

distinction to his attention with regard to Hick's *An Interpretation of Religion* (1989), a work of philosophy of religion, not theology. Other essays point out inconsistencies in Hick's approach, as well as resources for correcting them.

Part 4 considers the history of the impact of Hick's work and opportunities for its further influence. Geoff Teece in "John Hick's Religious Interpretation of Religion: An Unexplored Resource for Religious Educators" wonders why a writer as influential as Hick has not had more influence on religious education in Britain, such as Ninian Smart had. One quick answer Teece offers is that, despite Hick's breadth of subjects, he never wrote on religious education (254). Given the rise of secularization in Western Europe and North America, any religionist would be interested in this essay, but may wonder whether Teece convincingly provides Hick as a solution.

Other essays in this volume deserve comment, but space does not allow for it. Despite the 19 essays covering the wide range of Hick's thought, some are noticeably missing. Few scholars have been more influenced or critical of Hick than S. Mark Heim, who responded to Hick in detail in his award-winning *Salvations* followed by *Depths of the Riches*. Readers would want to know what a scholar of Heim's caliber thinks of Hick's place in the modern world. In addition, while King's essay and a few others briefly mention double or multiple religious belongings, one would like to read what Hickians think of this rising religious phenomenon.

St. Anselm College, Manchester, NH

BEDE BENJAMIN BEDLACK

THE TRINITY AND THEODICY: THE TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY OF VON BALTHASAR AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL. By Jacob H. Friesenhahn. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011. Pp. 197. \$89.95.

As Friesenhahn states clearly in his introduction, his goal here is to reassess the trinitarian theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar and to uncover its potential as a resource for a new constructive response to the "problem of evil" (1). The question of theodicy was not absent from Balthasar's vast *oeuvre*: in *Theodrama* and *Mysterium Paschale*, Balthasar himself had interpreted the mystery of the Trinity through the lens of a theology of the cross, whereby Christ's passion and his descent to hell could be seen as the supreme expression of God's solidarity with the suffering of humanity. F. adopts a different approach, choosing to present Balthasar's theology of the Trinity as a response to the philosophical discussion of the problem of evil by contemporary analytic thinkers.

Part I relies on the work of some prominent philosophers of religion to explore the "question of evil." F. begins with a discussion of Elie

Wiesel's play *The Trial of God*, where the problem of theodicy lies at the center of the drama; he then addresses Leibnitz's traditional affirmation of divine justice, Gordon Kaufman's approach to the question of evil "for a nuclear age," as well as a series of "pat answers" to the problem of suffering in this world (23–26). After conceding that the challenge of theodicy is not met by any of these authors, F. turns to David Hume and to J. L. Mackie, both of whom question the claim that a theist could logically affirm the existence of an all-powerful benevolent deity in the presence of so much evil in the world. F. claims that the contemporary theologian Alvin Plantinga succeeded in refuting the arguments of Hume and Mackie against theism by showing that in the presence of free will, the argument from evil could not offer a logical disproof of theism (51–58). Nontheist thinkers may of course question the assumption that free will accurately describes human agency, but if one shares Plantinga's rejection of ethical determinism, his position is at least characterized by internal coherence—F. calls it "epistemically justified" (59).

The next question, however, is whether a Christian theologian can only debunk the arguments of her nontheist opponents, or whether she can also say something more constructive, and indeed more comforting, about the response to evil of the God of Jesus Christ. F. discusses the work of John Hick, Eleanore Stump, and Marilyn McCord Adams, all of whom speak of God's process of redemption of creation, and of the way evil is overcome in this process (76).

Part II attempts to ground this "creation theodicy" in the scriptural narrative of the Old and the New Testaments, arguing that God's ongoing involvement in the history of humanity culminates in the cross of Christ (105). In this perspective, Balthasar's account of the immanent Trinity as "a dynamic life of interpersonal love" shared by three Persons (106) is fully congruent with the history of God's constant care for creation that is attested in Scripture. The cross is thus an event both within God and between God and humanity: the suffering of humanity is taken up into the very core of trinitarian life, and through the descent of Christ into hell—which Balthasar, under the influence of Adrienne von Speyr, envisaged as a deeply trinitarian event—God manifests God's deepest solidarity with sinners and with our common humanity, which is ravaged by suffering and death. In this perspective, hell—radical self-centeredness and selfishness—is the reverse of the Trinity's perfect relationship of self-giving love, and Christ's crucifixion and descent into the netherworld reveal that there is no aspect of the human condition that God's love cannot embrace and redeem.

F.'s project is ambitious and well executed, but its conclusions are perhaps less ground-breaking than one might have hoped, as the author finally restates Balthasar's conviction that the cross of Christ connects

human suffering to God's triune nature "in a fashion that redeems all human suffering and renders it of salvific value" (2). This study will nonetheless be attractive to theologians who are interested in Balthasar's thought, as well as in the cross-disciplinary conversation between analytic philosophy and contemporary systematic theology.

Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University

THOMAS CATTOI

INFINITY DWINDLED TO INFANCY: A CATHOLIC AND EVANGELICAL CHRISTOLOGY. By Edward T. Oakes, S.J. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011. Pp. xii + 459. \$44.

The figure of Jesus of Nazareth continues to both fascinate and provoke the modern imagination. From *The Da Vinci Code* to the latest dust-up over a tiny piece of papyrus of ambiguous provenance that mentions Jesus cryptically (something about his "wife"), the lingering influence of the Rabbi from Nazareth is incontestable. Nor is there any lack of more serious scholarly treatments of the life of this man, which, when taken as a whole, scarcely evince even a passing resemblance to an emerging consensus.

From the outset it is clear that the theological perspective of Oakes's text is rooted in that school of Catholic theology that has come to be known as *ressourcement*. And O.'s previous scholarly work as both a translator and expositor of the thought of Hans Urs von Balthasar shines through. But the text is not, for all that, a "Balthasarian Christology," but it does allow for the full range of *ressourcement* theology to shape its topography. It begins by setting the table with the dinnerware of de Lubacian paradox, emphasizing again and again that both fideist approaches to the reality of the God-man rooted in a false positivism of Revelation, and rationalistic approaches that seek to "explain" the mystery of the Incarnation by dissolving it in advance, are unacceptable for the orthodox Christian. In a beautiful opening chapter, therefore, O. turns to the Christology of the poets to establish the priority of maintaining the tension of paradox in all that proceeds.

O. then analyzes various historical critical approaches, which he finds in the dizzying array of often conflicting titles applied to Jesus in the New Testament. He avoids the laziness of many who have taken up this task, who are content to lay out their own analysis of the historical Jesus, and who then attempt to make such exegesis normative by invoking the claim that the position is supported by a "majority of exegetes."

The text then proceeds historically in its analysis of the development of christological doctrine that begins with the Church Fathers and moves on to treat medieval, Reformational, Pietistical, and modern philosophical Christology, before concluding with an analysis of the pluralism of modern Catholic and Protestant theology. O. ends with an examination of modern