



Another part of Ward's thesis is that God is not triune without the temporal missions of the Son and the Spirit. He supports this view by holding that in God "there is one ultimate subject which possesses three distinct forms of action and awareness" (323), a position he thinks is that of Karl Rahner. If this is the case, there is not real reciprocity in God. But real reciprocity is essential in love. Counter to this view, I would recall that Thomas holds, with Christian tradition, that the Father is the subject of an action of which neither the Son nor the Spirit is subject, namely that of generating the Son. This is a 'notional' action, that is, an action by which the Father is known as Father. The same can be said of the Son (he alone is generated and images the Father as such) and the Spirit (who alone 'proceeds'). This is not inconsistent with the divine simplicity; and so we must, it seems, hold that the Trinity is constituted by three subjects really distinct from each other by distinct and mutually opposed relationships. If mutually opposed relationships can constitute three distinct persons without this entailing a distinction of being, they can constitute three distinct subjects of action and consciousness, because it is the person who acts. Of course, we ascribe this to the Trinity in a strictly analogical sense. This seems to be demanded by Scripture ("The Father and I are one") and by Christian prayer that addresses the three persons differently, as though addressing distinct consciousnesses. So, contrary to Rahner, but in accord with an increasing number of Catholic theologians, I would hold that there is a reciprocity of personal relationship and love among the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, without this in any way depending upon the temporal missions of the Son and Holy Spirit.

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*The Quest for the Origins of John's Gospel: A Source-Oriented Approach.* By THOMAS L. BRODIE, O.P. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. Pp. 194. \$32.00 (cloth). \$15.95 (paper).

*The Gospel according to John: A Literary and Theological Commentary.* By THOMAS L. BRODIE, O.P. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. Pp. xiii + 625. \$55.00 (cloth).

In writing his longer commentary the author became convinced that the evidence for John's dependence on Mark, Matthew-Q, Luke-Acts, and Ephesians was such that he should track these sources in a separate work: hence the shorter volume. His argument in the *Quest* is more convincing in general than in its many particulars. This he expects to be told but with the

hope that his overall proposal will bring an end to the prevailing wisdom that John is either totally independent of the Synoptics or else may draw on a finally edited Mark for the account of the multiplication of bread and fish, Jesus walking on the Sea, and a few elements of the trial and passion narratives, but nothing more.

Brodie thinks that the search for John's purposes in writing, all quite various according to the authors who suggest them, and for the history of John's communities as traceable through Gospel and Epistles, are fated to failure for lack of solid evidence. He likewise finds a generalized orality as a way to account for free composition in John to be an insufficient explanation. Of the evangelist's awareness of oral traditions he has no doubt, but he understands the process that led to his gospel composition to be a carefully contrived literary one, namely the creative transformation of written sources. A strong feature of Brodie's argument is his demonstration of the preference of pagan and Jewish authors of the period for the transformative rewriting of classic texts over entirely fresh creation (much seen in the apocrypha, the Bible, and *midrashim*, Virgil's retelling in the *Aeneid* of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, etc.). The paradox he finds in John is a weaving of down-to-earth stories about people in actual situations in place of Mark's detailed and "rather exotic account," as he terms, for example, the narrative of Jesus' transfiguration (Mark 9:2-7). This characterization will come as a surprise to readers conditioned to think of Mark as presenting a Jesus rooted to earth and John as more ethereal. The latter is described in these pages as "a spiritual gospel" in Clement of Alexandria's sense (Eusebius, *H.E.*, 6.14). This does not mean "unworldly" but prophetic and interacting with the church at large as well as with John's immediate community. Theories of successive editings of John, whether by the original author or another hand, do not find a place here. Instead, there is a concentration on the way the writer of the canonical gospel makes use of his sources in the transformative process he engages in. His Greek was that of the Hellenized Judaism common to Palestine and adjacent lands. He knew his people's scriptures and the writings of other early Christian believers. He wished to convey who Jesus was and what he had come to do in a series of coherent narratives and reflections derived from various places in already existing writings.

