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Christianity but with the disadvantage that on this view God is less likely to be justified in permitting evil. In other words, the open view faces the same difficulties as traditional Christianity but with fewer resources to meet them. That does not strike me as an advantage.

Despite the laudable concern these authors have for developing a position that is both biblically sound and adequate for a rich religious life, the view they present, as I have tried to make explicit, is not only a radical departure from traditional Christianity but it is a departure not justified by the reasons they cite in its favor.

NOTES

1. One of the authors, William Hasker, in *God, Time, and Knowledge* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989) interprets this prophecy not as conditional but as a prediction "based on foresight drawn from existing trends and tendencies" (p. 194). Under either interpretation it is possible for the prophecy to be made but to be unfulfilled, either because the relevant condition—whatever it is—is unsatisfied or because the current trends are reversed or overridden.

2. J.T. McNeil's *The History and Character of Calvinism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954) is not primarily a history of the doctrine of theological determinism!

3. See his *God, Time and Knowledge* and "A Refutation of Middle Knowledge," *Noûs* 20 (1986): 545-57.

4. See Thomas P. Flint, "Hasker's *God, Time, and Freedom*," *Philosophical Studies* 60 (1990): 103-115 and "In Defense of Theological Compatibilism," *Faith and Philosophy* 8 (1991): 237-243, as well as Alfred J. Freddoso, "Review of William Hasker: *God, Time, and Knowledge*," *Faith and Philosophy* 10 (1993): 99-107.

5. Calvin, *Institutes*, I, xvii, 7.

6. *Ibid.* I, xvii, 11.

7. A similar claim may be made about the evils Hasker cites on p. 146.

The Sources of Christian Ethics, by Servais Pinckaers OP. Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995. Pp. xxi and 489. \$24.95.

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"It is difficult," Pinckaers notes, "to describe a situation while living in the midst of all its complexity..." (304) It's perhaps equally hard to identify a classic within a decade of its writing and a year of its translation for Anglophone readers. Still, Pinckaers's *Sources* is a contender.

The author, a Belgian, teaches theology at the University of Fribourg. *Sources* appeared as *Les sources de la morale chretienne* in 1985, and Pinckaers tells us he wrote it for a broad audience. His text is straightforward and ambitious. Pinckaers first defines Christian ethics and then examines its relation to the behavioral sciences, to Scripture, and to the

teaching of Augustine and Aquinas. Next he charts the history of his subject from the patristic era to the post-Vatican II period. Lastly, he explores the relation between freedom and law and between freedom and nature. In this he presages John Paul II's *Veritatis Splendor*.

When one reviews a (maybe!) classic, sobriety is in order. How do it justice? Simplicity is best. I first note what I simply omit from discussion. Then I identify the parts of the text which I want to underscore—and do so. Finally, I consider two issues (among many) which demand further analysis.

What must I simply omit? Too much: Pinckaers' account of Paul's Christocentrism; his charting of Christian ethics over two millennia; his view of Catholic-Protestant debates. The price of economy is high. It was, after all, Vatican II's call to reintegrate moral theology and Scripture (though not, he warns, *via* technical exegesis) that inspired Pinckaers. Yet apart from his reading of the Sermon on the Mount, conciseness must rule. It is this rule, however, that allows me to underscore five of Pinckaers' key themes and point to their significance.

For a start, what *is* Christian ethics? Pinckaers defines it as "the branch of theology that studies human acts so as to direct them to a loving vision of God seen as our true, complete happiness and our final end." (8) He immediately adds that we win this vision "by means of grace, the virtues, and the gifts [of the Spirit], in the light of revelation and reason." (8) The definition is critical for what it says and for what it omits. It focuses on neither law, nor duty, nor a subjective happiness, nor a schema of values, nor conscience. Its strength, rather, is a recapitulation of the sources of Christian life and a recognition of its *telos*: the joy of knowing God.

Our next step is to ground Christian ethics in Scripture, in particular, the Sermon on the Mount. For Augustine the "Sermon of the Lord" announces Gospel ethics "based on the Lord's own words." (142) Pinckaers develops Augustine's reading of the Sermon as the primary text of Christian ethics and his teaching that only in the Spirit can we follow Christ's way to happiness. This hermeneutic is noteworthy in that it does justice to the radical character of the primitive Christian ethos. It does so, moreover, in harmony with the trinitarian dynamic which the Fathers articulated. With Pinckaers, one never wonders about the force of Christian ethics; the question is how to order its power.

