

potentially deep divide between Creator and creature, that explanation really does make all the difference.

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Dando razones de nuestra esperanza: La pregunta acerca del mal. By Gerardo Aste, S.J. Lima: Centro de la Espiritualidad Ignaciana, 2014. Pp. 183. \$12.

Aste's volume offers ten chapters on the coherence of the Christian doctrine aimed at lay, college-educated adults who are wondering about their faith. The questions these adults raise regarding the structure of the Christian faith and the spiritual challenges they encounter in their context frame A.'s teachings.

The volume is didactic. It guides faithful religious persons through the spiritual challenges we all encounter in an urban setting—at home, at work, in society, with people of different religious beliefs, agnostics, and so on—and provides the intellectual tools needed to respond to these challenges with a kind heart and educated mind.

The chapters focus on the genesis of, and the questions about, evil, and are a fast read and well suited to their audience. The organization of the volume starts with basic historical, biblical, and christological questions that engage readers in an internal dialogue that draws them to imagine new ways of living and communicating their faith.

The volume is the first of a series of four that aim to help nonprofessionals articulate their own faith. Even more important, it is an example to other theologians of how to address the needs of educated middle-class Christians in their own regions. Libraries and books stores carry many works written by theologians for other theologians, or works that interpret the Christian religion from the perspective of the poor and vulnerable. This book and this series, however, target college-educated Christian adults who have not had the opportunity to engage in the theological dialogue that emerges from their own context.

I look forward to reading the successive volumes in this series.

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Christ and Analogy: The Christocentric Metaphysics of Hans Urs von Balthasar. By Junius Johnson. Emerging Scholars. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013. Pp. xi + 213. \$59.

Johnson's volume is a substantial revision of his dissertation at Yale under the direction of Miroslav Volf. Over eight chapters J. explores the border between metaphysics and theology that runs through Hans Urs von Balthasar's great opus of theological aesthetics, theo-dramatics, and logic. J. refers to Balthasar's 15-volume project as a "triptych," rather than a trilogy, in order to underscore the structural unity the work, which is metaphysically centered on the "panel" of Christ as the concrete analogy of

being. While neither a strictly philosophical nor theological study of Balthasar, the book focuses on philosophy's openness to fulfillment in theology in his thought. In chapters 2 to 4, J. charts Balthasar's navigation between two theses that describe the God–world relation, namely, “pure difference” and “identity.” J. then locates at the center of Balthasar's thought the Bonaventurian principle of the incarnate Christ as both the exemplar of all created being and the expression of God, forming within himself the two poles of the analogy of being.

The more explicitly theological chapters (6 and 7), which deal somewhat more tentatively with topics such as Trinity, love, and kenosis, require close reading to keep J.'s metaphysical argument clearly in view. The difficulty in doing this might lie more at Balthasar's door than J.'s, as Balthasar's most expansive thought on these topics arises most prominently in the volumes that are least systematic. The reader should not expect a treatment of the more controversial aspects of Balthasar's trinitarianism and anthropology, such as the influence of Adrienne von Speyr or Balthasar's theology of gender. But J. does provide, with much confidence and expertise, synthetic observations in a linear account of the deep structure of Balthasar's thought. This is a significant achievement, given the very nonlinear fashion in which Balthasar composed his “triptych.” The volume is a valuable systematic resource for readers who desire concision and clarity when dealing with the philosophical presuppositions underlying Balthasar's most ambitious and wide-ranging theological project.

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Mysticism and Spirituality, Part I, Mysticism, Fullness of Life. By Raimon Panikkar. Edited by Milena Carrara Pavan. *Opera Omnia* 1/1. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2014. Pp. xxv + 286. \$75.

Panikkar (1918–2010) was a most profound and original thinker. The English publication of his *Opera Omnia* emerges with this first of two books on *Mysticism and Spirituality*. These “complete works” are not merely the reproduction of earlier writings, but represent P.'s own abridgement, refinement, selection, and extension of his previous writings from the perspective of his final years.

Why begin with mysticism? Because, P. states, it is the “indispensable hermeneutical key” inspiring all his writings (xiii). It is also his primary category for critiquing his *bête noire*, Western body–soul dualism, with its forgetfulness of spirit. One needs to see with the “third eye” to integrate all human ways of knowing, being, and loving. P.'s mantra: mysticism is not for the privileged few, but “the integral human experience” involving a “new innocence,” prayer, silence, and contemplation. The Christian examples of Clare, John of the Cross, and Teresa of Avila (93–104) are given prominence even as P. notes how monotheism is problematic in encouraging mysticism.

The third section of the work, entitled “The Mystical Experience,” is the most systematic, especially in its presentation of nine sutras on mysticism (127–210) and