

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

that claim appeals to human dignity are a form of discrimination by dissolving the link some attempt to make between speciesism and racism or sexism.

The subsequent chapters demonstrate all too clearly that the book is simply a collection of stand-alone essays. There is no doubt that these essays are clearly argued, and Kaczor's keen intellect gets to grips with opposing views and nuanced arguments. Certainly human dignity is implicit in his discussion. However, the thread of human dignity does not seem to pull the collection together. Chapters 3 to 8 deal with procreation and the immediate beginning of human life. This is discussed in Chapter 3 in terms of equal access to fertility treatments, the welfare of the child and reproductive autonomy where equal respect does not entail a duty to do whatever a person requests. Chapter 4 deals with 'procreative beneficence' and the legitimacy of using fertility treatments in such a way as to maximise the likelihood of a child having a good life. Chapter 5 looks at the ethics of embryo adoption and artificial wombs as making 'the best of an already imperfect situation' (p.66). In Chapter 6 Kaczor examines the ethics of dealing with persistent ectopic pregnancy, that is where foetal heart beat can still be detected, particularly where there is a commitment to the equal dignity of every human being. Using direct abortion as a reference point, Kaczor argues that in the 'lively debate' neither salpingostomy nor the use of methotrexate need constitute direct and intentional killing of the embryo (p.76, p.79). To embed his conclusion Kaczor applies the theory of probabilism, that where there are legitimate doubts an opinion can be formed that relies on probable application of the law even when others hold an opposite and also probable opinion (p.85). Chapter 7 deals with the ethics of foetal surgery as well as reduction of twin pregnancy and the problem of twin-twin transfusion syndrome. In the latter case Kaczor admits the difficulty about coming to a just conclusion especially where foetal dignity is at issue and this leads him on to a sharp critique in Chapter 8 of Judith Thomson's famous violinist argument defending abortion even where the foetus is considered to be a person. In these chapters on the beginning of life certainly human dignity, particularly the dignity of the foetus, is implicit however the focus seems to fall more on the moral duties of parents or physicians to unborn children (p.29; p.39; p.90; p.105).

Kaczor then moves onto problems at the end of life in Chapters 9 to 11. The tone of Chapter 9 on faith, reason and physician-assisted suicide is markedly different in that Kaczor brings Scripture and the thought of St Thomas Aquinas as well as modern philosophers into the discussion. His analysis of the situation of the 'pvs patient' and Bl. Pope John Paul II's address on the subject is primarily concerned with the authority of the papal teaching, whether this teaching is in the longstanding christian tradition of distinguishing ordinary and extraordinary means of treatment, and whether artificial nutrition and hydration is required for pvs patients. An example of how Kaczor treats dignity as merely implicit in the discussion occurs in Chapter 11 on organ donation, where he says that the human dignity of the donor must be respected but the discussion is primarily about determining death. Similarly, although Kaczor deals thoroughly and decisively with vexing questions of conscience protection and conscientious objection in Chapters 12 and 13, dignity is mentioned but it is linked to autonomy and freedom (p.154–155; p.174). Given that much of the debate on physician-assisted suicide centres on interpretations of dignity in dying, and that the whole premise of the papal address rests on an understanding of the intrinsic dignity of all patients including the most profoundly disabled, it would have been useful if Kaczor had used his considerable analytical skills to explore dignity as attributed, as intrinsic worth and as flourishing in these situations.

Whether or not the reader agrees or disagrees with Kaczor's conclusions, Kaczor does make a strong case for his positions in each of these essays. However in this collection the essays would perhaps benefit from a stronger connection to

the issue in question: human dignity. More seriously perhaps is that in common with most books on bioethical issues problems are grouped in terms of the beginning of life, the end of life and questions of conscience. The rest of life and in particular disability is either merged with the beginning and genetic testing or hovers around dying and death. It is in the area of disability that we need a truly robust defence of human dignity in all its aspects of attributed, intrinsic and flourishing.

PIA MATTHEWS

**UNLOCKING DIVINE ACTION: CONTEMPORARY SCIENCE AND THOMAS AQUINAS** by Michael J. Dodds OP, *The Catholic University of America Press, Washington DC, 2012, pp. xii + 311, \$ 69.95, hbk*

In recent years the relationship between science and religion has been hotly debated and whatever side of the debate is taken, the question of how God acts in the world will inevitably come up. However, in the past many people who have written on this subject have been somewhat hampered by a rather restricted understanding of causality. This is something that Michael Dodds OP seeks to redress in this book. Dodds is a professor at the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology in Berkeley, California, and his latest work reflects 15 years of research.

There are many dangers for the theologian if certain premises of modern science are accepted too uncritically. The Catholic physicist and philosopher Wolfgang Smith, whom Dodds quotes, goes as far as saying 'I have no doubt that the ongoing de-Christianization of Western society is due in large measure to the imposition of the prevailing scientific world-view'. Therefore, if anyone sympathetic to Christianity is not to be unduly handicapped in the debate on divine action, they need to be aware of and ready to challenge the philosophical assumptions many people take for granted. In this regard Dodds' book is particularly helpful.

Clearly, the philosophical assumption that Dodds most has in mind is the assumption that causality has only one meaning. The default position is to assume that causality means efficient causality, and the paradigm of efficient causality is taken to be that of Newtonian physics: the only real effects in the world are caused by the forces between physical particles. Dodds expands this notion of causality by giving a clear account of Aristotle's four causes: material, formal, efficient and final causality. Little philosophical background is assumed and this makes Dodds' s book very accessible.

Whilst there has been a tendency amongst scientists since the enlightenment to reject formal and final causality and to have a distorted notion of material causality, Dodds argues that among some scientific circles, these pre-modern notions of causality are now making something of a come back. For instance, the common belief among many quantum physicists that on the subatomic level particle behaviour is fundamentally indeterministic very much lends itself to Aristotle's notion of material causality; the belief that there can be emergent properties of a system that cannot be explained purely in terms of its parts lends itself to the notion formal causality; and the anthropic principle, the fact that the constants of physics need to be very finely tuned in order for life to inhabit the universe, lends itself to the notion of final causality.

Of course there is still much debate on whether contemporary science really needs to appeal to these Aristotelian notions of causality and Dodds does discuss