

completion by Heidegger and the onto-theo-logical misunderstanding of God with reduction to Being. Second, *esse* and *ens* (entity) establish their relationship in creation. The *esse* Aquinas assigns to God creates all entities and therefore all beings. In effect *esse* causes the essences of all entities as created beings (*esse commune*). Yet as creator, *esse* remains separate from creation and being and “all what we understand and know under the title of being” (229, 233–36). Third, though the link between *esse* and *ens* depends on a created causality, *esse* as God is neither caused nor self-caused and therefore stands outside *causa sui*. Only theological determination suffices for considering what Thomas means by *esse*. For M., the designator of *esse* floats away from all concepts and operates like a negative identifier for God, ultimately reminding humans that knowledge about God requires beginning with God, i.e., revelation.

Ironically, the combination of “continental” philosophical *rigueur* and theological surrender in *God without Being* may tempt some to roll their eyes at yet another encore from a European male in theological curricula, or wonder what gives M. the swagger to write as confidently as he does about God. Christianity does arrive rather suddenly, and his vanguard approach to redefining the question of God through figures like Descartes, Pascal, Kant, Nietzsche, Lévinas, and Derrida shifts very quickly to an almost dogmatic appeal to the Eucharist and the Bible, not to mention M.’s strident fidelity to Catholic authority (67, 155). Dismissing the latest version of *God without Being* too hastily, however, overlooks another ingenious paradox pervading the text, that in his own line of argumentation M. faithfully submits to self-effacing, self-erasure, and refinement too.

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CHRIST MEETS ME EVERYWHERE: AUGUSTINE’S EARLY FIGURATIVE EXEGESIS. By Michael Cameron. Oxford Studies in Historical Theology. New York: Oxford University, 2012. Pp. xviii + 410. \$74.

This is a superb study of Augustine’s use of Scripture, capturing the developments and nuances of the great theologian’s engagement with the Bible and his hermeneutical approaches that led him to see himself as a Christian believer throughout the Scriptures. His goal was to enable all Christian believers to find themselves in the biblical texts, as he did.

Cameron has produced a masterful exposition of the dynamics of Augustine’s reading of the Bible. Augustine’s hermeneutical key was figuration. Scripture is a book of divine rhetoric, which Augustine the rhetorician read as the history of salvation. God’s divine strategy in Scripture is rhetorical “accommodation” (39), whereby all the “figures” of

Scripture—in both OT and NT—point to Scripture’s central purpose. People read “to discover God’s will, *voluntas Dei* (*Chr. Teach.* 2.9.14)” (41). Obscure passages are read in light of the clearer ones, with love being the main message that shines through. Thus the Bible is a “vast unified divine discourse” that is opened as “the spiritual mind configures the unity of Scripture” (41, 42). “‘In that pure eloquence,’ Augustine wrote, ‘I saw one Face, and I learned to rejoice with trembling’ (*Conf.* 7.21.17; trans. Sheed)” (42).

Jesus Christ in his humanity, as Augustine came to recognize the importance of this belief, helped him recognize Christ as a “way of seeing” Scripture. As Christ is the center radiating outward, so the whole of Scripture “‘mediates’ God’s love to its readers, especially when amplified by preaching in the liturgy” (13). As C. finely states: “For Augustine the rhetorical character of Scripture was not merely decorative, but potent. Figurative reading released a kind of centripetal spiritual force that unified Scripture’s many far-flung images, sayings, rites, events, and characters and drove readers back to its central load-bearing beam (i.e., its ‘end’) of love for God and neighbor (*Chr. Teach.* 1.35.39; *Instr. Beg.* 54.8).” The access key for readers was faith, which made them living participants in the self-sacrificial love that poured forth from the cross and fulfilled Scripture’s love commands (13).

C.’s clarity and detail shows him a master of Augustine’s thought and an able communicator who writes with eloquence and liveliness. Three parts take us through Augustine’s life as a novice (386–91), journeyman (391–96), and master (396–ca. 400), each phase featuring important developments as Augustine grew more fully into what it meant to be a student of Scripture who becomes engaged with and transformed by it. The “chief characteristic of Augustine’s Christian hermeneutics” is “the *exchange* by which readers project themselves into the Scriptures” (209–10). This “self-transposition into the text” transforms one by scriptural grace (292), and comes through “Christ’s gracious Incarnation and death” (210).

Augustine’s concerns to teach beginners how to read Scripture were addressed in his *On Instructing Beginners*. C. calls this lesson “looking from the bottom up” (240). Readers must come to know that love is the “key to Scripture” and that “Christ is the key to that love” (241). God’s love has become historical in Christ and love is “Scripture’s *summa*,” says C. For readers to grasp this, Augustine believed, “teachers must first tell Scripture’s love-forming stories so that hearers ‘by listening may believe, by believing may hope, and by hoping may love’ (*Instr. Beg.* 4.8)” (241). The *narratio* is the story of salvation, to which all Scripture points, beginning with Genesis 1:1 (242).

All Scripture anticipates Christ and “converges upon Christ” (245). Christ’s death is the “tipping point,” where, in the mystery of the cross (*mysterium crucis*), God’s love is poured out “backward and forward in

time throughout the whole history of salvation” (246). The Old Testament anticipates this salvation in Christ (prophecy); the NT displays it (fulfillment [267]). Figurative patterns woven through the OT by the Spirit are uncovered by the pattern of the NT (277). Finding the hidden treasures of what God has revealed is the task—and joy—of the Christian interpreter. As C. puts it, “For Augustine, Scripture shows God playing a game of peekaboo with his children, a game that they win by reading in such a way that understanding opens up to them” (280).

Love is the end or purpose of the Law, but it is also “the primary rule of spiritual epistemology, for ‘no one enters into truth except through love’ (*Faust.* 32.18)” (280). Reading Scripture this way brings life, delight, and nourishment. For Augustine, “Christ meets and refreshes me everywhere . . . in those Scriptures” (*Faust.* 12.27)” (281).

C.’s work is undoubtedly one of the truly great studies of Scripture in Augustine’s thought. It is persuasively constructed, astonishingly documented, and engagingly presented. This is as an outstanding work of highest merit and value.

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KARL BARTH, CATHOLIC RENEWAL, AND VATICAN II. By Benjamin Dahlke. Translated from the German by Helen Heron, Alasdair Heron, and Kenneth R. Oakes. T. & T. Clark Studies in Systematic Theology 17. London: T. & T. Clark, 2012. Pp x + 183. \$110.

The scope of Dahlke’s study is more accurately conveyed in the German edition’s title, translated as *The Catholic Reception of Karl Barth: Theological Renewal Prior to the Second Vatican Council*, and covers German-speaking Catholic theological reception of Barth from 1922–1958. The text revolves around two poles. For the first five chapters, D. assembles a considerable and disparate body of Catholic responses, beginning in the 1920s with the initial reactions to Barth’s *Epistle to the Romans*. These responses engage Barth both as a part of the “school” of Dialectical Theology and after his break from that position, although they do not always display much sensitivity to the rapidly changing state of Barth’s thought. The last four chapters turn to Hans Urs von Balthasar as a primary interlocutor for Barth; Balthasar engages Barth more fruitfully and midwives some of his thinking into the broad stream of Catholic renewal that then builds toward the Second Vatican Council. It is a shame that the title does not also alert Balthasar scholars to his major role in the volume.

In the first chapters, D. offers the results of a sweeping survey of early Catholic readers of Barth. While some names of those who will engage Barth in this volume are well known (Balthasar, Karl Adam, Karl Rahner),