

and parts of his chapter would be thematically at home in Book II of *Paradise Lost*. How, *morally*, should a Christian respond to a view like this? I'm not sure. Maybe the usual analytic approach is enough. But I found myself hoping that, as the literature on the axiology of theism expands, part of it will address the research ethics appropriate to the investigation. (I'm grateful to Liz Jackson for comments on an earlier version of this review.)

Faith and Humility, by Jonathan Kvanvig. Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. viii + 219. \$60.00 (hardcover).

CHRIS TWEEDT, Christopher Newport University

In *Faith and Humility*, Jonathan Kvanvig argues for an account of two virtues that balance, or provide correction for, each other: faith and humility. Faith is the disposition to act in service of an ideal, a disposition that remains despite difficulties or setbacks. One can, however, pursue distorted ideals or pursue them in the wrong way—with unquestioning zeal, for example. Humility, which helps to correct this extreme, is the disposition to attend to the value of one's aims and the extent of one's contribution toward accomplishing them. To establish these accounts, Kvanvig first argues for a method that directs his arguments, and he then develops the accounts as he articulates and responds to alternative views. In what follows, instead of summarizing the book chapter by chapter, I provide a summary of Kvanvig's positions and his arguments for them as they are eventually developed throughout the book.

In the first three-quarters of the book, Kvanvig gives an account of faith. His aim is to provide an account that applies across both religious and non-religious contexts by searching for faith worth having, employing an axiomatic approach rather than engaging in linguistic analysis, etymology, or an effort to discover the fundamental components of the world. The axiomatic approach, says Kvanvig, is what makes philosophy worth doing: "We can engage philosophically in an analysis of anything in the dictionary, but we don't, and the reason we don't, when it is justifying of our practice, is because we presuppose the value or importance or significance of what we focus on in our philosophical explorations" (25).

In the search for faith worth having, Kvanvig assumes that faith is a virtue, a trait of character that is characterized functionally, and asks what this trait is for, or why it is worth having. His answer is that faith provides structural unity to a life. Lives of faith are contrasted with lives that are wantonly disconnected, "just one damn thing after another" (16), or



lives characterized by changes of direction and loss of heart. Throughout, Kvanvig uses two exemplars of faith: (1) Abraham, who faithfully left Mesopotamia at God's command (Genesis 12), and (2) a Little Leaguer who gives up a game-winning home run and resolves to become a better pitcher so that it doesn't happen again. Faith is what explains the behavior of the exemplars—both have integrated a significant portion of their lives around a long-term ideal, even if that ideal is insufficiently articulated or unlikely to be realized.

Kvanvig argues against alternative accounts of faith, the first of which are cognitive accounts. One such account is that faith is the disposition to believe truths supported by the evidence, but, Kvanvig says, faith is too valuable just to be that. In fact, there seems to be no underlying cognitive attitude held by all people of faith, because the exemplars above (and other people of faith) do not share any cognitive attitude. For example, Abraham could have acted solely on the hope, rather than the belief, that God would fulfill his promises. Kvanvig later adds that rational attitudes are thoroughly perspectival, so we shouldn't expect there to be a particular rational attitude that underlies faith. As Kvanvig states, "rationality is always and everywhere sensitive to change in first-person perspective" (73). One might argue that rationality is not a matter of individual first-person perspectives but, rather, a God's-eye perspective, but Kvanvig notes that a God's-eye perspective cannot determine what rational attitude a person should have, because such an attitude would not make sense to individuals with different perspectives. For the reasons above, faith is not a cognitive virtue.

One option not considered by Kvanvig is whether faith is a certain range of perspectives or construals of the world—perspectives that orient the agent toward what is valuable. These perspectives are, to be sure, cognitive, and they are certainly worth having; if people act, they act according to how they see value in the world, and such perspective-taking orients and structures lives. Abraham could have construed the world as one directed by God without any of the specific beliefs or rational attitudes that Kvanvig mentions, and the Little Leaguer could have construed the world as one in which his hard work will prevent future losses. Even if there is not a unique, consistent perspective that constitutes faith, neither is there one unique, consistent ideal that constitutes faith on Kvanvig's view. Perhaps future work could head in this direction.

Kvanvig also argues against alternative non-cognitive views of faith, specifically against the view that faith is trust and the view that faith is based on the subject's preferences. Kvanvig argues that faith is not trust, first, because it is unclear what trust is—dependence on the goodwill of another, optimism about the goodwill of another, a decision-theoretic calculation, or a disposition involving normative reactive attitudes. Second, trust is not necessary for faith, because Abraham could have had severe trust issues but still acted in faith; in fact, according to Kvanvig, it appears Abraham did have trust issues (35). Finally, trust is not sufficient for faith,

because trust can be completely passive whereas faith is a disposition toward action.