A third theme Pinckaers pursues is the *disordering* of the dynamism of Christian ethics that emerges from the nominalist turn. Here Ockham is the chief player. Ockham's conceptual brief, though, leads us beyond the claims that only individuals exist and that universals are but labels. His freedom, Pinckaers finds, is "the power to choose between contraries, independently of all other causes except freedom, or the will itself—whence the term *freedom of indifference*." (242)

Such freedom isolates the human act from both its agent's past and future. Virtue and finality fall away. Obligation supplants natural inclination. But obligation itself stems from God's will. Indeed, to preserve God's freedom, Ockham teaches that "God can command the created will to hate him" in this world and the next. (247) So the wisdom of

sequi naturam yields to the paradoxes of a Divine Imperative. Ockham's impact, for Pinckaers, is huge. Only too soon Christians begin to see their moral legacy through "nominalist lenses." (253)

This "revision" is at issue when we compare Ockham's freedom of indifference with Aquinas's "freedom for excellence." Mapping this contrast is the fourth of Pinckaers' key themes. For Ockham, he notes, freedom opposes natural inclination and law; it is, in a sense, brute self-assertion independent of the agent's character. For Aquinas, however, we find free choice in the developing interplay of reason with will; it expresses an inclination for what seems good, and wise law serves its development. Without virtue freedom is farce, and absent the finality of happiness freedom has no direction.

Pinckaers's basic argument for freedom of excellence is that it reflects the intricate fabric of our experience. Part of that experience is our quest to show it intelligible. Aquinas offers a way intelligibly to join who we are with how we (best) live. His ethics seeks to account for the dynamics of our anthropology. But if we divorce ethics from anthropology, we forgo a deepening reflection on the ways of life that realize our nature, and do so only for an elaborate exercise in the arbitrary.

This last claim, of course, itself expresses the Christian view that our nature is not arbitrary. Rather it is made in the image of God. As rational and free, we are persons and it is in our personhood that we image God. Indeed, Pinckaers affirms, and we see this as the fifth of his key themes, that "Natural law is the foundation of human rights, as it roots them in our personal nature." (452) With this claim, explicated by Revelation's Good News about God's nature and involvement in ours, Pinckaers goes to the core of his *praxis*. He parallels John Paul II's *Veritatis Splendor* with its harmony of freedom, nature and grace.

A classic begins or reshapes deep projects. Does *Sources*? Pinckaers rethinks the Christian tradition in light of the primacy of happiness. He illuminates insights of the tradition to dispute now dominant assumptions about freedom. But a classic equally invites still more analysis, so I will suggest two lines of inquiry.

First, the "free will defense" has long played a key role in responding to the problem of evil. But if we understand freedom as motivated by natural inclination, why does not God create us with less confused inclinations? Or why not, at any rate, with less confusion about them? It is not that to be free we must act independently of inclinations; indeed, they make our freedom possible. But the plot thickens: suppose God makes it clear wherein perfect happiness lies or even that a particular action is required for that happiness. If this be so, will we surely not choose happiness or at least the action that it requires? But how then are we free? In reply to the thickening plot, Aquinas says that we might yet will not to think of happiness or its requirements and that there is a real distinction between acts of *will* and of *intellect*. (395) But should God have willed this distinction? The discussion is not over.

Pinckaers does not write in the analytic mode. And yet one would like him to address the logician's view of freedom as a three-place predicate: *S* is free from *C* to do *A*. Determinists deny freedom because, they

say, its negative condition is not met. Causality reigns. Compatibilists allow for freedom *if* the causes at issue are within the agent. But that proviso strikes libertarians (and others) as empty. Still, what are we to make of actions that are "authored" by a libertarian self both metaphysically and historically unimaginable?

For Pinckaers, we *become* free. We do so in becoming free *from* what impedes the cooperation of reason and will and thus free *for* the good which attracts us. So we are neither determinists nor libertarians. But are we compatibilists? Surely not in a Humean sense; perhaps not in any sense. What, then, is the Christian view in the modern context? How do we engage the established disorder if our identity is unclear? *La lotta continua*.

Faith and Criticism, by **Basil Mitchell**. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994. Pp. 173. \$29.95 (Cloth)

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The central problem dealt with in this book is whether openness to criticism is compatible with the strong commitment essential to religious faith. Mitchell approaches the problem by contrasting what he calls *liberals* and *conservatives* in theology. Evincing keen awareness of the ambiguity of these terms, he stipulates the following understanding.

...within all the mainstream churches there is a sharp division between those who take it for granted that Christian theology should be studied critically with the aid of all the resources of modern scholarship and with due attention to all that is received as knowledge in the modern world [*liberals*], and those who resist this trend as destructive of the historic faith of Christians [*conservatives*] (1)

Mitchell's presentation of this contrast is notable for bringing out the way in which fundamentalists and radical thinkers like D. Z. Phillips share a rejection of the possibility that extra-religious knowledge could overthrow Christian faith, despite their very different versions of this conviction.

The central issue of the book then emerges from a conservative criticism of liberal theology.

Christian faith is unconditional. It demands our complete and whole-hearted allegiance. But to allow Christian belief to be exposed to criticism implies that criticism might turn out to be fatal. Once it is allowed that faith is, in principle, vulnerable to criticism, its character is bound to change. In place of the total commitment which is demanded of Christians we have a faith which is tentative and provisional. (4)