

stream Christian theology" (p. 205). In a word, even if, contrary to what I have urged, Hasker's arguments for incompatibilism were indeed compelling, it would still be incumbent upon Christian philosophers to preserve the classical understanding of divine providence, which is a linchpin of the Christian Faith and of the traditions of intellectual inquiry it has inspired. As I see it, this is the main theological lesson to be learned from Hasker's remarkably provocative book.

NOTES

1. See Luis de Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge (Part IV of the "Concordia")*, translated, with an introduction and notes, by Alfred J. Freddoso (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 75-78; Thomas P. Flint, "Hasker's *God, Time, and Knowledge*," *Philosophical Studies* 60 (1990): 103-115; and Rod Bertolet, "Hasker on Middle Knowledge," *Faith and Philosophy* 10 (1993): 3-17. In fairness to Hasker, I should also mention his "Response to Thomas Flint," *Philosophical Studies* 60 (1990): 117-126, as well as the *amicus* brief filed by Robert Merrihew Adams in "An Anti-Molinist Argument," *Philosophical Perspectives* 5 (1991): 343-353.

2. For more on this, see my "God's General Concurrence with Secondary Causes: Why Conservation is not Enough," *Philosophical Perspectives* 5 (1991): 553-585.

3. In "Divine Providence and Simple Foreknowledge," *Faith and Philosophy*, forthcoming, David Hunt argues that if we reject the claim that God has complete providential sovereignty over all events, including free actions—a claim he stigmatizes as 'hyper-Calvinist' but might just as well have called 'Augustinian' or 'Thomistic'—we may coherently maintain that simple foreknowledge can contribute to "the strongest providential control compatible with there being free agents other than God." Perhaps. But Hunt is mistaken in his undocumented assertion that he is defending the "traditional" position.

4. See Flint, "In Defence of Theological Compatibilism," *Faith and Philosophy* 8 (1991): 237-243; and "Hasker's *God, Time, and Knowledge*," esp. pp. 112-14. For the record, the relevant power entailment principle is this: If p is true and entails q , then if it cannot be in anyone's power to bring it about that p is false, it cannot be in anyone's power to bring it about that q is false. So given that (i) God's past belief entails that Peter will refrain from watching the game and that (ii) Peter cannot make it the case that God never held that belief, Peter cannot make it false that he will refrain from watching the game.

5. For more on this point, see Nelson Pike, "A Latter-Day Look at the Foreknowledge Problem," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, forthcoming.

Christian Philosophy, edited by **Thomas P. Flint**. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990. Pp. xix + 226. \$31.95.

WILLIAM HASKER, Huntington College.

Christian Philosophy comprises seven papers delivered at a 1988 conference at Notre Dame, plus an excellent introduction by Thomas Flint. I shall comment on each of the essays in turn.

Norman Kretzmann leads off with "Faith Seeks, Understanding Finds: Augustine's Charter for Christian Philosophy," a piece which analyzes Augustine's conception of the relationship between faith and understanding. Certain problems arise if we suppose, as might initially seem natural, that faith is "a deficient cognitive state to be supplanted by understanding" (p. 10). If this is what faith is, how are we to understand Augustine's notion that understanding *supplements* rather than *replaces* faith? How can an imperfect, authority-based acceptance of a proposition coexist with a firm, rational grasp of its truth? The solution to these and other difficulties is found in the insight that faith for Augustine is not primarily "propositional faith" but rather the religious way of faith, which involves commitment to the way of life implied by Christian doctrine. Thus, "the aim of Christian philosophy as Augustine sees it is to combine propositional understanding with the way of faith" (p. 18). Thus baldly stated, the conclusion is not particularly startling; what cannot be conveyed in a brief summary is the skill and loving care with which Kretzmann analyzes alternatives, elicits the intentions behind Augustine's text, and draws implications for Christian philosophy as it is practiced today.

The doctrine of the atonement receives attention in "Justice, Mercy, Supererogation, and Atonement," by Richard Purtill. Purtill's central idea is that the Son of God, by his voluntary acceptance of suffering and death, performed a work of supererogation which made it appropriate that the Father, on his request, should pardon repentant sinners who are otherwise deserving of damnation. In developing this Purtill rejects "strict retributionism," which holds that one "should never punish more *or less* than is deserved," thus making mercy impossible. He also rejects "weak retributionism," which holds that mere repentance is always in itself a good and sufficient reason for pardon, thus making atonement unnecessary. But how are we to understand the *reason* behind Christ's suffering and death? Purtill concludes, "It seems that there is no real substitute for a theory of our incorporation into Christ which takes our unity with Christ as a genuine metaphysical fact" (p. 46). He does not go on to explicate the nature of this metaphysical fact; nevertheless, his suggestions hold real promise for further work on this doctrine.

