

Hier volgt de bespreking door Francis Martin, verschenen in *The Thomist* 67 (2003) 321-324.

Christ's Fulfillment of Torah and Temple: Salvation according to Thomas Aquinas. By Matthew Levering . Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002. Pp. 264. \$44.00 (cloth), \$24.00 (paper). ISBN 0-268-02272-0 (cloth), 0-268-02273-0 (paper).

The Vatican II declaration *Nostra Aetate* placed interreligious dialogue at the center of Catholic theology in our day. In many ways, the most important dimension of that dialogue is with the Jewish people. Carried on in the shadow of the Shoah and yet with the élan given to Catholic-Jewish dialogue by the words and actions of John Paul II, the direction set by *Nostra Aetate* has been developed and has enabled a type of honest interaction that would have seemed impossible before its promulgation on October 28, 1965. Many difficulties lie ahead, of course, but some of the means of overcoming these have become apparent in recent years.

One of the most important means of furthering the dialogue is undoubtedly serious and mutual theological reflection on the nature of the relation between Jews who do not believe in Christ and Christians. How can we understand John Paul II's words, delivered in the synagogue at Mainz, November 17, 1980, calling the Jews, "the people of God of the Old Covenant that has never been revoked by God"? Clearly we are being invited to undertake a work of retrieval that will force us out of familiar categories and provide the energy and depth we need to look at the reality of Israel in our own day and to begin to work toward a development of doctrine.

Matthew Levering 's book is an example of the type of research and reflection needed if we are to recover in greater fullness the robust thinking of the past, in this case that of Thomas Aquinas, in regard to the ongoing mystery of Israel. As the title indicates, Levering wishes to see how Aquinas understands Christ's fulfillment of both Torah and Temple. The first part of the book is dedicated to the first question and is followed by the second part concerning Christ and the Temple. Each part is made up of three chapters, and the book ends with a concluding chapter.

In chapter 1, Levering offers a response to Michael Wyschogrod's objection that Aquinas's division of the Law into three aspects--moral, ceremonial, and judicial--does not respect the integrity of the Torah as understood by Jews, who see in its every aspect an expression of the one will of God. Levering points out that for Aquinas the Mosaic Law is the principal exterior expression of God's ordering of human beings to their supernatural end. The interior expression and empowerment to achieve this end is the Holy Spirit himself. Thus, nothing of the Law is lost; it is rather fulfilled, that is, brought to higher realization in Christ. Far from holding that the people of the Old Covenant were deprived of grace, Aquinas, considering that the grace of the New Law (the Holy Spirit), preceded the state of the New Law, holds that Jewish observance, even of the ceremonial law, was a means of grace through an implicit faith in the Christ to come: "The ancient Fathers, by observing the sacraments of the law, were brought towards Christ through the same faith and love by which we are still brought towards him" (STh III, q. 8, a. 3, ad 3). Chapter 2 discusses some of the consequences Aquinas draws from the fact that Jesus, as the Incarnate Wisdom of God, acts out that Wisdom in his life, his teaching, his observance of the Law, and particularly in the principal events of his life.

In chapter 3, Levering links Christ's threefold office of priest, prophet, and king, especially as these are brought to their consummation on the cross, as providing another way of understanding how Aquinas understands Christ's fulfillment of the whole Law. While it is true

that there are two significant sentences in the Tertia Pars that refer to this threefold office (see 178 n. 73), this does not seem to have been an operating organizing principle in Aquinas's treatment of the Incarnation and Redemption. Nevertheless, Levering makes good use of these dimensions of Christ's person and activity to return once again to the notion of fulfillment of the Law according to Aquinas's division of the Law into ceremonial (priest), judicial (king), and moral (prophet). In regard to the first two of these Levering cites STh III, q. 35, a. 7, ad 1: "Christ's priesthood and kingdom were consummated principally in his passion." The last lines of chapter 3 speak of the one reality and activity of Christ in its threefold manifestation: prophet--the source of the Inner Teacher, the Spirit who mediates the will of the Father; priest--continuing to be the one who sanctifies believers and brings them into the presence of the Father; king--governing his Church according to the perfection of the Divine law whose principal intention is to "establish man in friendship with God" (STh I-II, q. 99, a. 2). While the heavenly state of Christ will be considered in relation to the new Temple, his Body, these lines invite further study regarding the fact that the Law is being fulfilled now by the heavenly action of Christ and the share that believers have in this activity.

