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# Review of "The Rise and Fall of Theological Enlightenment: Jean-Martin De Prades and Ideological Polarization in Eighteenth-Century France" by Jeffrey Burson

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of the cross as “recognizing and overcoming the persecution-victimage mechanism” (154); and (3) the retrieval of the church as an “agapic network . . . bound together by devoted memory to a model of active love” (194). W. indicates from the outset that the failure of the Enlightenment project ultimately hinges on its inability to grasp rightly the relation of transcendence and immanence, not least because its predecessor Christianity had also fallen into dualism on these matters (216). By contrast, Dostoevsky unflinchingly manages to achieve a Rousseauian respect for immanence (inoculating him against the Nietzschean critique), while maintaining that respect for the human relies ultimately on the divine. In his conclusion W. reveals that such a balance ultimately hangs on traditional claims about the trinitarian nature of God, the Chalcedonian claims about Christ, and the necessity of the church.

W.’s narrative is not new. What distinguishes his book is its compact engagement with the roots of so many central questions, getting beyond a simplified liberal modernity either endorsed or rejected by a simplified Christianity. Compressing these ambitions into little more than 200 pages is both admirable and daunting. Most disappointingly, W. does not engage central figures (e.g., Henri de Lubac and Hans Urs von Balthasar) who support his theological readings and have seen Dostoevsky as key to their own work. Is W. in agreement with their work? Disagreement? There is no sign. Also, the book remains highly theoretical throughout, rarely engaging with societal examples of the ideals he interrogates. Despite appeals to Dostoevsky’s “realism,” Dostoevsky’s work remains fictional and sometimes quite far from contemporary structures. How do the village figures of his novels compare to, say, the contemporary beggar? Yet W. magnificently explains the exact concepts needed for such concrete issues and, in particular, how to interrogate our psychology about them. Picking Rousseau (instead of Kant or Mill) is a masterstroke because of Rousseau’s attention to the psychology of Enlightenment ideals, the desires and aversions we experience when trying to be compassionate or true to ourselves. And the strength of Dostoevsky’s response is his similar, though revised, attention to the same psychological complexities. W.’s major contribution is this reconfiguration of the engagement of Christianity and modernity in ways that are both accessible and constructive. The overarching character of the questions he engages makes the book required reading for theologians of all stripes.

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THE RISE AND FALL OF THEOLOGICAL ENLIGHTENMENT: JEAN-MARTIN DE PRADES AND IDEOLOGICAL POLARIZATION IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE. By Jeffrey D. Burson. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame, 2010. Pp. xxiv + 494. \$55.

While the Jesuits of the 18th century are usually regarded as the main force of the Counter-Enlightenment, Burson demonstrates that the Society

of Jesus in France produced in the first decades of the 18th century a remarkable (and hitherto forgotten) synthesis of the epistemological empiricism of John Locke with the system of Nicholas Malebranche. The champions of this synthesis, Claude Buffier and René J. Tournemine, regarded it as a long overdue update of Thomism necessary for a church facing the problems and challenges of the modern world. Initially this project was broadly welcomed, and found favor within early-Enlightenment publics, from the salon to the seminary, at a time coincident with expanding networks of readers of both radical and theological enlightenment texts.

