

more extravagant accounts of his alleged philosophy to be checked and counterbalanced.

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**ATONEMENT: SOUNDINGS IN BIBLICAL, TRINITARIAN, AND SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY** by Margaret M. Turek, *Ignatius Press, San Francisco, California, 2022, pp. 266, £16.21, pbk*

Christ's Incarnation and Passion transformed without negating essential principles the Jewish Day of Atonement. Throughout the Christian centuries the Fathers and Councils, including Ephesus and Trent, expounded upon the theological implications of atonement in both Testaments. Yet, as Benedict XVI noted in *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*, the concept is alien today due to a trivialization of evil, rejection of the existence of a good God, and our 'individualistic image of man' (p.159).

Margaret Turek faces challenges head-on as she plumbs the depths of the mystery of atonement with the aid of a 'quartet' of theologians: John Paul II, Benedict XVI, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Norbert Hoffmann. The selection is not arbitrary. Turek wishes to demonstrate a 'real, sustained and significant' harmony of thought between the four, noting, as a foundation, their agreement that the mystery of redemption must be interpreted by God; sin is transformed by infinite love; the inseparability of the Father and Son in the act of atonement (p.26).

Her work extends beyond speculative theology to a 'spiritual theology of atonement', with the rationale that a correct theological understanding of atonement includes a participation of each person in grace. The simple structure of three chapters with the first two addressing atonement in the Old Testament and in the New Testament respectively, should not deceive the reader. The study is profoundly exegetical and theological, or more specifically, Trinitarian. Turek aptly describes it as a fugue evidenced both by the subtle interplay of topics of sin, love, wrath, self-sacrifice, and by her attempt to balance the dialogue between the members of the quartet. The Scriptural analysis is deep and broad, summarized with an introductory reading of *John 3:16-19* – 'God so loved the world that he gave his only Son'. This and many other passages help her to define authentic elements of atonement beginning with the truth that sin is not measured by divine vengeance. Also,

‘the Son’s work of atonement’ does not result *in* the Father’s love being ‘revived or jumpstarted’, since it is rather ‘the result *of* the Father’s love’. Finally, the Father’s merciful love both forgives and atones for sin (p.18).

From Hoffman and von Balthasar Turek gleanes three integral factors of the process of atonement. God’s sovereign initiative, his passionate involvement, and humanity’s free participation, which is both derivative and imitative of the Father’s love, guide her theological interpretation of both Testaments. These factors include paradoxes, particularly since they demand a discussion of God’s *passion* and *wrath*. To respond to the question of the suffering of an impassible God, Turek cites the International Theological Commission. Its 1981 document identifies three boundaries for the delicate dialogue of God and passion: 1) God is *impassible*; 2) God is *immutable*; 3) we can speak of a *passio caritatis*, a passion of love whereby the Father suffers when his creatures reject his love. In her explanation Turek highlights John Paul II who, while acknowledging divine impassibility, eloquently speaks of the ‘depths of God’ and of both the Father’s love and ‘pain’ before man’s rejection of his Covenant and this ineffable love. Turning to God’s wrath, Turek leans heavily upon the interpretations of von Balthasar and Hoffmann. She notes how both interpret the wrath or divine judgment of God as an aspect of love. Of particular note is the related paradox of God’s *self-concealment* and *accompaniment* (p.69). In various Old Testament texts we read that God conceals himself, withdraws; Israel feels abandoned, forsaken by their God, yet all develops as part of the Divine plan where God’s love endures, abides, atones for all of humanity’s sins. Turek uses this concept of withdrawal to connect the two Testaments. Christ is the response to a *spiritual exile*, which persists even after geographical exile ends.

Examination of the ‘depths of God’ also requires some attempt at reconciliation of the Son’s suffering and cry of abandonment on the Cross with the Father’s infinite love. Here again Hoffmann’s and von Balthasar’s terminology dominates the discussion as Turek writes of the positive ‘op-position’ between Father and Son, ‘repercussive effect’ of sin on the Trinity, and Christ standing in and enduring ‘sinful estrangement’ from the Father. Benedict XVI’s and John Paul II’s writings merely confirm these points. Here and elsewhere her arguments are weakened by the assumption that the quartet’s harmony of themes implies a harmony of argument that precludes distinction. Consider her use of Benedict XVI’s commentary on Jesus’s cry from the cross. Turek italicizes the words ‘*anguished cry at God’s absence*’, but fails to include the subject of the phrase – which is not Christ, but the ‘world’. Further, Benedict XVI does not identify the cries of Christ with the world’s but subtly argues that Christ: 1) identifies himself with the suffering; 2) takes their cry upon himself; 3) transforms it; 4) brings it before the heart of God himself.

The final chapter shifts from the Scriptural and theological principles to the spiritual theology of atonement. The Holy Spirit formally enters the discussion, completing the Trinitarian emphasis. ‘Through his Spirit’ the Son ‘draws us into his filial life’ (p.164). A minor but recurring theme is that of martyrdom. It first appears in reference to temple sacrifices of the Old Law where the blood of the sacrificial lamb or bullock atoned for the sins of the people (*Lev. 10:17*). The exile made temple sacrifice impossible but allowed for development of the concept of a different type of sacrifice and the notion of ‘martyr’. The self-offering to death first appears in Isaiah’s prophecy of the Suffering Servant who will bear the sins of many to make them righteous (*Is 53:11-12*), but the Jews also developed the concept in a more general manner, identified with any individual’s self-offering of suffering unto death.

Martyrdom naturally recurs in the spirituality of atonement. Self-sacrifice and martyrdom take on new meaning with the death of Christ. Thus Benedict XVI relates martyrdom to the liturgy of the Cross— both show the ‘cruciform witness’ of love (p.121). A third occurrence, in chapter two, rightly identifies martyrdom as the highest form of imitation of Christ (p.144). But problems arise in the broader argument where Turek, speaking of Christ crucified, attempts to apply Thomas Aquinas’s teaching on anger to divine wrath. She correctly notes Thomas’s teaching that the irascible appetite overcomes contraries, but her explication of his anthropological and moral principles falls short. Granted, the errors are not just hers but also those of her Thomistic interpreters, Martin Bieler and Thomas Kryst.

A general error is a seeming identification of anger with the irascible appetite, thus ignoring the many other passions of hope, despair, courage, and fear, as well as virtues, including fortitude, patience, and meekness. According to Turek, Thomas would identify anger as the root of *all* movements of this appetite, even hope, courage, and patience. In fact, Thomas identifies the object of the irascible appetite as *any difficult good or evil*, which may cause various irascible passions. Multiple virtues perfect the appetite in relation to specific objects. When applied to the specific topic of wrath and Christ on the Cross, the implication is that Christ’s final hours were solely an expression of his wrath. How, then, should one interpret Christ’s words, ‘Father, forgive them’? Are these an expression of anger and wrath? Further, a true Thomistic discussion of anger and Christ, the Paschal Lamb, necessarily requires discussion of the virtue of meekness: ‘I am meek and humble of heart’.

Despite weaknesses, Turek successfully reopens scriptural and theological discussion of atonement. Her insights into the theological riches of her quartet pushes the discussion forward, not solely for the sake of

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-