In part 2, Levering considers Christ's fulfillment of the Temple. At this point his Jewish dialogue partner is Jon Levenson, who develops a theology of the relation between Sion, the Law, and Zion, the place of David's city and the Temple, utilizing the theme of the "cosmic mountain" as outlined by Mircea Eliade. According to Levenson the Old Testament, and particularly Rabbinic theology, looks upon the Temple as located on the "cosmic mountain," thus manifesting God transcendent "presence." This presence is not dependent upon the existence of the physical Temple; even now it is the mysterious center of Jewish life, that "place" of holiness outlined and effected by observance of the Torah in such a way that it can be said that people become the Temple of YHWH.

Levenson derives much of his thought from the theology of the "name" present in the dedicatory prayer of 1 Kings 8 and elsewhere. So too, in the opinion of Aquinas, "God's 'name' dwelt in Israel's Temple because the Temple was the place where the holy sacrificial liturgy, which God had instructed Israel to perform, manifested God's 'name'" (95). Aquinas, of course, goes on to develop this in terms of the whole Christ, Head and members, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and each individual Christian, each in his own interconnected way being a place of the worship of the Trinity in sacrificial holiness. The consummation of this worship, proleptically manifested at the Transfiguration and realized in the Resurrection of Christ, is seen to be the eternal and glorious liturgy of the whole Body of Christ in heaven.

After acknowledging, at the beginning of chapter 5, that an account of the Christian life that illustrates how it is meant to fulfill the Torah is necessary for a complete presentation of Aquinas's notion of fulfillment, Levering goes on to concentrate on the Mystical Body of Christ and the sacraments as the place where the Temple worship is fulfilled. This fulfillment is not complete, of course, since for Aquinas and the biblical tradition he adheres to both the worship and sacramenta of the Old Law and in another way those of the New Law are consummated in the beatific vision. The perfection of worship and the perfect fulfillment of the covenant are found in the passion of Christ. Thus, relying on Aquinas's teaching, Levering states: "In both Israel and the Church, inclusion in the Mystical Body is achieved through the spiritual realities of faith and charity, but these spiritual realities cannot be cut off from corresponding physical 'signs' or sacraments--Israel's Temple and its fulfillment in the Church's sacramental structure and worship" (121).

In the final chapter Levering treats of what he calls "the liturgical consummation of history" (129): the beatific vision, the ultimate sacrifice of praise shared and offered by all in the heavenly Jerusalem who make up one Body, one Temple of the Messiah. It is here that, in and through Christ, the Temple worship, which reached its earthly fulfillment in the Passion of Christ prolonged and participated in by his Body, finally reaches its consummation. In STh I-II, q. 103, a. 3, Aquinas sketches out the three stages of worship: "One state was in respect of faith and hope and in the means of obtaining them [the Old Law]. . . . Another state of the interior worship is that in which we have faith and hope in heavenly goods, as in things present or past [the New Law]. . . . The third state is that in which both are possessed as present; wherein nothing is believed in as lacking, nothing hoped for as being yet to come. Such is the state of the Blessed. In this state of the Blessed, then, nothing in regard to the worship of God will be figurative; there will be naught but thanksgiving and voice of praise (Isa 51:3)" (127).

This fine work makes a serious contribution to the kind of retrieval theology that must be done before we Christians can approach Jewish-Christian relations in our own day with a genuine spiritual and theological understanding of what the Scriptures and Tradition actually teach. Terms like "supersessionism" and "evangelization" are used with little understanding of what the New Testament and the great theologians and mystics of our tradition actually teach. The undoubted and manifold sins of the past, to speak only of the Christian side, must be repented of and never repeated, but there is as well the golden thread of genuine teaching that must be joined to our modern efforts if the dialogue is to be honest and fruitful.

In regard to Aquinas himself, more work is needed to develop his thought regarding what we call now the "unrevoked covenant." His views on the ways in which Christians should relate to Jews, often misunderstood and confused with those of his contemporaries, must be clarified; a study in this line of thought is soon to be published. Finally Aquinas's teaching on the Beatitudes as the Christian activity that fulfills the Torah must be set forth, and indeed lived in a public and widespread way, before our claim to be the heirs of God's revelation to Israel will be credible.

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