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"one-upmanship" (see some of his gracious concessions in the debate with Plantinga on religious epistemology: "The Foundations of Theism Again: A Rejoinder to Plantinga"), and exhibiting the way in which crisp philosophical thinking can be informed by the history of philosophy and literature, perhaps best exemplified in Quinn's riveting treatment of Shusaku Endo's novel *Silence* in his "Tragic Dilemmas, Suffering Love, and Christian Life." Surely these essays bear vivid testimony to the fact that the philosophical landscape is a richer place because of Philip Quinn.¹

¹Thanks to T. Allan Hillman, Christian Miller and Ted Poston for comments on drafts of this review.

Was Jesus God?, by Richard Swinburne. Oxford University Press, 2008. 175 pp. \$24.95 (hardback)

GLENN B. SINISCALCHI, Duquesne University

A little over ten years ago, Pope John Paul II urged philosophers to provide bold arguments to establish the preconditions of divine revelation: "Consider, for example, the natural knowledge of God, the possibility of distinguishing divine Revelation from other phenomena or the recognition of its credibility, the capacity of human language to speak in a true and meaningful way even of things which transcend all human experience."¹ Other than being one of the world's finest Christian philosophers and the author of many books and articles on various philosophical topics, Richard Swinburne has faithfully served the Church with an apologetic vision that is clear, courageous, and convincing. His most recent book on the subject is no different.

Although *Was Jesus God?* is not as philosophically rigorous as his trilogy on the philosophy of religion, it can be read as a sequel to any of his previous publications on natural theology. Because he focuses on the reasons to believe in Jesus's divinity in this volume, he does not provide a new battery of arguments for God's existence which can only show that a "bare" or "bland" theism is true. So long as one assumes that God exists, the reader will be able to benefit from Swinburne's newest rationale to believe in Jesus. "Christian theism," he rightly points out, "can be true only if bare theism is true" (p. 23).

The first prong in the overall argument for Jesus's divinity consists of the pertinent reasons that can be utilized apart from the influence of divine revelation to show that God is the kind of God who would want to become a human and do the types of things that Jesus would do. Thus, Swinburne's first goal is to describe and explain the "*a priori* reasons" for expecting God to become incarnate in human history. *A priori* reasons

¹John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, N. 67.

arise "from the very nature of God and from the general condition of the human race why we should expect them to be true" (p. 5). While it was not necessary for God to become human and atone for the sins of humanity, there are nevertheless good reasons to think that he would do such a thing. It is appropriate for God to identify himself with those who have been made in his image (pp. 39–52); it provides reasons for thinking that people have intrinsic dignity; and it reveals the extent to which God loves the human race. Within this unique state of existence, God will live an exemplary human life in terms of teaching the truth about God and being supremely moral (pp. 61–77). A divine stamp of approval will be made on his life, vindicating his message (pp. 84–87). His teachings will be faithfully carried out to future generations in a way that is culturally sensitive to each of them (pp. 75–77). Swinburne summarizes his argument in part 1: "I have argued that, if there is such a God, there are *a priori* reasons . . . for supposing that he has the nature . . . which Christianity claims, and that he would act in history to do the things which Christianity claims that he has done." God "would take the nature of a human nature and share sufferings, and found a church to tell cultures and generations other than those in which he lived on earth about what he had done" (p. 83).

Many apologists are content with arguing for basic Christian faith by giving philosophical arguments for God's existence and historical arguments for Jesus's resurrection. Within the second half of this approach, standard historiographical principles are used to assess competing hypotheses, all of which can account for the few reported facts that have been furnished by the consensus of New Testament scholars. After naturalistic hypotheses have been tried and found wanting, the resurrection hypothesis is shown as the best explanation of the facts. Now there is plenty of merit to this approach, but Swinburne goes much further than this by spelling out the *a priori* reasons for expecting God to enter human history.

One would be hard-pressed to establish anything about Jesus or his resurrection without establishing Swinburne's *a priori* reasons for expecting God to make a personal entry into history first. As the prominent New Testament historian, Dale Allison, recognizes:

When the mundane historical work is done, the results are disappointingly scanty, severely circumscribed. . . . At this point, then, the discussion has to be handed over to the philosophers and theologians, among whose lofty company I am not privileged to dwell. They, not me, are the ones who can address the heart of the matter, the problem of justifying—if such a thing is possible—a worldview, the thing that makes the resurrection of Jesus welcome or unwelcome, plausible or implausible, important or unimportant.²

According to Allison, a bare theism does not give sufficient leverage for the historian to infer on the basis of the evidence that Jesus was raised. Indeed, in a postmodern age, it is generally assumed that historical conclusions

²Dale C. Allison, *Resurrecting Jesus: The Earliest Christian Tradition and Its Interpreters* (New York: T & T Clark, 2005), 350, 351.

are reached through an inextricable interplay of fact and interpretation—between what is generally accepted and what is intuited. Viable hypotheses are constructed in part and thus vary considerably from historian to historian. To be sure, there is no contradiction in proposing an intellectually satisfying alternative to the resurrection hypothesis and maintaining that bare theism is true. Philosophers should pay attention to Allison's advice, laying out a refurbished case for the Christian faith by taking Swinburne's *a priori* reasons into serious consideration. The traditional case for Christian theism must become more forceful: If God were so cold and detached from humanity, it is difficult to conceive why he would have created the universe in the first place.

