REVIEWS

Matthew Levering, Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: Love and Gift in the Trinity and the Church. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016. (440 pp.) [ISBN 9780801049927]

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Matthew Levering's *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* is the second volume in his now five-part "Engaging Doctrine" series. A common thread in this series is Levering's penchant for Thomistic doctrine: the reader finds *Summa Theologica* expounded in response to every subject, such that one wonders if "Theology in Conversation with Aquinas" might serve as the series subtitle. As ever, Levering brings his Aquinas touchstone into conversation with interlocutors from throughout the Great Tradition, and his engagement is masterful. The result is that whether or not one agrees with his conclusions, the discussions on the way serve to examine and test the reader's position. In this volume, Levering argues "that the Holy Spirit should be praised and contemplated under the proper names 'Love' and 'Gift,' with respect both to his intra-trinitarian identity and to his historical work in Jesus Christ and the church" (p. 2). The Spirit's identity occupies his attention through the first three chapters, and the work of the Spirit is the subject matter of chapters four to seven.

Levering begins with a defence of the West's pneumatological tradition as he upholds the Spirit's names as "Love" and "Gift" and the Trinitarian order of origins. In the first chapter, he rehearses Augustine's canonical reading of 1 John 4:7-8, concluding that the Holy Spirit is uniquely the love of God (p. 56). He admits this Augustinian exegesis is viewed with suspicion by contemporary critical exegetes, yet he reasons, "For Augustine . . . the proper context of 1 John 4:7-8 includes not only 1 John 4 but also the Gospel of John and indeed the whole of Scripture, since the Triune God inspired the whole of canonical Scripture in order to teach us about himself" (p. 69). As such, his exegesis is a compelling demonstration of a theological interpretation of Scripture. The issue as I see it is not the privileging of the Spirit in reading these texts, but the limiting of the texts he investigates. Why, for example, does he not apply the same method to the baptism of Jesus, the wilderness temptations, or other Gospel narratives? He does indeed develop a Third Article Christology in the fourth chapter ("The Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ"), in which these narratives are read for the activity of the Spirit in constituting Jesus' identity. But post-resurrection he speaks of a "Trinitarian inversion" in which the Spirit again becomes God's (passive) gift of love to his people, delimiting this activity to the economy of God. Why can we not in those narratives also recognise "a divine intention to acquaint us not only with the Holy Spirit in the salvific economy but also, in the process, with the mystery of the eternal distinctiveness of the Spirit" (p. 69)? Might not more weight be given to contemporary pneumatologies that recognise the intra-trinitarian activity of the Spirit, if these texts are included?

In Chapter 2, "Naming the Holy Spirit", Levering proceeds to call into question modern theology's fondness for emphasising the "dynamic" and "active" intra-trinitarian role of the Spirit and modifying the doctrine of the Spirit's procession. For example, theologians like Steven Studebaker argue against the names Love and Gift because they "'consign the Spirit to the status of a passive, less-than-personal fruit of the activity of the Father and Son, so that the Spirit is fatally subordinated to the Father and Son'" (p. 5). Others like Dimitru Stăniloae and Thomas Weinandy articulate the immanent life of God in ways that affirm the active role of the Spirit, such that there are relations of complementarity overlaying the traditional relations of opposition (p. 41). By contrast, Levering is content for the Spirit to be the passive gift of the Father and Son on account of his commitment to defending a non-temporal order of procession, in which the relational distinction of Father, Son, and Spirit is affirmed while preserving God's transcendental oneness. He contrasts these contemporary theologians with the apophatic pneumatology of the Greek fathers, concluding, "I applaud and wish to imitate the Greek fathers' emphasis on the revealed order of origin and their cautious refusal to say more about the Holy Spirit in the intra-trinitarian life than can be warranted by divine revelation" (p. 89). A major theme of this book, therefore, is Levering's desire for "salutary sparseness" (p. 141; cf. p. 35), in contrast to contemporary efforts to dramatize the Spirit beyond what (in his view) revelation affords.