In "Providence and the Problem of Evil" Eleonore Stump places her own previously stated views on theodicy in the context of an account of divine providence derived from Aquinas. While this account of providence adds depth and background to the theodicy, the centerpiece of the latter remains Stump's claim that all undeserved suffering is a benefit (or at least, the best available means to a benefit) for the one who suffers. The first objection considered is, "This approach to the problem of evil apparently entails that nothing bad—nothing *really* bad, that is—ever happens to anybody. But this conclusion is wildly implausible." Stump admits the entailment, but replies, "This...objection is equivalent to insisting that the problem of evil is insol-

able" (p. 69). Such a response, I think, amounts to a rather abrupt (not to say question-begging) dismissal of all those theodicies which do not affirm what her own theodicy affirms. In any case, there may be a difficulty about Stump's appropriation of Aquinas. Is she really entitled to help herself to his doctrine of providence, when her account of how God is able to operate to accomplish his providential purposes differs so fundamentally from his? She emphatically rejects both theological determinism (arguably the best interpretation of Aquinas) and Molinism, and affirms what I have elsewhere called a "risk-taking" view of providence. It would seem plausible that this might require some modifications in Aquinas's doctrine, though I am not certain that this is so.¹

Alan Donagan's contribution is entitled, "Can Anybody in a Post-Christian Culture Rationally Believe the Nicene Creed?" The Nicene Creed functions here as a specific expression of the historic Christian faith; Donagan answers the question through a combination of apologetics with an account of his personal journey of faith. He begins with a discussion of the development of doctrine (considered as posing a threat to the claim that all of the church's teaching is apostolic), and follows with some remarks on demythologizing. He then turns to naturalism, and cites C. S. Lewis's well-known argument against naturalism (or materialism) from *Miracles* as an example of failed apologetics. (He subscribes to the popular view that Lewis's argument was demolished by Elizabeth Anscombe, and does not discuss the changes Lewis made in the revised edition of *Miracles*.²) Should Christian philosophers, then, seek a replacement for Lewis's (supposedly failed) argument? Donagan thinks not; materialism, in his view, is really not worth refuting: "Understood as the doctrine that nothing happens that is not causally explicable in terms of the natural sciences as they now are, materialism is certainly false; and...understood as the doctrine that nothing happens that is not causally explicable in terms of ideal natural science, it is something we know not what" (p. 107). Here I think Donagan is mistaken. It is true that contemporary materialism appeals to the future progress of science. But there are some fairly tight constraints on what this future science is to be like: it must not, for instance, contain any ultimate, irreducible, intentionality or teleology. Materialism so conceived is by no means a will-o'-the-wisp, and the task of refuting it is not necessarily a futile one.

The final, and in some respects the most impressive, section of the paper deals mainly with the current state of biblical studies and their effect on those who inquire into the faith. He has some severe comments on the methods used by many biblical scholars, and remarks that "Accepting the Nicene faith has been, for all I have talked to, in large part a matter of forming a critical attitude to much biblical scholarship" (p. 113). In his conclusion (p. 116), Donagan asks: "Why do converts to Christianity from pre-Christian and post-

Christian cultures accept [its doctrines]? ...When they learn what Christianity teaches, they judge it, if true, to be a remedy for their condition.... Their verdict is, like Peter's when Jesus asked him, 'Will you also go away?' 'Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.'"

Next comes Nicholas Wolterstorff's essay, "The Remembrance of Things (Not) Past: Philosophical Reflections on Christian Liturgy." Wolterstorff surveys a large range of materials relevant to the understanding of ritual, from Mircea Eliade to Brevard Childs to Max Thurian to Edward Casey to Sigmund Mowinckel. His central focus, however, is an interpretation of the human (not the divine) actions in the Eucharist. His interpretation cannot be summarized here; I will only say that it strikes me as surprisingly thin and unsatisfying. Perhaps Wolterstorff would agree that a great deal remains to be said; he concludes with an appeal to philosophers to pay attention to Christian ritual as they have to Christian belief, Christian ethical action, and Christian experience. The point is well made, but the task seems to call for an aesthetician, and we have few if any aestheticians of Wolterstorff's stature who might undertake it. So it is to be hoped that he will take up his own challenge and give us a book on the subject.

"Love and Absolutes in Christian Ethics," by J. L. A. Garcia, deals with a number of related ethical topics. Garcia begins by setting out his own ethical theory, in which (1) "a person's moral life comprises certain salient relationships or roles...[and] to be morally good or bad is to be good or bad in such roles as friend, parent, offspring, spouse, neighbor (in the scriptural sense), confidante, informant, promiser, etc." (p. 163); and (2) it is love (interpreted as benevolence) which determines whether one is performing the roles in question well or badly. He then moves on to a discussion of intentions and their place in moral evaluation, and building on this he presents an argument that certain "moral absolutes" (especially, the prohibition against killing the innocent) can be justified on the basis of his theory. Next, he defends moral absolutes against some arguments of Scheffler, and he concludes with some reflections on moral dilemmas, which he thinks should be excluded from Christian ethics. Clearly there is a great deal of philosophical substance here; far too much, in fact, for a single essay. But the ideas richly deserve the further development they will no doubt receive.

