



the Catholic Reform that is refreshing. Lehner's work is a welcome addition to the field and should be required reading in courses on early modern Catholicism.

doi:10.1017/S0036930623000492

Jeffrey Skaff, *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth: A New Conversation*

(New York: Routledge, 2022), pp. xiv + 217. \$170.00.

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Since Hans Urs von Balthasar's engagement with Karl Barth, there has been no shortage of engagements between Barth and Aquinas. Adding to this body of work, Jeffrey Skaff provides a new reading of Aquinas and Barth highlighting how divine 'mercy precedes justice' (p. 27) for both thinkers, and how this sharpens our understanding of their soteriologies, theological anthropologies and doctrines of God.

In his first chapter, Skaff sets the stage for this conversation by foregrounding the moral vocabulary of justice and mercy that is shared between Barth and Aquinas. By avoiding a metaphysical approach, this focus on justice and mercy is advantageous because it focuses our attention to God's actions and work in the world and shows the priority of divine mercy and non-competition between God's mercy and justice. Skaff lays out this prior point about God's justice and mercy by first expositing Aquinas' position in the *Summa Theologiae*. For Aquinas, justice pertains to right relations between persons and is determined 'by the particulars of those relationships' (p. 18). Skaff argues that for Thomas God cannot have a debt of justice towards creatures, except as it 'is due to it [the creature] by its nature and condition' (p. 25). This debt is an ordering 'according to divine wisdom' and an act whereby God is just towards God's own divine being. At the same time, divine freedom is affirmed for Thomas, and this guarantees that every act of God towards creation is an act of mercy (i.e. it is gratuitous and not compelled), something that is also clearly present in Barth's own theological formulations. Skaff also names an overlap between Aquinas' account and Barth's own use of divine justice, which is always embedded in certain roles and relationships between God and creation ('Creator, Saviour, Preserver, Keeper, Guarantor, Protector, Helper, and Benefactor'; p. 29). Despite certain differences, Barth's implicit account of justice is very much like Aquinas' in that both are specified within particular relations between God and creature. Justice for both Barth and Aquinas is determined by God's specific role and the status of each human person (elect, sinner, Jew, Gentile etc.) in relation to God.

The latter chapters use this hermeneutic of divine justice and mercy to engage various theological issues from the vantage point of each thinker. For brevity, I will only highlight or comment on some important aspects of each chapter. Chapter 2 engages the 'humanity of God' and divine providence and shows that Aquinas' theology of law embedded within his broader theological framework allows him to affirm the basic contours of Barth's doctrine of election as found in *Church Dogmatics* II/2. Chapter 3 continues this thread of divine providence into nature-grace debates and

should attract the attention of not just scholars of a Barth–Aquinas dialogue, but also contemporary debates between Thomism(s) and *ressourcement* theology. Having used Barth's theology of creation and covenant to intervene into these debates, Skaff could have brought in Barth's criticisms about the *analogia entis*, but strangely, he does not do so. Chapter 4, which covers Aquinas's account of the Old Law and biblical history, also extends the conversation towards Pauline studies. From Apocalyptic Paul to the New Perspective, contemporary scholarship on Paul and the biblical law has centred around the question of continuity and discontinuity in biblical history. Skaff's analysis of Aquinas in this chapter shows that contemporary Pauline scholarship and classical theology can be mutually illuminating, and Aquinas may help hold the discontinuity and continuity that Paul narrates together in ways contemporary biblical scholarship has not. Finally, chapter 5 engages questions of justification and merit in the context of the New Law. Skaff argues that the divide between Barth and Aquinas on this issue does not pertain to divine and human action (a typical assumption in these debates), but about how divine justice is accomplished: Christ's justification *extra nos* (Barth) versus the justification and sanctification of the individual through the Holy Spirit (Aquinas). This latter point, as it pertains to pneumatology, is worth exploring further within and between Catholic and Reformed traditions more generally and could yield interesting potential for ecumenical dialogue.

Considering this shared ground between Barth and Aquinas, two questions remain for this reviewer. First, can this moral grammar of divine justice and mercy contribute to our understanding of actual divergences between these thinkers? For example, does the reality of, or lack thereof, of natural knowledge of God (or *analogia entis*) say something about their shared understanding of God's mercy and justice (or vice versa)? Or should the differences be explained and understood in light of other commitments, not shared between these thinkers? Second, if there is agreement between Aquinas on law and Barth on election and command, one wonders how the mediation of law and divine command figures into this. Is Aquinas's belief that angels are the mediating agents of the Old Law between God and humanity compatible with Barth's own beliefs about angelology and divine command? These critical questions are meant only to expand and evaluate the scope of this important book, which is a welcome clarification of actual differences and convergences between Barth and Aquinas and an excellent contribution to constructive and ecumenical theology.

doi:10.1017/S0036930623000510

William Greenway, *Reasonable Faith for a Post-Secular Age: Open Christian Spirituality and Ethics*

(Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2022), pp. xii + 215. \$28.00.

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In this powerful collection of essays, William Greenway sharpens the moral clarion call that he has been sounding for the past decade. With unflinching eye, he describes the