposition’ is particularly troubling. The repeated comparisons with Karl Barth tell us more about Brazier’s theological interests than Lewis’s. The assertion that Lewis the Christian convert viewed pagan myths as ‘the mere product of humanity’ (p. 206) is controverted by the very passage quoted two pages earlier, where Lewis states that such myths ‘are God expressing himself through the minds of poets, using such images as he found there’. Solid stretches appear from time to time, but there, where Brazier is clear and sound, he is mostly just re-presenting Lewis’s ideas, not analyzing or interrogating them.

Distractingly, the book is littered with typos, repetitions, and tics. Could not a proof-reader have got the sacred tetragrammaton right (p.180)? How many times

do we need to be told the meaning of *aut Deus aut malus homo*? Is the author on a commission to use ‘pertinently’ as his go-to adverb?

Most problematic of all, Brazier simply puts too much weight on Lewis as a serious theologian. He acknowledges the existence of those who ‘assume that [Lewis] was an amateur theologian’ and who claim that he was ‘not an original thinker or a systematician on the scale of more noted professionals’ (p.5), but he asserts that his four-volume series ‘demonstrates that this is *not* so, that such conclusions are spurious’. The funny thing is that these were Lewis’s own conclusions. It is not for nothing that Lewis said of himself that he did not belong among ‘real theologians’ (‘Transposition’), that he was ‘not good enough at Theology’ (*Letters to Malcolm*), that he was an ‘amateur’ (*Reflections on the Psalms*), that ‘any theologian will see easily enough what, and how little, I have read’ (*The Problem of Pain*). These disavowals may contain elements of false modesty, they may also, in part, be canny strategies designed to ingratiate himself with his readers, but they are surely also statements of fact. And therefore it is not the content of Lewis’s theology that deserves attention so much as the manner of its presentation. One need not look only to his fiction and poetry to see this. Even in his non-fictional works, Lewis’s primary value as a theologian is rhetorical, pedagogical, imaginative: he uses arresting analogies, provides handy tools of thought, refreshes conventional wisdom through techniques of defamiliarization, shows the dramatic verve, the poetic logic, the personal importance, the sheer attractiveness of the faith, and so on. As Austin Farrer said of *The Problem of Pain*: ‘we think we are listening to an argument, in fact we are presented with a vision; and it is the vision that carries conviction’. Whither is fled that visionary gleam? Alas, it burns up and all but passes away under Brazier’s well-intentioned but poorly handled magnifying-glass.

MICHAEL WARD

**A DEFENSE OF DIGNITY: CREATING LIFE, DESTROYING LIFE, AND PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF CONSCIENCE** by Christopher Kaczor, *Notre Dame Press*, Indiana, 2013, pp. x + 220, \$ 30, pbk

Christopher Kaczor makes it plain at the outset that his book *A Defense of Dignity: Creating Life, Destroying Life and Protecting the Rights of Conscience* is a collection of his previously published essays. These essays have been (minimally) revised and arranged as thirteen chapters. Nine of the essays were published in the *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly*, two in the journal *Christian Bioethics*, one in the *Linacre Quarterly*, several also appeared online and two originally appeared as chapter contributions in edited volumes (though curiously the title of one of the books appears as *The Ethics of Organ Donation* in Kaczor’s book rather than as its actual title *The Ethics of Organ Transplantation*).

Kaczor says that these essay chapters ‘examine ethical issues related to human dignity’ (p.1). His first chapter sets the scene by justifying human dignity, particularly the dignity that is intrinsic to all human beings, in response to those who argue against the usefulness of dignity or who reduce dignity to the exercise of autonomy. Referring to the three-fold analysis made by Daniel Sulmasy of dignity as attributed, as intrinsic worth and as flourishing (p.5), Kaczor states that these three senses of dignity ‘inform’ the different parts of his book (p.6). His second chapter consolidates his justification of human dignity by arguing through the question, ‘are all species equal in dignity’. Kaczor neatly demolishes arguments