Kvanvig's objection to accounts according to which faith is based on attitudinal states such as preferences is that these accounts cannot account for crisis: the agent sometimes cannot compare their preferences for alternate outcomes, because one of the alternatives might involve an event that is so cataclysmic to matters central to their life that the agent cannot form preferences about it. This bewilderment might be indicated by Peter when he had to consider whether to abandon Jesus and asked, in the face of such a decision, "Where would we go? You have the words of eternal life" (49, John 6:68). Kvanvig takes the failure of preference-based accounts—Lara Buchak's in particular—as a proxy for the failure of other accounts of faith based on attitudinal states (emotions, hopes, fears, and other preferences) because Buchak's view is the most impressive attitudinal-state-based account in the literature and because it has plausible modern-day decision theory behind it, which gives it an advantage over other attitudinal-state-based accounts (40).

Kvanvig concludes that faith is essentially affective and is compatible with a multitude of cognitive attitudes, levels of trust, preferences, and so on, even if those attitudes, trust levels, etc. are ontologically more basic. Faith is defined as hearts are—functionally, in virtue of pumping blood—and which are realized by different shapes and materials.

What about religious faith? Doesn't religious faith involve having particular creedal beliefs? Kvanvig spends a considerable amount of space discussing religious belief, responding to John Dewey's account of faith, undercutting arguments for the view that religious faith involves particular beliefs, and providing an alternative understanding of Christian Scriptural accounts of faith. Concerning the alternative understanding, Kvanvig notes, first, that in the Christian Scriptures the term for faith in Greek is *pistis*, which is often incorrectly translated as "belief"; we ought instead to convert New Testament English translations of belief into language of faith. James 2:19, for example, should read, "You have faith that there is one God. Good! Even the demons have that faith, and shudder" (116). That James passage would then convey that the disposition to act in service to an ideal involving one god is insufficient for saving faith. Kvanvig also notes that the contrast to faith—doubt—is best construed not as lacking a belief but as wavering or hesitation instead of steadfast pursuit of the relevant ideal. For example, when Peter walked on water and began to sink, Jesus's rebuke, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14:31) would be odd were Jesus asking Peter why he didn't sustain a belief; instead, Peter needed help because he was hesitating. Finally, Kvanvig avers that faith can be useless or "dead" when it is not expressed, because faith, as a disposition, can be masked (when factors prevent its expression), and if it is always masked, it is useless. He adds that if there is a God who cares about one's life and faith, the masking possibility is very improbable if one does, in fact, have faith. The strength and value of one's

faith, then, is measured by how resistant it is to being prevented and how much doubt (read: wavering or hesitation) one has.

Concerning arguments that undercut the view that religious faith involves particular beliefs, Kvanvig argues that if one wishes to defend the view that a belief is fundamental to the Christian faith (e.g., that Jesus is God), one must also defend that even the Old Testament saints endorsed the claim. One could appeal to a generic claim (e.g., that God exists), but even generic claims require representational content that it is likely not all the saints had (79). It is better, says Kvanvig, to think that generic claims are entailed by the cognitive commitments of people of faith rather than that they are in fact one of the cognitive commitments of people of faith. One might respond that the Athanasian anathemas reveal that faith requires certain particular commitments. (The Athanasian creed, after many theological claims, concludes, "This is the catholic faith, which except one believes truly and firmly, they cannot be saved.") Kvanvig responds by making an analogy to parents who sometimes make false and exaggerated claims ("Smoking will give you cancer," "Snakebites will kill you!"). These claims are often made without much reflection, and when questioned, parents can easily get impatient and appeal to their own authority. One can see the history of religion, Christianity in particular, this way—as people of faith engage in efforts to understand how the world coheres with their affective features, one should expect those people to adopt positions that do not pass epistemic scrutiny. The central concern of Jesus is not about belief; it's about "moving away from a central concern for self and following him . . . being a follower of Jesus has to do with losing one's life rather than seeking it and in terms of servanthood rather than a pursuit of power, fame, fortune, or even honor and glory . . . it is hard to see how to fit talk of belief in the modern sense into this picture" (130). In a slogan, Kvanvig holds that "It is an unnecessary hijacking of Christianity that makes doctrinal matters central" (200).

The upside to the non-centrality of doctrinal commitment is that it doesn't make sense to criticize people of faith for being unreasonable. The problem of faith and reason is not a problem "any more than there is a concern about some inherent conflict between European ethnicity and reason. . . . All [the problem] would show is that there are lots of people with irrational beliefs, not exactly a shocking revelation and certainly not a situation in which one might expect some analogue of the New Atheists to arise, counseling everyone to do whatever they can to rid the world of European ethnicity" (130). So, it is not only unreasonable to hold that doctrinal matters are central to Christianity; it is also unreasonable to criticize Christianity on the basis of the unreasonableness of a particular doctrine.

