

argument, but with an admirable goal of fostering a spiritual theology that does not shy away from difficult paradoxes.

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**A THOMISTIC CHRISTOCENTRISM: RECOVERING THE CARMELITES OF SALAMANCA ON THE LOGIC OF THE INCARNATION** by Dylan Schrader, [Thomistic Ressourcement Series]. *The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 2021, pp. xiv + 266, £54.95, hbk*

The revival of interest in the continuing relevance of early modern scholasticism is a welcome development in current theology. This study is a splendid example of how insights from seventeenth-century Thomism can be communicated in a succinct and readable fashion today. It explores the contribution of the Carmelites of Salamanca, who produced a lengthy multi-authored course across the whole range of scholastic theology, to the question of the ‘motive of the incarnation’: For what reason did God become incarnate? Was it ultimately to redeem us from sin, or was there some other rationale independent of the Fall?

Chapter one recounts how the question arose in the schools from different angles in the twelfth century, and came to be cast and answered in such a way during the thirteenth that a polarization of Thomist and Scotist schools ensued. While the disciples of Aquinas held that Christ would not have come if Adam had not sinned, the followers of Scotus concluded from the primacy of Christ’s predestination that he would have become incarnate in this world, even if there were no Fall. Chapter two shows how the two positions borrowed from one another and a combination of them was attempted. This sets the scene for Chapter 3’s analysis of the argument of the Salmanticenses’ own disputation (translated by the author in a separate volume), including a clear explanation of the theological tools employed.

Schrader explores how they refined what he calls a more ‘three-dimensional’ (p. 97) use of the Scotist ordering of logical instances within God’s plan, while avoiding the overcomplications of some Thomist appropriations of it. From all possible worlds, God chooses one in which Christ’s redemptive incarnation depends on the fact of sin according to one dimension of causality (material), where everything also depends on him according to another dimension of causality (final). Moreover, while Christ’s incarnation is willed by God *for* the world in one sense, the world is willed *for* Christ in another. Key to this is the analysis of final causal-

ity into several aspects, where our benefit is the ‘end’ of his coming (*finis cui*) and Christ is conversely our ‘end’, simply speaking, desired on its own account (*finis cuius gratia*). It is the latter that guarantees that the Salmanticenses’ Thomism is Christocentric.

In Chapter 5, Schrader defends their account against a range of subsequent critics. Thus emboldened, he then takes their position with admirable eirenicism to those of Rahner (here Scotist, Chapter 5) and von Balthasar (here Thomist, Chapter 6) and gallantly attempts to show how the Salmanticenses’ position can also be enriched by them. It is noteworthy that while he pays extended attention to these theologians, there are only occasional mentions of another important Catholic theologian of the twentieth century, Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange OP. This is surprising because Garrigou was deeply indebted to the Salmanticenses on the incarnation’s motive and committed himself to their account of Christ’s final causality. However, it may be that, given the wide prejudice against Garrigou, only a fresh account of an earlier modern Thomist approach can gain a fair hearing today.

There is perhaps one respect in which Schrader overstates the Salmanticenses’ Christocentrism. He says not only that the Redeemer is willed by God as ‘the proximate final cause of all other works’ (p. 231) but specifically asserts that they held that ‘the grace of original justice was indeed produced for Christ as final cause’ (p. 104). This theme returns both in Schrader’s engagement with Rahner (pp. 174, 199–201) and in his response to an objection from some Thomists that the Salmanticenses confuse the state of original justice with that of the redeemed. Schrader rightly denies that the Salmanticenses thought Christ the meritorious cause of original justice, as he is indeed the meritorious cause of our grace, while also affirming that they taught that he is original justice’s final cause (pp. 144–150).

Now it is true that the Salmanticenses speak of ‘all other things’ being ordered to Christ as their *finis cuius gratia* (p. 75), and one might suppose that this includes original justice. However, they mention there specifically only the permission of sin and redemption, and not original justice itself. Again, where they speak of ‘all the divine works pertaining to the order of nature and of grace’ in connection with Christ’s final causality, they are arguably speaking in the context of the permission to sin and redemption, while original justice is not explicitly mentioned (p. 76). I wonder whether, although the Salmanticenses considered it possible that God could have arranged it that Christ was the proximate final cause of original justice, this was not their preferred position.

Schrader rightly points out that an enquiry into all this is put off until later in their work (p. 104), mentioning the further disputation that considers the extent of Christ’s Headship. It seems to me that here the Salmanticenses qualify the sense in which Christ was an ‘end’ for humanity before the Fall. Opposing the position that Christ was the Head of prelapsarian Adam, they consider the argument for that position that Christ must have

exerted an influence on him before the Fall in the mode of a final cause, since Christ is the *finis cuius gratia* of all things. However, while they maintain that it is true that all things are related to Christ as to what is primarily intended by God, they allow a sort of exception for the state of original justice. Since their account of the motive of the incarnation means that Christ's coming presupposed original sin in the order of material cause, that is, the 'destruction' of original justice, Christ did not exert influence, formally speaking, on that original state in the order of final cause.

I would have found it interesting to have seen what Schrader would say about this passage. Otherwise, it is easy to suspect that the Salmanticenses were not quite so Christocentric as he supposes. Or is Schrader inadvertently pointing to a Thomism even more Christocentric than either the Salmanticenses or Garrigou-Lagrange proposed?

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**THE ABUSE OF CONSCIENCE: A CENTURY OF CATHOLIC MORAL THEOLOGY** by Matthew Levering, *William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2021, pp. viii + 360, £36.99, hbk*

In the *Investigations* Wittgenstein diagnoses one of the principal sources of philosophical illness: 'A main cause of philosophical disease—a one-sided diet: one nourishes one's thinking with only one kind of example' (*PI* § 593). Matthew Levering in *The Abuse of Conscience* sets out to diagnose a main cause of theological disease; the one-sided diet that results from an overemphasis on conscience at the expense of a wider account of how grace transforms human conduct.

Levering's diagnosis is made through the history of a century of moral theology, beginning with a chapter on 'Conscience and the Bible', which examines how Catholic and non-Catholic theologians in the twentieth century up to Vatican II understood the role of conscience in the bible. Theologians who elevated conscience to give it a central place in their reading of Scripture, such as Tyrrell and Bultmann, are contrasted with theologians who sought to overcome a one-sided emphasis on conscience by giving greater emphasis to other elements of the moral life; such as Congar, who read Paul as emphasising the virtues of prudence and charity. This is by no means intended to be an exhaustive survey of pre-Vatican II biblical scholarship, but the eight figures represented provide a good overview of the state of scholarship from this period.