



Scripture and Metaphysics: Aquinas and the Renewal of Trinitarian Theology

Matthew Levering

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This book makes a major contribution to contemporary theological and philosophical debates, bridging scriptural and metaphysical approaches to the triune God.

Bridges the gap between scriptural and metaphysical approaches to biblical narratives.

Retrieves Aquinas's understanding of theology as contemplative wisdom.

Structured around Aquinas's treatise on the triune God in his 'Summa Theologiae'.

Argues that intellectual contemplation is part of a broader spiritual journey towards a better understanding of God.

Contributes to the current resurgence of Thomistic theology in both Protestant and Catholic circles.

Scripture and Metaphysics: Aquinas and the Renewal of Trinitarian Theology Details

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Jonathan Platter says

This is a truly phenomenal book. Matthew Levering's command of primary and secondary sources on Thomas Aquinas is incredible. The argument of the book is very refreshing, as he is intent on clearing up some muddled thinking in recent trinitarian theology. What Levering especially finds troubling is the quick dismissal of the role of metaphysics in Scriptural interpretation, the dismissal of the dual approach to God's one-ness (simplicity) *and* three-ness, and finally the claims of trinitarian ontology.

On each of these aspects of recent theology, Levering's response -- using Aquinas as the exemplar -- is nuanced and sensitive. He offers a careful and sympathetic reading to several representatives, and he chooses rigorous representatives, not merely "straw men" or radical examples. Through his summaries, he identifies the important insights in recent emphases and shows how those are actually well upheld in Thomas, only in Thomas the positive insights are upheld without leading to negative consequences.

Finally, the book as a whole is intent on maintaining the proper focus in trinitarian doctrine: immersion into the life of God through spiritual ascesis and contemplation. The Trinity is not a utilitarian doctrine but is a means by which God draws us into the mystery of God's abundant, self-giving life. By following the discipline of careful reading of scripture and the metaphysical issues that arise through such reading, God reveals God's Triune self to us that we may contemplate and enter more fully.

Matthew says

This book is very helpful in many respects. First, it simply is helpful for understanding St. Thomas on God (both one and three - ST I 2-42 [he doesn't expound on the missions in question 43]). Second, it is very helpful in learning the lay of the contemporary theology land inasmuch as in each chapter Levering takes up a few of these contemporary theologians who raise certain objections to Thomas and certain problems in general. Levering then takes Thomas as having something to say about these problems (this is where Levering will explain St. Thomas on certain points while relating them back to these contemporary issues). Third, the book is helpful because it drives home the very purpose of theology, namely, in its being a contemplative wisdom. Overall, Levering is seeking to show how metaphysics in general and Thomas' in particular is necessary in order to read Scripture. I highly recommend this book for its clarity, depth, and comprehensiveness.

Joel Zartman says

This is a closely reasoned book that I read far too quickly. The argument is that in order to understand Scripture, the metaphysical precision and sophistication which Aquinas employs is necessary. It is not only an argument for the speculative theology of Aquinas, but for an understanding of theology as necessarily speculative, requiring the assumptions and tools of proper and careful and right philosophy which Scripture does not supply. I read it quickly because I have no need to be persuaded. He's right.

Jordan says

A strong argument for the integration of metaphysics and exegesis. With Aquinas as his prime example, Levering places him in conversation with various contemporary theologians and biblical scholars on a range of topics related to trinitarian theology. The footnotes are a gold mine though I wish Levering or an editor would have compiled a bibliography at the end. It's also surprising that Levering doesn't interact with Molnar's 'Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity' (T&T Clark, 2002).