After Swinburne's *a priori* reasons have been outlined and explained, the discussion turns to what Swinburne dubs the "*a posteriori* evidence" for Christian faith in part 2. The *a posteriori* evidence is the historical evidence for the life and resurrection of Jesus and the subsequent teaching of the Church (p. 23). The teaching of the Church, which consists of Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox Christianities, counts as indirect evidence for Jesus's divinity. If God is the God of Jesus, it is safe to conclude that he will ensure that the Gospel will be heard by subsequent generations after Jesus has been glorified. If the central doctrines of the Church are true, then the *a posteriori* evidence should nicely complement the *a priori* evidence that was originally deduced in part 1. Not only will both types of evidence harmonize with one another, but the *a posteriori* evidence for Christianity should be able to outstrip all other historical evidence that is brought to the table by apologists who are representing other religious traditions.

The New Testament writings provide good evidence for those features of a person's life that would have to be seen if God were to become a human and do the kinds of things that were established by the *a priori* evidence. Jesus's life is the type of life that God would have lived if he were to become human. He led a perfect moral life despite the great amount of sufferings that he endured (pp. 100–102); he claimed to be God incarnate (pp. 102–106); he claimed to make an atonement for humanity (pp. 106–107); he gave accurate teaching about God's direction for human life (pp. 107–111); and he founded an organized Church that is supposed to continue his message (pp. 111–112, 134–143).

After presenting the relevant evidence for Jesus's life, Swinburne devotes an entire chapter to the reality of Jesus's resurrection (pp. 114–127). His greatest contribution to the debate on the resurrection concerns the origin and spread of Eucharistic belief and praxis (pp. 119, 120). To my knowledge, no contemporary apologist has utilized the evidence of the Church's earliest Eucharistic devotion to argue for Jesus's resurrection to the extent that Swinburne has (Swinburne has used the Eucharist as evidence for the resurrection in a few places in his previous writings). At the end of part 2 he concludes that the *a posteriori* evidence for Jesus's divinity fits in with the *a priori* reasons better than any other evidence supporting other religious claims. Naturally this leads to the conclusion that the

doctrines about Jesus's divinity and the Church's message about him are probably true.

For all of the book's strengths, there are some notable weaknesses in it. In a text that only briefly skims the surface of issues that can literally determine how one evaluates the fundamental truth claims of Christianity, Swinburne might have offered some bibliographical resources at the end of each chapter (or at the end of the book) for the reader to pursue. Lastly, Swinburne does not mention anyone with views that are different from or even contrary to his own. In the same vein, it is troubling that he does not spend more time elaborating on the challenges that other religious scholars pose to the *a posteriori* evidence for Christian theism (from, say, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, etc.). Thus, a little more negative apologetics would have illuminated his overall argument. Undoubtedly there will be New Testament scholars who will gainsay the evidence that Swinburne marshals in favor of certain components of Jesus's pre-Easter teaching and ministry. Unfortunately, he does not inform the reader of the bewildering amount of disagreement that currently exists among New Testament specialists in this regard (for example, Dale Allison and Raymond Brown are two reputable scholars who would deny that Jesus proclaimed his own deity during his lifetime).

This is not just another apologetics book. John Paul II's clarion call for Christian philosophers and fundamental theologians to defend the faith is clearly embodied in *Was Jesus God?* In spite of its minor omissions, those who seek to give reasons for Christian faith might well examine Swinburne's newest book. It will give plenty of food for thought.

Moral Scepticisms, by Walter Sinnott-Armstrong. Oxford University Press, 2006. Pp. xiv + 271. \$85.00 (cloth), \$19.95 (paper)

E. J. COFFMAN, University of Tennessee

This book argues for two main conclusions: *Pyrrhonian Moral Skepticism* (we should suspend judgment on the question of whether any moral beliefs are *epistemically* justified) and *Moderate Moral Skepticism* (moral beliefs can be "modestly justified" but not "extremely justified"—more on these terms below). Sinnott-Armstrong calls the conjunction of these claims *Moderate Pyrrhonian Moral Skepticism*.

The book has two main parts. In Part I, Sinnott-Armstrong's main goals are (a) to identify the best arguments for the conclusion that there is no moral knowledge (chapters 2–4) and (b) to develop an argument for Pyrrhonian Moral Skepticism (chapters 5–6). Chapter 1 helpfully sets the stage by distinguishing moral epistemology from other areas within moral theory. In Part II, Sinnott-Armstrong builds a case for Moderate Moral Skepticism by evaluating four replies to (what he regards as) one of