Brodie's technique in tracing what he calls the Johannine progression "from history to spirit" is to identify what Raymond Brown, in a 1961 *CBQ* article, called "incidents that are units in the synoptic gospels but dispersed in St. John." He does this first in a lengthy chapter on "John's Systematic Use of All of Mark," then in other, shorter chapters on the gospel's systematic use of Matthew, part of Luke-Acts, the Pentateuch, and Ephesians. In the first case he divides John and Mark into nineteen sections each, makes a table of pericopes in parallel, and proceeds to analyze the passages in his tentative outline that suggest John's derivation from Mark. The second of three sections into which both gospels are divided, Mark 7-16 and John 7-21, suggests that Jesus' journey

toward death in Mark, which is essentially a picture of profound vitality, provided the basis for John 11-17, in which death threatens powerfully (Jairus's daughter; Lazarus; Jesus' hour that has come) but is met with a greater power for life. Sometimes the similarities in both word usage and content are striking and help to make the author's case. At other times two motifs will be set in parallel, such as the prudent bridesmaids of the parable and the Bethany sisters Martha and Mary, that leave the reader wondering whether John had any such thought in mind. The moving of passages in Mark to find a place in John (helpfully indicated by thirteen tables of parallels, once with the use of chiasmic arrows) at first reminds the reader of Bultmann's scissors-and-paste reconstruction of John until the total of common elements in the two gospels strikes home. John's hypothetical dependence on the other gospels, Acts, and the Pentateuch is demonstrated to be less than his dependence on Mark, although not non-existent. There is also less dependence on some portions of Mark than on others.

Twice is the author caught nodding: in declaring that the place names in the land of Israel found in John are totally uncertain (Palestinian archaeology has some solutions); and that the fourth gospel's particulars of setting and community life, even if speculative, are fated to be completely unknown. Finally, the absence of any discussion on which Jews "the Jews" of John might be contributes to the continuance of a stereotype, which is particularly noteworthy in a book so rich in exploring literary motifs.

Brodie's *Commentary* is literary and theological, as the subtitle says, precisely not historical or social-historical. He takes the canonical version to be the one the author produced and intended, with the exception of the later-added 7:53-8:11. Aporias and contradictions are explained not as the work of successive editings but as literary devices either to catch the audience up short or to show development in Jesus' thought as the narrative presents it. As to theology, the commentary seeks to discover the religious meaning of each passage above any other meaning. All that the gospel recounts is taken as having happened to Jesus, although the commentator is fully aware that he is dealing with an artfully woven narrative calculated to persuade. The persuasion hoped for is a realization that a new life in the Spirit (hence, "spiritual") is available in Jesus. This life constitutes a sharp turn away from the Judaism his contemporaries knew.

Brodie demonstrates acquaintance with a broad range of Johannine scholarship, citing in his text rather than in footnotes the treatments of others he finds supportive. He does not attend to the relation of John to the Synoptics which absorbs so much of their attention, having dealt with the matter of sources in his *Quest*. He views the fourth gospel as able to stand on its own without being regularly compared or contrasted with the others. The structure of John as a narrative is his chief absorption. He finds in the framework of three Passovers (the identity of the feast of 5:1 remains a mystery) a three-year ministry. The first year is described in 1:1-2:22, the second in 2:23-6:71, and

part A of the third in chapters 7-12. Combined, they make book 1. Book 2 is composed of chapters 13-21 and is part B of the third year.