Merold Westphal concludes the book with "Taking St. Paul Seriously: Sin as an Epistemological Category." "Taking Paul seriously" means stressing the importance of the "noetic effects of sin," an important theme not only in Paul but in Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and Barth. The recognition of "motivated irrationality" is also prominent in a number of philosophers, though most of them tend to exempt their own epistemological projects from the general indictment. Westphal recommends to Christian philosophers a wide-ranging investigation which would pursue this topic throughout the history

of philosophy. His most pointed criticisms in the present essay, however, are directed at Reformed epistemologists Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff, both of whom conspicuously fail to take St. Paul seriously.³ Plantinga is faulted for, in effect, limiting the noetic effects of sin to unbelievers; Wolterstorff, on the other hand, goes astray in holding, with Reid, that we have certain “innocent belief dispositions” whose outputs should normally be taken as trustworthy. In both of these philosophers, “creation does a full day’s work, while the fall is only asked to put in a cameo appearance” (p. 215); neither takes Paul seriously.

What is noticeably lacking in this essay is any positive epistemological program—any means by which, amid the general ruin, we might manage to arrive at a few warranted beliefs. Westphal may be correct in thinking that Plantinga tends to limit the noetic effects of sin to unbelievers, though the passage he cites does not demonstrate this.⁴ And I do think Wolterstorff’s epistemology is overly “Edenic,” at least in the essay cited. But Westphal goes too far when he recommends “abandoning the idea that we naturally have innocent beliefs or belief dispositions and adopting the principle that our beliefs are guilty until proved innocent” (p. 217). As Westphal should know, it is simply impossible to “prove our beliefs innocent” in the way this would require; the outcome of the “guilty until proved innocent” principle must be a pervasive scepticism.⁵

Or perhaps fideism. Westphal writes, paraphrasing Isaiah, “all our [noetically] righteous deeds are like a polluted garment,” suggesting that he may agree with Bultmann that, also in epistemology, justification is by faith alone.⁶ But if this sort of all-out fideism is the result of Westphal’s program, we would be better off as epistemological Pelagians. It is possible, of course, that Westphal does not intend this result. But the result may be inevitable, whether intended or not. Once we employ the noetic effects of sin to launch a general assault on human cognition, three outcomes are possible: We will ourselves be buried in the general epistemological wreckage, we will (sinfully) exempt our own projects from the “principle of suspicion,” or we will appeal to divine inspiration, in which case we are no longer engaged in doing philosophy.⁷

It is clear that the essays in *Christian Philosophy*, like those in the earlier *Philosophy and the Christian Faith*,⁸ probe more deeply than is usual among philosophers into what has been regarded as the distinctive territory of Christian theology. The boundary between theology and philosophy may not be effaced entirely, but the Wall is down and traffic is moving freely back and forth. At the conference at which these papers were delivered, Ralph McNerny reflected on the oddity of theology done by philosophers and concluded, “God has indeed from these stones raised up children to Abraham.” May the stones speak on.

NOTES

1. In a note (p. 86) Stump promises an essay which addresses "issues involving the mechanisms of God's providence."

2. For a contrary view of the Lewis-Anscombe exchange, see Victor Reppert, "The Lewis-Anscombe Controversy: A Discussion of the Issues," *Christian Scholar's Review* XIX:1 (September 1989), pp. 32-48.

3. The essays cited are Plantinga's "Reason and Belief in God" and Wolterstorff's "Can Belief in God Be Rational If It Has No Foundations?"; both are contained in *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*, ed. Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983).

4. One might, more charitably, interpret Plantinga as holding that in the case of believers the noetic effects of sin, while present, are counteracted by divine grace sufficiently to permit our innate noetic dispositions to function more or less normally.

5. Westphal does, it is true, allow for exceptions in the case of "existentially peripheral" beliefs such as those of mathematics. But it is hard to see how this can help; Westphal clearly rejects the foundationalist strategy of basing our metaphysical and religious beliefs on those other, less contaminated, areas of knowledge.

6. "The man who wishes to believe in God as his God must realize that he has nothing in his hand on which to base his faith. He is suspended in mid-air, and cannot demand a proof of the Word which addresses him. For the ground and object of faith are identical. Security can be found only by abandoning all security, by being ready, as Luther put it, to plunge into the inner darkness" ("Bultmann Replies To His Critics," in *Kerygma and Myth*, ed. Hans Werner Bartsch (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), p. 211).

7. Westphal writes, "Perhaps the notion of Christian philosophy makes sense after all, not in terms of its propositional what but in terms of its prayerful how" (p. 220). A fine sentiment, but oddly placed at the end of ten pages spent criticizing his fellow Christian philosophers for accepting epistemological propositions which are not in accord with Christian doctrine.

8. Thomas V. Morris, ed. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).

Atheism: A Philosophical Justification, by **Michael Martin**. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990. Pp. xiii and 533.

JAMES A. KELLER, Wofford College.

Michael Martin's purpose, as his subtitle suggests, is to present a comprehensive philosophical justification for atheism. He realizes that this has been attempted before, but he believes that the case for atheism must be restated in light of certain recent developments, including the appearance of some new arguments for theism and revised statements of old arguments, as well as new replies to arguments against the existence of God. Martin wants to respond to the most important of these. His book and all of the literature to which he refers are solidly within the analytic tradition of the philosophy of religion.