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Review of "Faith, Reason and the Existence of God" by Denys Turner

Philip Rossi
Marquette University, philip.rossi@marquette.edu

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helpful addition to a long tradition in German-speaking lands of theological interpretations of Ignatian spirituality.

University of Notre Dame J. MATTHEW ASHLEY

FAITH, REASON AND THE EXISTENCE OF GOD. By Denys Turner. New York: Cambridge University, 2004. Pp. xix + 271. $75; $29.99.

Denys Turner has produced an erudite, well-crafted argument that "we know by faith that it is possible to know God by human reason with certainty" (25)—the controversial affirmation made by the First Vatican Council. T. mounts his defense of the rational knowability of God, a claim that seems "to stand in more than one form of conflict with most philosophical and theological opinion of recent times" (6), in three stages. The first and longest, encompassing chapters 1–6, offers an account of reason based on T.'s reading of Aquinas that advances two crucial claims: first, "reason replicates, as it were by anticipation and in an inchoate way, the 'shape' of faith itself" (23); second, the particular "shape" of faith that reason anticipates is a "sacramental" one, that is, "an openness of embodied existence to that which altogether lies beyond its grasp" (24).

The second stage of T.'s argument, spanning chapters 7–9, engages the question of the possibility of a "natural theology" by canvassing some medieval and modern understandings of "the nature of the divine unknowability" (24). With Scotus, Aquinas, and Derrida as primary conversation partners, T. then frames this possibility as one requiring that "the account that you give of the logic of inference from creatures to God . . . be such that it can cross the gap of 'difference' between God and creatures" (194). T. recognizes, however, that the account he endorses of divine unknowability, which he draws from pseudo-Denys, Eckhart, and Aquinas (and pointedly distinguishes from the reading given to such figures in "Radical Orthodoxy"), may make that difference so radical that "the issue is forced whether that gap between God and creatures is now not so great as to be beyond the power of any possible inference to cross it" (194).

Stage three, in chapters 10–13, then sets forth an account of the logic of proof as it functions in the strategy that Aquinas employs in making the inference from creatures to God. Central to T.'s execution of this task is establishing a link between "that narrower expression of reason which consists in 'ratiocination' from premises to conclusion in the course of proof and that broader sense of 'reason' which was said . . . to possess the shape of the 'sacramental'" (24). T. constructs that link through a theological nexus formed by the doctrines of creation *ex nihilo* and the Incarnation. In the course of so doing he articulates a notion of "kenotic reason" (232–33) that, despite the brevity of its presentation, opens a rich vein for further theological and philosophical exploration, particularly with respect to its claims about the fundamental embodiedness of our rationality: "Bodiliness is the stuff of our intellectual being, as intellect is the form of our bodily stuff, and the conjunction is our rationality" (232).

While T. characterizes his specific project to show the possibility of rationally demonstrating the existence of God as "intentionally narrow in focus" (ix), he also recognizes its importance in addressing what has increasingly become an intellectual given in much of the culture of late modernity, namely, "that nothing hangs on whether there is or is not a God" (228); even less, it seems, hangs on reasoning to such a judgment. Such indifference offers little space for serious argument between believers and nonbelievers, a circumstance T. sees as indicative that "responsibilities to reason have been shirked" (262) on both sides. In this respect, the long-term goal of T.'s argument is thus considerably more ambitious than might appear from its formal concern with the logic of proof.

T. is offering nothing less than a theologically founded case for the rehabilitation of a robust understanding of reason in a cultural context that he sees marked by a "faith-induced loss of intellectual nerve" (261). His argument is thus pertinent to efforts to probe the intellectual dynamics that have shaped a contemporary culture of nonbelief. Perhaps in consequence of T.'s chosen focus on conceptual issues, the argument he articulates here generally gives only passing attention to the particularities of the cultural and historical contexts in which those issues have been ingredient. It is thus not altogether surprising that his effort to bring philosophical and theological inquiry back into conversation about the existence of God does not explicitly take note of the work of thinkers such as Michael Buckley, Charles Taylor, and Louis Dupré, whose thick descriptions of those contexts offer useful lessons about why these conceptual issues have lost their cultural "traction." There is likely to be much mutual gain for the project of rehabilitating reason in such an expansion of the conversation.

Marquette University, Milwaukee PHILIP J. ROSSI, S. J.

KANT AND THE ETHICS OF HUMILITY: A STORY OF DEPENDENCE, CORRUPTION, AND VIRTUE. By Jeanine Grenberg. New York: Cambridge University, 2005. Pp. xi + 269. $75.

Grenberg's engaging and elegantly written book is an effort to rehabilitate the virtue of humility by way of a constructive rereading of Kant's moral theory. While this might seem an odd pairing, G. demonstrates that humility is central to a Kantian account of moral character and that Kant has an original contribution to make to our understanding of the nature and significance of this neglected virtue.

Contrary to confusions and evasions within modern moral consciousness, G. proposes that humility is an essential virtue precisely because of the kind of beings we are—dependent and corrupt, yet dignified and rational, and therefore capable of moral progress—a reading consistent with Kant's claims about the fragility of human happiness and our propensity to evil. Our dependence upon things outside our control, G. explains, renders our pursuit of happiness unstable, and this gives rise to anxiety that leads in turn to the over assertion of one's needs and desires and, thus, to a mis-