The first year is marked by the initiatory experiences of Jesus' public life after a prologue that sums up the history of salvation: his presence at John's baptizing activity but not his own baptism; a variety of calls to his disciples and acknowledgments by them of who the one is whom they have discovered; the "sweet wine" of a wedding which is also Jesus' betrothal to his new friends; intimations of his death in the temple of his body. In the second year Jesus encounters persons the limitations of whose lives he is able to remove (Nicodemus, the Samaritans of Sychar). He witnesses the decrease of John's importance, even as John baptizes at Aenon; likewise the emergence of a new order with his second sign, the healing of the royal official's son. Portraits of God as life-giving healer and provider are given in chapters 5 and 6. In part A of the third year Jesus begins to teach in the temple area in mid-feast (7:14), the autumn harvest Festival of Tents. For Jesus it is a "death-evoking" occasion (7:19). Chapter 8 spells out a life-giving union with God and its opposite, a death-dealing union with the devil. The blind man's healing in chapter 9 is called "a drama of creation" in six scenes, the shepherding images of chapter 10 a "parable of Providence." The Lazarus story that follows and the Bethany anointing are together an evoking of burial and resurrection. Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet (chap. 13) has as its outcome love, his comfort offered to the troubled heart (chap. 14), peace. Purifying and sanctifying are seen as themes of chapters 15 and 16, having as their outcomes greater love and confidence respectively. In chapter 17 Jesus' ascent will be the cause of his disciples' sanctification, with unity as the outcome. The arrest and interrogation of 18:1-24 are taken to be a matter of six scenes, the trial before Pilate (18:28-19:16a), the same. Crucifixion and death (19:16b-42), resurrection (chap. 20), and abiding presence (chap. 21) are the concluding headings.

The schematization is first done in a three-page chart followed by the author's translation of the gospel, which incorporates the phrases of the schema as the headings of its divisions. The English is purposely wooden to reflect the Greek word choices accurately. The reader must consult it to see how the author constructs his arguments from John's vocabulary.

A question that arises throughout, as in all such outlines, is whether the evangelist would claim it as his own or declare it an alien imposition. The answer is probably acceptance of the skeleton but not of some of the flesh proposed in the running commentary on *his* flesh.

Brodie opts for the gospel's portrayal of Jesus' public career as one of ascent to a plateau of reception of his word (*logos*, 12:48), which is at the same time God's word (17:14, 17), descent toward death, and ultimately ascent to the Father (20:17). The evangelist frames his narrative, in the author's view, as the soul's journey of Jesus that believers too must make. Brodie's identification of motifs is at times startling. Examples might be Jesus' threefold charge to Peter in 21:15-19, understood as shepherding people in the three basic stages of life;

the woman at the well leaving her water jar as she goes into the city, corresponding to hurrying in the conventional betrothal scene; the drinking of blood (6:53-56) to signalize acceptance of death and the flow of water (7:37-38) to signalize life and spirit, which come out of Jesus' side together (19:34) to manifest loss and gain, death and life.

What one reader will say is a psychologizing of the gospel another will, with the author, say is a spiritual message implanted by John to be discovered. All students of John's gospel are at ease in declaring it a book of symbols in which spirit is consistently manifested in flesh. Brodie has found a secondary meaning of every word and phrase, which in his view the evangelist intended as primary. The Dominican friar scholar is by any reckoning a member of the exegetical guild. Many will undoubtedly find his word hard and walk with him no longer. But if they persevere with him they will find themselves thinking a few new thoughts.

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*The Quest for Moral Foundations: An Introduction to Ethics.* By MONTAGUE BROWN. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1996. Pp. 192. \$45.00 (cloth), \$14.95 (paper). ISBN 0-87840-602-6 (cloth), 0-87840-613-1 (paper).

This clearly-written and thoughtful book makes an important contribution to the debate about moral foundations. Brown offers a well-reasoned and succinct exposition of a contemporary theory of natural law. His non-technical language and careful exposition make the present debate on foundations accessible to the educated reader. He writes for the "ethical amateurs" (xiv), who will be so vital to any renewal of moral foundations in society at large.

Relativism dominates the debate on moral foundations in the United States. "I have my values and you have your values and as long as we don't hurt each other everything is fine" is a commonly heard expression of this popular point of view. Brown's work challenges the validity of these ideas. He seeks to show that relativism is an incoherent moral position. He contends that only a theory that holds absolute moral norms makes ultimate sense.

Brown develops his book in a logical and systematic way. He begins with a discussion of relativism. He then devotes chapters to emotivism, egoism, and utilitarianism. He proceeds to Kant's utilitarianism and to natural law. Toward the end, he revisits all the theories as he seeks to include their best aspects in