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Book review: The Vocation of the Child. Edited by Patrick McKinley Brennan

Nancy Dallavalle

Fairfield University, ndallavalle@fairfield.edu

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and John Paul II. The book is learned even without lengthy footnotes, and even though at points M.'s attentiveness to global concerns and the social context of agency falters.

KRISTIN E. HEYER
Santa Clara University

FORGIVENESS AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS. By Anthony Bash. *New Studies in Christian Ethics* 29. New York: Cambridge University, 2007. Pp. xi + 208. \$85.

Anthony Bash of Durham University has produced an enormously helpful monograph on the meaning of forgiveness. He displays a masterful grasp of the relevant texts in theological ethics, systematic theology, psychology, and moral philosophy, while he also explores the relevance of Christian ethics for detailed public living (consistent with the editorial intent of Robin Gill's series).

B. provides a helpful overview of how forgiveness has been preached by the church and examined by theologians, as well as how it has been studied by social scientists, dissected by analytic and Continental philosophers, and employed by political and religious leaders in their efforts to find a way of coming to some resolution of postconflict divisions. Instead of providing a clear and simple but ultimately unhelpful definition of *forgiveness*, B. finds that the term's multiple, complex, and ambiguous usage defies those who seek a univocal meaning. Forgiveness has two main attributes that function consistently: it is a moral response to wrongdoing, and it is a person-to-person phenomenon. The book provides a fine-grained analysis of forgiveness: as a response to wrongdoing; as a way of modifying or supplementing justice; as an expression of religious themes such as love and mercy as a form of psychological therapy that brings freedom from "victimhood"; and as a potential aid to restorative justice. B. helpfully distinguishes between appropriate and inappropriate forgiveness, proper and improper applications of forgiveness to various kinds of human relationships (e.g., an individual cannot forgive a perpetrator on behalf of the victim), and human and divine forgiveness. His treatment of forgiveness in the

NT is masterful, as is his discussion of the influence of various models of the redemptive activity of Christ for the theology of forgiveness. Various scholars of forgiveness will differ over details of B.'s position, but I recommend that all read and ponder (and, I trust, appreciate) this fine book. In fact, every moral theologian should do so.

STEPHEN J. POPE
Boston College

THE VOCATION OF THE CHILD. Edited by Patrick McKinley Brennan. *Religion, Marriage and Family*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008. Pp. xvi + 445. \$36.

Featuring a broad range of academics and professionals in theology, ministry, law, and education, this volume takes a fresh angle on an overworked topic by asking: what does it mean to be a child? Drawn mainly from fairly conservative Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox perspectives, the variety of frameworks in play nonetheless makes this a valuable contribution for all in the conversation. Four opening essays situate the question of vocation; of interest is Vigen Guroian's focus on childhood as a specific Christian "office" with requisite duties. The question of "duties" also shapes another section where Bonnie Miller-McLemore provides a historical perspective on children's work in the economic picture of the family.

The influence of Augustine and Thomas comes to the fore in a section titled "Innocence, Depravity, and Hope for the Freedom of the Child." Particularly helpful here is the broad acquaintance of William Harmless with Augustine's work, as he teases out the metaphor of Christ the physician to discuss the "injury" of childhood. Also helpful is Patrick McKinley Brennan's exploration of the question of the child in the contours of Jacques Maritain's Thomistic vision of the realization of potency. In contrast, a final section focuses on nurture, not nature, asking practical questions about how childhood can and should be shaped, with a sharply critical eye to current trends in education.

Graduate students and academics will find much of value in this collection's

willingness to “go beyond the sentimentality, political manipulation, and ungrounded assertions” that too frequently exercise a stranglehold on the topic of children and families.

NANCY DALLAVALLE
Fairfield University, Conn.

GLOBAL NEIGHBORS: CHRISTIAN FAITH AND MORAL OBLIGATION IN TODAY'S ECONOMY. Edited by Douglas A. Hicks and Mark Valeri. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008. Pp. xxv + 276. \$28.

This volume emerged from a year-long consultation among Reformed Christians committed to integrating a biblical commitment to justice with an economically realistic view of life. It aims “to help others reflect on moral participation in the market and to envision strategies that might transform market relationships” (xix).

The book has much to offer all Christians. Thomas Walker and Eric Gregory helpfully employ insights from the parable of the Good Samaritan (the backdrop for the whole volume), drawing on Jesus' rejection of distance as an excuse for avoiding the suffering of others. Today's concern is with the billions of vulnerable neighbors left on the side of the road by the rigors of market life. Kent Van Til, Rebecca Todd Peters, Jeff Van Duzer, and Janet Parker speak critically—and sensibly—to mainstream economic theory; H. examines the effects of the “celebrity activism” of Bono (something of an embarrassment to the churches, since Bono claims to take the parable of the last judgment more seriously than they do).

In a remarkable essay, Robert Austin and Lee Devin provide a hopeful but sobering chronicle of the transition from craftsmanship (in the production of armor in medieval England) to the mass production processes of Ford and Taylor, to postindustrial work today. Shirley Roels provides a realistic and sympathetic assessment of the moral difficulties facing manufacturers in a globalized world. Rebecca Blank provides her typically sharp analysis, here investigating the proper relation of government and market within the Christian tradition.

The editors and authors have creditably integrated these readings. The volume is a refreshing effort to ask how best to bring the market economy in closer alignment with Christian faith, avoiding the simplicities of a liberationist rejection of markets and a neoconservative celebration of them. As the editors put it, “Christian faith requires individual, church-based, and political action” (xxv).

DANIEL FINN
St. John's University,
Collegeville, Minn.

LOVE THAT DOES JUSTICE. By Thomas L. Schubeck. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2007. Pp. 211. \$22.

At once sophisticated and accessible, Schubeck's introductory text examines fundamental principles of love and justice as they relate to one another and as they illuminate contemporary moral issues. He frames the volume with undergraduates' narratives of their own encounters with injustice. The narratives ground his subsequent survey of Christian metanarratives, from which emerge insights into the relationship between justice and love. His presentation of biblical and theological conceptions of love and justice joins nuanced theoretical discussions with pertinent practical applications.

For example, S.'s scriptural chapters explore the ways biblical love and justice liberate the poor and how Jesus' agapic love ethic invites nonviolent resistance embodied by Tertullian, Justin Martyr, and Martin Luther King Jr. S. considers the virtue ethics of Augustine and Aquinas, applying each figure's conception of charity and justice to the use of force (including martyrdom) and to friendship. Finally Reinhold Niebuhr and John Paul II serve as modern examples of dialectic and complementary understandings of love and justice; S. discusses Niebuhr's Christian realism in light of his critiques of Marxism and racial bigotry, and John Paul's personalism in light of international economic injustice.

S.'s own embedded analyses avoid easy dichotomies (e.g., in discussing John Paul II and liberation theology).

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