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Book Review: Personal Identity In Theological Perspective

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what is said literally. "We understand the person who offers the excuse to mean that he did what he did *only because* he was unable to do otherwise, or *only because* he had to do it. And we understand him to mean . . . that when he did what he did it was not because that was what he really wanted to do."⁴ Frankfurt's attempt to explain away what is literally said is suspect for at least two reasons. First, a person who tells us he did what he did because he was unable to do otherwise or because he had to do it might very well have wanted to do what he did, believed that he ought not do what he wanted to do, and not have done what he did except for the fact that he was unable not to do it because he was determined to do it. Second, a person might very well utter these words in a context where his wanting to do something that is good deterministically led to his doing it. Because he knows this was the case, he is insisting that he does not deserve any praise or reward for doing what he did.

As I stated in FSCBQ, I do not know how to resolve the question about the identity of D and ~AP in any non-question-begging way. But I also do not think that there is a non-question-begging argument against a compatibilist view of determinism, alternative possibilities, and moral responsibility and in support of a libertarian view of these matters. Borrowing some terminology from Fischer, I believe that when we come to the issues of freedom, moral responsibility, determinism, and alternative possibilities we ultimately reach a "dialectical stalemate" (pp. 166–67). But even though Fischer's way with regard to these issues is not my way, I am happy to say that *My Way* is a wonderful collection of essays by a superb philosopher. It is a book well worth reading.

NOTES

1. Stewart Goetz, "Frankfurt-Style Counterexamples and Begging the Question," in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, vol. XXIX, ed. Peter A. French, Howard Wettstein and John Martin Fischer (Oxford: Blackwell), 2005, pp. 83–105.

2. Peter van Inwagen, *An Essay on Free Will* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 3. Richard Taylor (*Metaphysics*, 3rd ed. [Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1983], p. 34) defines 'determinism' as the principle that "there are antecedent conditions . . . given which [something] could not be other than it is."

3. Harry Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility," *Journal of Philosophy* 66 (1969): p. 838.

4. *Ibid.* 2

Personal Identity in Theological Perspective, ed. Richard Lints, Michael S. Horton and Mark R. Talbot. Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 2006. vi + 226 pages. \$20 (paper).

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The title of this volume misled this reviewer who was expecting a collection of papers on "Personal Identity in Theological Perspective" to have at its theme "personal identity" issues—bodily continuity, continuity of

character, continuity of the soul and the like. Only one paper in this collection, contributed by Nancey Murphey, explores such issues. Instead the theme of this volume is suggested by the subtitle of Richard Lints' introductory chapter, "Theological Anthropology in Context." The theme is human nature, not personal identity, and the "theological perspective" is evangelical and confessionalist. The papers would fit a title such as "Human Nature in Evangelical and Confessionalist Christian Perspective" but the reviewer can understand why the editors chose the perkier title, "Personal Identity in Theological Perspective."

These papers were originally presented at a colloquium in Colorado Springs in 2002, were discussed at length, and the authors were given the opportunity to revise the original papers. One additional paper, by Stanley Grenz, was added after the discussions. The theme of the collection is what it means to be human and all of the papers were written by evangelical or confessionally oriented Christian thinkers. Differences in orientation can be found in the papers themselves and were pointed out by Lints in his introduction, but the papers themselves did not dwell on differences. As Lints suggests, they were looking for common ground. Also the editors chose not to present any of the discussions of the papers at the conference because the attempt to capture such discussions "normally makes for lousy reading." This reader thinks that the discussion might have made a more exciting volume, and wished that the finished papers had made more reference to each other.

The opening chapter, "Theological Anthropology in Context" (Richard Lints), provides an introduction to the various papers and their themes and is followed by the papers grouped under three categories. "Setting the Context" includes "Biblical Humanism: the Patristic Convictions" (Robert Louis Wilken), "*Homo theologicus*: Aspects of a Lutheran Doctrine of Man" (William C. Weinrich), "Post-Reformation Reformed Anthropology" (Michael S. Horton) and "The Social God and the Relational Self: Toward a Theology of the *Imago Dei* in the Postmodern Context" (Stanley J. Grenz). "Significant Challenges" deal with "Nonreductive Physicalism: Philosophical Challenges" (Nancey Murphy) and "Anthropology, Sexuality and Sexual Ethics: The Challenge of Psychology" (Stanton L. Jones and Mark A. Yarhouse). "Suggestive Proposals" contains "Personal Bodies: A Theological Anthropological Proposal" (David H. Kelsey), "Learning from the Ruined Image: Moral Anthropology after the Fall" (Mark R. Talbot), "Image and Office: Human Personality and the Covenant" (Michael S. Horton) and "Imaging and Idolatry: The Sociality of Personhood in the Canon" (Richard Lints). The subtitles are illuminating and illustrate the variety of perspectives from which they were written and so I have provided them. Except for the Grenz piece and the two Horton chapters, the papers seem to have been written specifically for this conference and are not available elsewhere.

Because some selection has to be made, I have chosen to comment on the contributions by psychologists and philosophers rather than on the chapters written by theologians and historians.

