

salvific role, but prefers Rahner's generous vision of grace and Christology over Dupuis's trinitarian soteriology (185).

R. not only offers a lucid and reliable survey on how Christian thinkers have and continue to reflect on the mystery of salvation, but also engages their work in a critical manner and offers the reader new insights and perspectives to assess their proposals and respond to the invitation of grace. The very richness of these theological themes and works exposes the book's necessary limitation, in that the material treated asks for yet further treatment. I do recommend this book to educated Christian readers, most particularly to theology teachers, seminarians, and graduate students.

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Resurrection: A Guide for the Perplexed. By Lidija Novakovic. New York, NY: Bloomsbury T. & T. Clark, 2016. Pp. 208. \$28.

Despite the generic title, this book devotes five of its six chapters to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Its longest (opening) chapter draws on Novakovic's strengths to expound resurrection hope in Second-Temple Judaism. N. sets out the language and conceptual-ity available for the first Christians when they made the unprecedented claim that one individual had been raised from the dead in anticipation of the general resurrection to take place on the last day.

N. generally handles well the texts dealing with the proclamation of Jesus's resurrection, his appearances, the discovery of the empty tomb, and (more briefly) the theology shaped by his resurrection. In dialogue with those who recognize the primitive character of Mark 16: 1–8, N. does not, however, recognize the full force of their argument. For instance, she fails to notice the significance of "you seek Jesus the Nazarene who has been crucified." He is not given any Christological title but simply his historical name; unlike 1 Corinthians 15: 3 and other examples of early proclamation, it is not said that he died "for our sins." Likewise, in discussing the fear and silence of the women who flee from the empty tomb of Jesus, N. does not advert to the work of Timothy Dwyer and others: in Mark's Gospel and elsewhere divine activity and revelation can appropriately prompt such a reaction.

When expounding John 20: 2–10, N. speaks of Peter showing himself "more courageous" because he entered the tomb first (91). This implausible remark about Peter's courage at that point in his history ignores the rich significance of the whole interplay between Peter and the beloved disciple in John 13–21. Like Augustine and many others, N. writes of Jesus "passing through closed doors" when he appeared to his disciples. Yet John 20: 19 does not say this, but simply that such a barrier cannot prevent the risen Jesus from showing himself to the disciples.

Yet, all in all, N. demonstrates a sharp exegetical eye for the Easter texts. My main concerns are more of a philosophical and historical nature. To present "the third day" motif as *either* a theological *or* a chronological claim raises the question: why not

both? In the case of Jesus's crucifixion, for example, the New Testament makes claims that are both theological and chronological. In a similar way, N. and others who treat the issue of the appearances of the risen Jesus as being *either* objective events *or* subjective experiences risk ignoring that the Easter encounters have both an objective *and* subjective character.

In treating possible analogies to the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, it always seems useful to examine not only the similarities but also the dissimilarities. Since the pioneering work of Dewi Rees on widows and widowers experiencing their beloved dead, some writers have found here an analogy to the disciples meeting the risen Jesus, as N. points out. But we neglect the dissimilarities at our peril. The "bereavement" the disciples suffered was not that of those who had lost their beloved spouse. Moreover, unlike any of the cases studied by Rees, Jesus was a major religious reformer who died a most painful death by public execution. Then, over 70 percent of the widows and widowers interviewed by Rees and his colleagues had never previously mentioned to anyone their experiences of the deceased spouses. This silence sets them utterly apart from the disciples who quickly announced to the world the good news of Jesus's resurrection. In my *Believing in the Resurrection* (2012), I presented eight reasons for denying that the bereavement analogy is close and truly illuminating for those who examine Jesus's post-resurrection appearances.

To state that "all historical events are unrepeatable and thus unique" (130) fails to do justice to the core meaning of unique as "the only one of its kind." The unique as such is always unrepeatable, but the unrepeatable is very rarely genuinely unique. Likewise, it misconstrues historical judgments to claim that "all historical judgments are open to revision" (128–29; see 155). It is historically certain that Napoleon was finally defeated at Waterloo, even if some secondary details of the event can be open to revision. While certainty in history is not established in the way certainty can be reached in mathematics, chemistry and other disciplines, there are innumerable cases of historical certainty. In debates about the status, historical or otherwise, of Jesus's resurrection, *pace* N. (154), there are examples of skeptics changing their minds. Frank Morison's *Who Moved the Stone?* (1930) is a spectacular and now classic case of that happening.

Despite these quibbles, this book persistently comes across as a well informed and fair-minded study of the Easter mystery, which is at the heart of Christian faith.

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The Mystery of Union with God: Dionysian Mysticism in Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. By Bernhard Blankenhorn, OP. Thomistic Ressourcement, 4. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 2015. Pp. xxxiii + 508. \$65.

In this revised version of his doctoral dissertation, Blankenhorn has produced an impressive and illuminating study of the mystical theologies of Albert the Great and of