Despite the non-centrality of doctrinal matters, faith can still be misguided. When Kvanvig writes that faith involves integrating one's life toward an ideal "worth achieving or pursuing" (27), he means that it is worth living a life in pursuit of an ideal, not that the ideal is always in itself valuable. Throughout, Kvanvig maintains that there can be narcissistic or

distorted faith in the same way there can be courageous acts in service of detrimental ends. This is a concern for Kvanvig. Faith is a virtue, but the virtue without restraint can lead to overzealous pursuit of nefarious ideals. Such a concern leads Kvanvig to develop an account of humility in the last quarter of his book.

Humility, which keeps the overzealous pursuit of nefarious ends in check, is the disposition to attend to the value of one's aims and the extent of one's contribution toward accomplishing them. By reflecting on one's own fallibility, one can reevaluate, temper, and realign their aim and methods of pursuit toward their target.

Kvanvig begins his inquiry into humility by noting that humility is different from modesty. Modesty concerns showiness, and its opposing vice is vanity, whereas humility concerns one's estimation of one's own abilities or accomplishments, and its opposing vice is pride or arrogance. Kvanvig then considers the nature of the virtue of humility. He argues that humility does not require ignorance about one's own accomplishments; in fact, the opposite is true—one cannot be humble about one's accomplishments when one is clueless about what those accomplishments are. Humility might even be compatible with full knowledge of one's accomplishments. Kvanvig also argues against the view that humility requires downplaying another's assessment of one's accomplishments for four reasons: first, it would be difficult for those who are greatly disadvantaged to be humble; second, self-awareness is good in itself; third, the only value in such a virtue is that it is fun to be around such a person, but obsequiousness would also serve such a purpose; and fourth, one could become competitive about how much they can downplay their own accomplishments, but to engage in such a competition is not to express humility. Kvanvig settles on the position that to be humble is to focus attention on one's own limitedness and fallibility. Whether or not one is being praised, a humble person realizes at least one of three aspects of their accomplishments: (1) good fortune played a role, (2) their accomplishments are less significant when compared to other acts, and (3) we all possess weaknesses. (The difference between religious and non-religious humility is just that they involve a different set of evaluative standards.) By being humble, we are able to assess ourselves more accurately by evaluating, comparing, and revising the standards of evaluation we're using so that we can determine "whether our hearts and minds have been placed on things that matter, or whether our cares and concerns are but a chasing after the wind" (203).

Faith without humility can be extreme and distorted. Humility without faith can lead to diminished efforts. By having faith, someone can integrate their life toward a particular direction, and by being humble, that person can maintain a healthy focus on their own fallibility to ensure that their life is headed in the right direction in the right way.

Faith and Humility is important reading for scholars who research faith, humility, or their application, but it will also be of interest to philosophers who are interested in how debates in other philosophical areas bear on

practical matters. The book is replete with applications of what initially seem to be unrelated philosophical areas to issues pertinent to faith and humility. For some examples, epistemic contextualism, fallibilism, action theory, counterfactuals, dispositions/masking/finking, Frege's puzzle/opacity of propositional content, Bayesian conditionalization, epistemic coherentism, the basing relation, analyticity, and the preface paradox are all brought to bear on issues related to faith and humility. It is my hope that this integration of other philosophical areas with work on faith and humility will lead to applied work by specialists in these other fields and to more widespread work on both faith and humility.

God, Science, and Religious Diversity: A Defense of Theism, by Robert T. Lehe. Cascade Books, 2018. 188 pages. \$25 (paperback).

MICHAEL THUNE, Joliet Junior College

A currently popular belief is that the advances in scientific knowledge over the last few centuries have demonstrated that science is incompatible with religious belief—the latter counting, at best, as “faith” and not knowledge. A second currently popular belief is that the existence of a plurality of different religions, each containing adherents that are sincere and morally upright—and whose characteristic beliefs are matters of “faith” rather than knowledge—means that it is wrongheaded (to say the least) to have any intellectual commitment to the truth of a given set of religious beliefs if this commitment involves thinking that any of the beliefs found in other religions is false. Robert T. Lehe, in *God, Science, and Religious Diversity*, provides an academically rigorous and trenchant challenge to both of these popular beliefs. The intended audience seems to be manifold, including religious believers who feel uneasy about their own commitment to certain religious beliefs in light of their awareness of the advance of science and of the plurality of religious traditions. But the book is also for skeptics, who may be surprised by Lehe's well-articulated defense of the claim that “modern science is not only compatible with the existence of God, but . . . favors theism over metaphysical naturalism, the view that only the natural world exists and that all phenomena are governed entirely by the laws of physics” (1). While there are many other books that conjointly address the topics of science and religion, there aren't as many that address science and religious diversity as twin challenges to particular religious belief and whose responses to these challenges are woven together in a unified, coherent, and compelling way. *God, Science,*