But around the middle of the century the Enlightenment project in general and the Jesuit synthesis in particular came under suspicion because of the publication of Diderot's anticlerical and antireligious *Encyclopedie*, which nevertheless was not lacking supporters among many scholars in France, including Jesuits and theologians. After it became common knowledge that one young priest, Jean Martin de Prades, had contributed an article to this work, his recently successful defense of his Sorbonne dissertation was censored in 1752. De Prades was even charged with plagiarizing it from the writings of Diderot, and was further accused of destroying classical apologetic theology by rejecting the proof from miracles, and thus the certainty of any supernatural revelation. Miracles were, in de Prades' view, no longer valid proofs for any divine message unless they could be verified with the help of prophecies. Consequently Jesus' healings, "however miraculous in themselves, if they are separated from the prophecies that reveal to us their divinity, would not be able to persuade us of the source of these miracles, since they have a species of similarity with the cures of Aesculapius worked by magic or diabolical virtue" (227). This comparison of Jesus with a Greek god led to the charge that de Prades had also questioned the divinity of Christ himself. Most strikingly, in the historiography of the following 200 years, de Prades remained depicted largely as a half-reformed heretic who was more of a *philosophe* at heart. History was accepting the charges brought against de Prades and the ultramontane narrative of the 19th century, apparently without anyone rereading de Prades' dissertation or his defense of it. B., however, has unearthed with great diligence the fact that the priest attempted to reconstruct, with immense care, a modern Catholic theology that would reach beyond the Jesuit synthesis and address the most pressing challenges brought forward by men like Mandeville, Voltaire, du Marsais, and Spinoza. That he did this at the height of the Jansenist controversy was a great misfortune for him and for the future of Catholic theology. Due to Jansenist propaganda, which voiced horror about the heresies supposedly taught at the Sorbonne, de Prades was sacrificed by his own teachers to save the Jesuit reputation—there were close links between Jesuits and the faculty of Paris in the 1730s and 1740s, an influence that B. has also meticulously reconstructed in the first and second parts of this book.

De Prades ultimately fled to Prussia when he was still quite young; Frederick the Great endowed him with a canonry in a small Silesian city

after a meteoric rise and fall from grace at the king's court in the wake of the Seven Years' War, and accelerated by Voltaire's complicated relations with Frederick and with the young abbé. Although later reconciled with his church (1754), de Prades never got over the unjust treatment he had received and was never able to return to France. Moreover, the scandal of de Prades intimidated the Jesuits so much that they sharply curtailed their more open-minded engagement with the Enlightenment project, preferring instead to favor aspects of it while rather hypocritically pursuing both the Encyclopedia project and the Jansenists with renewed vigor—a position that became politically untenable as the later 18th century progressed. In this way, the Jansenist Catholic Enlightenment marked as its first victory the expulsion of the Jesuit order from France, which was one indirect cause of the radicalization of the Enlightenment in France before the Revolution.

B.'s elegantly written book is to date the most definitive account of a tremendously important theological battle that occurred in Enlightenment Europe, and it evokes thought-provoking reflections on more recent events. He clearly presents the ecclesiastical setting of 18th-century France, guides us safely through complex and highly intricate theological quarrels, and shows their connection to wider trends in the scholarship of the transnational Enlightenment, the radicalization of Enlightenment, the Catholic Enlightenment, and the history of pre-Revolutionary France. B. argues convincingly that the affair of Abbé de Prades was crucial, not only for French Catholicism but also for the fate of the French Catholic Enlightenment. This book is a must read for historians and theologians alike.

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EDUCATING FOR FAITH AND JUSTICE: CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION TODAY. By Thomas P. Rausch, S.J. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 2010. Pp. xiv + 165; \$19.95.

For Thomas Rausch the Catholic university is to be, more generally, at the service of faith and, more specifically, an agent that enables the next generation to come to a personal encounter with the living God as revealed in Jesus Christ. In defense of this position, R. presents two sets of well-written essays that can be read independently of the other. Section 1 is written by R.; section 2, by guest authors.

In his own first two chapters, R. meticulously traces the development of the Catholic university from its medieval roots, highlighting the developmental role of philosophy and theology. He eventually states that Vatican II and its aftermath introduced significant challenges to long-dominant understandings of the mission and identity of the university—challenges that are still being worked out. Theology, for example, once the locus of Catholic identity, has been profoundly affected by declericalization, professionalization, and laicization. The discipline has moved from a pastoral and wisdom focus toward a more critical and interpretative focus, prompting greater faculty and even administration loyalty to the