

*Forgiving and Forgetting: Theology and the Margins of Soteriology*. Edited by Hartmut von Sass and Johannes Zachhuber. Religion in Philosophy and Theology, 82. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015. Pp. viii + 225. \$65.47.

The question of forgetting haunts the various assumptions and forms of religious engagement, perhaps in particular for those religions that find a remembered past to be normative and, with modernity, are vulnerable to historicism. This volume takes up this topic, engaging its multiple dimensions, from the inner life of the believer to the ideology of “public forgetting” (45), and finally, to the status and utility of the “unforgivable.”

Agata Bielik-Robson’s psychoanalytic approach explores the notion that the expulsion from the womb is a defining model for all subsequent forgetting/leaving, with the exodus serving as the exemplar narrative for “birth trauma” (Otto Rank). Simon D. Podmore draws on Kierkegaard to trace the delineations between human and divine forgiveness, circling around the impossibility of fully knowing that which is “forgiven.” Paul Fiddes also draws on Kierkegaard’s description of the painful journey to the other that is the role of the one who would forgive.

Lydia Schumacher reflects on Augustine’s *Confessions* as an attempt precisely to remember his own forgetting of God in order to forgive, which she retrieves via the Augustinian notion of divine immutability. In a program for further study, Phillip Stolte’s searching essay suggests that imagination is not only necessary for memory, but also “the decisive condition of the possibility of forgiveness” (212).

This collection, drawn from papers presented at an Oxford conference on the topic in 2012, is intended for specialists, but is reasonably accessible for scholars and students across the field of religion. The use of several common sources allows the insights that emerge from the perspectives and methods of the authors to emerge with clarity. There is a cumulative effect to the sequence of the essays. Whether read in whole or in part, these essays could enliven many a seminar discussion.

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*Passions and Virtue*. By Servais Pinckaers, OP. Translated by Benedict Guevin, OSB. Washington: Catholic University of America, 2015. Pp. ix + 139. \$65.

This magnificent work has all the beauty of a late career book written by a master who speaks about his area of expertise simply and wisely. This is not a heavily detailed and footnoted argument. It is a book about the virtues and passions by someone so steeped in the thought of Aquinas that he can approach his topic creatively and boldly, and yet still be firmly rooted in the Angelic Doctor’s thought.

As the book begins it appears to offer a straightforward Thomistic analysis of virtue and passion, with chapters on virtue and passion, lists of passions, and love and hate. We see hints of P.’s creativity afoot with a prominent role for mercy and pity, which do not play such a role in Aquinas. Though the next few chapters mimic a Thomistically

ordered analysis (concupiscence and hope; delectation, pleasure and joy; and, suffering, pain, and sadness), here we see even further free rein, as in the deepened treatment of suffering in the context of pain.

By the middle of the book P.'s innovative creativity is complete. Ensuing chapters on the virtue of humor and the virtue of silence are followed by treatments of piety, work, rest and leisure, sport, psychology, and uselessness. Each of these chapters, like those that precede it, contain beautiful spiritual reflections on the topic at hand, reflections that exemplify P.'s long-standing argument that moral and systematic theology are withered if not fused with spirituality. Reflections on silence and "noise" seem perfectly attuned to today's spiritual challenges. Even treatments of classic moral questions such as the relationship of mercy and justice are done in a personal and spiritual style.

In sum, this book will have both scholarly and broader appeal. First, we gain greater insight into P.'s mind, which would justify the book in its own right. But second, we see P. creatively treat topics of contemporary and spiritual interest in a manner imbued with the wisdom of St. Thomas even while at times extending beyond Aquinas's thought.

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*Lying and Christian Ethics.* Christopher O. Tollefsen. *New Studies in Christian Ethics.* New York: Cambridge University, 2014. Pp. xii + 209. \$90.

Lying is a perennial topic of moral analysis, but there are very few monograph-length treatments of the subject from the perspective of Christian ethics. Tollefsen's most recent offering is thus a welcome contribution to the contemporary literature on lying and deception. Drawing primarily on Aquinas, the author touches on a number of the ethical and social issues related to lying, but, at less than 200 pages of actual content, the book's focus is appropriately narrow. He is ultimately concerned with defending the view that lying (defined here as an utterance at odds with the speaker's own mind) is always wrong. A significant percentage of the text is dedicated to defending this "absolute view" against possible objections. This is one of its greatest strengths, as T. does not shy away from the difficult theoretical questions and the minutiae that inevitably arise when dealing with the hard cases of lying.

There are, however, two difficulties that I believe T. has not adequately addressed. These difficulties are of equal interest to interpreters of Aquinas and to opponents of the absolute view against lying. The first is that the author's discussion of the virtue of truth appears as an afterthought and is addressed in the space of only three pages (45–47). This is significant because one could easily imagine developing a rather different interpretation of Aquinas on lying if the virtue of truth were taken as the starting point, rather than taking T.'s "basic goods" approach of advocates of the New Natural Law. The second is the puzzling omission of any discussion of mortal and venial sin.