While his desire for biblically warranted Trinitarian pneumatology is laudatory, Levering seems at pains to show that Aquinas' doctrine (and his own) fits this criterion. In "The Holy Spirit and the *Filioque*" (Chapter 3), against the accusations of Sergei Bulgakov and Vladimir Lossky, he attempts to demonstrate that "The central authority for Aquinas is neither the analogy of the mind nor the philosophical doctrine of substance and relation, but rather is Scripture interpreted in the tradition" (p. 143). To that end, he defends the doctrine of the *filioque* from John 16:14, identifying "as a 'rule of Scripture' the principle that the Son has all that the Father has" (p. 144). Beyond that, however, it does appear that Aquinas gives more weight to analogy and philosophical doctrine. On several occasions, Levering recounts Aquinas' analogy of the interior processions of intellect ("word") and will ("love") in humans, which he uses to distinguish the processions of Son and Spirit in the life of God. Levering defends this on account of natural revelation (p. 108). He draws on Aquinas' conditional reasoning, constantly inferring one matter from another: if the Son has no role in the Spirit's procession, then the Son does not have all that the Father has and the Father has not communicated himself perfectly (p. 151); "If the Son and the Spirit both had the exact same origin, then they would not be distinct persons" (p. 152); "if the Holy Spirit were not from the Father and the Son, then the Holy Spirit could not be distinguished from the Son" (p. 153), and so on. That, combined with the contrast between this and the first chapter on Augustine's pneumatological reading of Scripture, leaves this reader favouring Bulgakov and Lossky's critique: Is Aquinas (and Levering) not also guilty of theological speculation beyond Scripture?

As mentioned earlier, Levering's fourth chapter is a fine example of Third Article Christology: a daring examination of Jesus' experience of the Holy Spirit enabling his eschatological self-consciousness,

guided by the unusual pairing of Aquinas and James Dunn. This section makes a useful contribution to this growing body of Christology starting with the Spirit—the only frustration being that it apparently fails to translate to his doctrine of God proper. It does, however, translate to his subsequent chapter on "The Holy Spirit and the Church," where the Spirit continues his work of inaugurating the kingdom of God in the world. He opens the chapter with the apparent dilemma of Jesus's eschatological predictions, which have led Dale Allison to conclude that "Jesus promoted an apocalyptic eschatology that did not, in fact, come to pass" (p. 220) and was therefore a "false eschatological prophet" (p. 226). In response to Allison, Levering submits that the proof of Jesus' eschatological expectation is the anointed church: "Appreciating Jesus's eschatological words and deeds should lead us to attend ever more fully to the Spirit's work in the church" (p. 232). This discussion is a highlight of the book and serves to unite his Christology and ecclesiology through the lens of Spirit-enabled eschatological fulfilment, resulting in a soaring vision of the church.

He subsequently asks, "In what ways should the church's life, and the life of the members of the church, be expected to display the work of Christ's Spirit?" (p. 233). His response is a thoroughly Catholic theology of the church visible, beginning in the latter half of chapter five (where he discusses "infused virtues" (p. 246), the gifts of the Spirit, and the sacraments), and continuing into chapters six ("The Holy Spirit and the Unity of the Church") and seven ("The Holy Spirit and the Holiness of the Church"). To this Protestant reader, it is worthwhile to hear an authoritatively traditional perspective of these features of church life, though admittedly some of the concepts are so steeped in Catholicism as to feel abstracted from (my experience of) the Scriptures. For example, he refers to "the theological tradition" of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit enumerated in Isaiah 11:2-3, but fails to reference those named in 1 Corinthians 12-14 or elsewhere in the New Testament familiar to those of us touched by the charismatic renewal. As such, there is scope for other denominational responses to Levering's question about displaying the work of the Spirit in the life of the church, building upon the ecumenically satisfying eschatological vision of the church he developed in chapter five. Here, then, is an engaging study on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, alive to the trends of contemporary pneumatology and faithful in its exposition of the Thomistic tradition.

Paul S. Fiddes, *Charles Williams and C.S. Lewis: Friends in Co-Inherence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. (393 pp.) [ISBN 9780192845467]

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Charles Williams and C.S. Lewis: Friends in Co-Inherence is the first of three monographs by baptist theologian Paul S. Fiddes, all due to be published in the academic year 2021-2022. Now well into his fifth decade as a theologian, and holding the Title of Distinction of Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of