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The God of Israel and Christian Theology, by R. Kendall Soulen

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takes her first principles from arithmetic can also study arithmetic, if she pleases, and follow the deductive links that bind them to higher first principles, the student of sacred doctrine has no independent access to the first principles it takes from the *scientia* enjoyed by God. So Thomas introduced the qualification of 'quasi-subalternation' in concession to the disanalogy" (26). Such writing makes for needlessly tough going. Or, as R. might put it, the reader's noetic endeavor will likely be encumbered in a way that is not strictly required, that lacks *nécessité*.

Nonetheless, this book is required reading for both Thomists and Barthians. It lays the groundwork for a dialogue that a mere decade ago many would have called unthinkable.

RONALD K. TACELLI S.J.
Boston College

THE THEOLOGY OF REVELATION OF AVERY DULLES 1980–1994: SYMBOLIC MEDIATION. By Ross A. Shecterle. Preface by Avery Dulles. Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen, 1996. Pp. xxxv + 224. \$89.95.

Dulles began writing on revelation in the 1960s, moving out from Vatican II's *Dei Verbum* and presenting in a schematic and analytical manner the variety of perspectives on revelation found among both Protestant and Catholic theologians. The "early" Dulles served as a bridgemaker between the more essentialist and intellectualist approaches to revelation found in neo-Scholastic thought and the decidedly personalist, biblical, theocentric, and christocentric perspectives of Vatican II. Shecterle focuses upon Dulles's theology of revelation in his writings between 1980 and 1994. In the Preface Dulles endorses this timeframe as constitutive of his matured position on revelation.

S. demonstrates how Dulles developed a position on revelation as symbolic communication in which both ecclesial and transformative elements are integral to a proper understanding of God's self-communication in Jesus Christ. The Church's heritage is

expressed and communicated not only in credal symbols but in action, example, and worship. Polanyi's notion of tacit knowing and Newman's illative sense contribute to Dulles's appreciation of the surplus character of symbolic mediation. S. indicates that Dulles's anthropological foundations are Rahnerian as is his articulation of the symbol.

S. employs a number of Dulles's essays written prior to 1980. The earlier essays reflect well Dulles's sensitivity to cultural and historical influences in theological expression. S. offers a modest critique of Dulles, asking whether his framework for revelation theology allows for interfaith dialogue and whether he appears to champion at times a more cognitive-propositional view of revelation over the ecclesial-transformative model he has taken pains to articulate. S. has sifted through the rich corpus of Dulles's writings and captures well the central tenets of his theology of revelation. While S. identifies Dulles's use of models as a methodological "trademark," this reviewer would cite Dulles's "models" as the product of theological investigation sensitive to a framework that is at once historical, scriptural, magisterial, ecumenical, and theological.

JOHN F. RUSSELL, O. CARM.
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THE GOD OF ISRAEL AND CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY. By R. Kendall Soulen. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996. Pp. xii + 195. \$19.

The book is divided into two parts: the first, a historical analysis of the virtual ubiquity of supersessionism in Christian tradition and its theological reflection; the second, a constructive effort to show how Christian theology might embrace its Jewish roots without vitiating the particularity of Christian claims, including the central place of God's revelation to Israel in Christian belief, or reducing Judaism to a tradition that lost its pride of place to a triumphalistic Christianity in God's plan of salvation.

In Part 1, Soulen defines superses-

sionism as the belief that "[a]fter Christ came . . . the special role of the Jewish people [in God's preparation of the world for the coming of Christ] came to an end and its place was taken by the church, the new Israel" (1-2). This belief involves Christians in a theological contradiction since it makes the God of Israel, the God of Christian belief, at least indifferent to the people of Israel (the alternative "at most" accounting for anti-Semitism and its horrors in history). S. charts the prevalence of this belief in ancient and modern thought, providing variations on the supersessionist theme in the work of Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Kant, Schleiermacher, Barth, and Rahner. In Part 2, S. offers a way to redress this false reading of the Christian canon by proposing that the divinely created diversity of peoples be seen as a blessing for all the nations and that within this diversity the otherness of the people of Israel be seen as a particular blessing for Christians and all Gentiles. Israel's difference in S.'s argument is productive, testifying to the unity of God's salvation that opens to all peoples through the "narrow gate" (133) of God's chosen people.

S. presents his constructive position in a manner both subtle and rich. This excellent book on an important topic deserves a wide reading.

JOHN E. THIEL

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DEVOTIONAL LANGUAGE. By Johannes Sloek. Translated from the Danish by Henrik Mossin. Theologische Bibliothek Töpelmann. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996. Pp. xix + 155, DM 78.

Sloek seeks to defend the abiding truthfulness of devotional and mythical language as an epiphany against efforts to reduce it to alternative rational explanations. His justification of mythic truth harkens back to Heidegger on the disclosure of truth in art, and to Kierkegaard's and Bultmann's existential approach to Christology, but it is framed in a poststructuralist idiom. Myth is defended as the prerequisite of logos and its founda-

tion, but myth cannot be transposed by interpretation into logos. Logos requires argumentation, while myth is warranted by the quotation of authorities. Metaphysics and dialectics are not important for S.'s theology; in the face of the absurdity of existence one is urged to choose the Christ myth of the cross which has its genesis in history.

S.'s defense of the truth of myth has merit in what it affirms, especially his analysis of the power of devotional discourse to disclose deep truths about the phenomenal world. But it is limited by its aversion to exploring the positive purpose served by rational discourse in relation to myth and by its restricted treatment of the persuasive functions of myth. In order to defend the truthfulness of myth, a religious esthetic reason is set in opposition to the illumination offered by dialectical reason, and even distanced from practical reason. S. insists that Christianity establishes a distinctive positive bond between myth and history and champions the epiphanic character of mythic truth, but he fails to account for the nexus between myth and history in terms of hybrid genre selection in the development of Christian narratives and the amalgamation of various kinds of truth claims conveyed by myth, not simply epiphanic, but also pragmatic, correspondence, coherence, and consensus.

The translator nicely situates S.'s contribution in relation to recent Protestant German thinkers in the aftermath of Rudolf Bultmann.

BRADFORD E. HINZE

Marquette University, Milwaukee

A HISTORY OF HEAVEN: THE SINGING SILENCE. By Jeffrey Burton Russell. Princeton: Princeton University, 1997. Pp. xv + 221. \$24.95.

This book is best viewed as a "prolegomenon to a detailed, multivolume study of heaven" (xv). Seen from this perspective, it is a remarkable presentation of the history of the Christian concept of heaven, with some passing references to the thought of Judaism