Philosopher Nancey Murphy develops her "evangelical physicalism" in response to three centuries of evangelical endorsement of mind-brain dualism. She apologizes that she has not yet "been able to provide well-

considered solutions to all of the problems I have raised" (p. 117). She claims that her nonreductive physicalism fits well with almost all scientists (except for Sir John Eccles) and with almost all secular philosophers (she says she knows of only one exception), but that Christian philosophers are divided between physicalism and dualism (p. 96). Her religious-philosophical project has been to argue for Christian nonreductive physicalism. Problems she chooses not to address here are Biblical texts which seem to imply dualism and the issue of "intermediate states," and she does note in passing that Christian dualism has had undesirable consequences in that "it has given Christians something to be concerned about—the soul and its final destiny—in place of Jesus' concern with the kingdom of God" (p. 97).

She addresses five problems. The evidential base for physicalism is the success of science, but science has had trouble explaining the distinctiveness of human persons. She looks to our neurological complexity and cultural development which "together resulted in the capacity for genuine moral reasoning, including the ability to recognize an objective obligation to obey the voice of the Creator" (pp. 102–03). Another issue is that of personal identity which is complicated by the problem of having a new and radically different resurrection body. She favors "character identity" as the criterion for personal identity rather than material continuity (p. 107). With respect to free will and mental causation, she proposes that the physical body has modified itself to provide for both since free will and mental causation are obviously capacities which we have. She has made the case here and elsewhere for "evangelical physicalism" and her arguments are well worth reading.

The other philosopher presented in this collection is Mark Talbot, who wrote the original paper for this colloquium. Talbot examines common platitudes about child raising, about wanting to take "the wantonness out of little human beings" (p. 166), and our expectation that parents assist the development of self-regulating persons. Our capacity to realize why wantonness is unnatural, the use of language, and the development of social referencing provide natural prolegomena to Christian anthropology. We are more than our physiologies; we seem to require spirituality as human beings (p. 172). Our child-raising practices recognize what we naturally want to become, but also show that our capacity to do so has been ruined. As an evangelical, he points out that this natural knowledge does not substitute for revelation, but is illuminated by it. Redeemed natural theology, "by starting from Scripture, can identify what is true in unregenerate thinking as well as what even the unregenerated should know . . . and then deploy those truths in articulating and defending Christian belief" (p. 174).

In discussing sexual ethics, the psychologists Jones and Yarhouse lament evangelical neglect of many social issues other than sexual, as well as high divorce rates among evangelicals. Not unsurprisingly, they defend traditional sexuality, endorsing claims that the practice of people who pray together is highly correlated with sexual satisfaction and have a lower rate of divorce, and that cohabitation before marriage leads to high divorce rates, extramarital affairs and less sexual satisfaction in marriage. They claim that "an immense literature attests to the quality-of-life benefits of

traditional marriage and of two-parent family arrangements" (p. 130), referring to a recent review of the research by Linda J. Waite and Maggie Gallagher, *The Case for Marriage* (New York: Broadway, 2000). If there are contrary estimates of the value of traditional sexuality in the review of the literature they cite, the authors do not choose to bring them up. Their discussion of homosexuality is based mainly on Robert A. J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001). This reviewer was a bit surprised that they judge that tolerance of homosexuality as valid is "as grave in some ways as the behavioral choices of the homosexual person" (pp. 133, 135). It was not clear whether their objection was to tolerance in the church or also to tolerance by society, but I presume their remarks were directed at the church.

The papers deal with many dimensions of theological anthropology from confessionalist and evangelical Christian perspectives, and some readers may be disappointed, as I was, that if there were differences that might have surfaced in the discussions among conferees. The editors chose not to print them, nor did the conferees refer to them in the final versions of their papers. The papers have variety, are largely expository and, I presume, because they were written for this colloquium, the writers did not feel a need to engage in issues of justifying their perspectives nor a need to debate each other in their papers but were engaged in exploring common ground. Also, the authors made repeated references to the Bible, but did not explore any differences they might have had in interpreting the Bible.

The book has no index or comprehensive bibliography, but the individual chapters have extensive footnotes in most cases. The volume contains well-written papers, written by the convinced, discussed with others equally convinced, and now offered by publication to a wider readership. The book is well produced and inexpensive, and people who want to read the papers can well afford to purchase it for their personal libraries, but they should be warned that the theme of the papers is *not* theological perspectives on criteria for personal identity over time.

Reason and the Reasons of Faith, ed. Paul J. Griffiths and Reinhard Hütter. New York: T&T Clark, 2005. Pp. ix + 373. \$60.00 (Cloth).

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The essays that make up this book are the product of a series of discussions held by leading systematic theologians between December 2000 and May 2003 at the Center of Theological Inquiry in Princeton, New Jersey. The goal of these discussions was to address what the editors call the "double crisis" of faith and reason in late modernity. Faith (which is based on the authoritative testimony of Christian Scripture and tradition) is in crisis, they say, because it has been severed from the guiding light of reason, so construed as a capacity for judgment, argument, and ascertaining truth. Reason is in crisis because it has lost sight of its most noble task of ascertaining truth: it has been weighed down (or misguided) by the reigning