

**Marc Cortez, Joshua R. Farris, and S. Mark Hamilton, eds. *Being Saved: Explorations in Human Salvation*. London: SCM Press, 2018. 361 pp. \$56.00 (paper); \$56.00 (eBook).**

Stephanie Nicole Nordby  
Lee University

*Being Saved: Explorations in Human Salvation* addresses questions fundamental to the Christian faith while emphasizing diverse and interdisciplinary voices. The anthology examines what exactly is meant by the theological conviction that we are redeemed and saved by God. Contributors hail from the disciplines of both philosophy and theology; the intended purpose of the volume, according to the editors, is to collect essays that represent the vanguard thinking of specialists while still tackling interdisciplinary matters in soteriology that were once addressed primarily by generalists. Additionally, the editors intentionally assembled the anthology with diversity in mind; the chapters span a wide range of topics, and the authors selected are from diverse backgrounds, in hopes of achieving a “genuinely catholic (global Christian) theological enterprise” (xii). The book takes a very warm view of analytic philosophy, even going so far as to describe systematic theology and biblical studies as “ships passing in the night, [whereas] philosophy of religion is more like a space shuttle orbiting miles above the rest of us” (xi). Unsurprisingly, then, ideas from representatives of the theo-philosophical tradition feature heavily in the volume; Augustine, Abelard, Anselm, Boethius, and Aquinas all make appearances.

One of the volume’s strengths is that, in a departure from the aforementioned historically rooted treatments, it includes more exegetically-attentive contributions. A refreshing contribution along this line is Jonathan Rutledge’s “Retributivism Rejected: A Restorative Hope for Justice in the Age to Come,” in which he provides a detailed treatment of many relevant Scriptures pertaining to retributivist theology. Rutledge argues for alternative understandings of (mostly Pauline) texts that are often used to support retributivist theology; he contends that these passages are actually about God’s mercy and justice that is restorative. Here we see what philosophical acumen can bring to the table when combined with an astute study of Scripture.

Additionally, Andrew Loke’s chapter, “The Doctrine of Predestination and a Modified Hylomorphic Theory of Human Souls” is a prime example of how constructive analytic theology can be. Loke defends a causally incompatibilist interpretation of predestination by drawing on the resources of Molinism, a philosophical theory of freedom and foreknowledge from the 16<sup>th</sup> century theologian Luis de Molina. Molina makes use of divine counterfactual knowledge to explain how humans enjoy libertarian freedom while still being subject to God’s sovereignty.

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When combined with his account of Traducian hylomorphism, according to which humans are created when the “soul-stuffs” passed down from a father and mother are given shape (*morphe*) by God, the Molinist can embrace an agent-causal theory of freedom where human choices originate in the agent and follow directly from her essence.

One upshot of Loke’s view is that it allows us to explain how predestination does not entail modal determinism (that is, determinism across all possible worlds), such that Judas can rightly be said to have freely chosen to betray Jesus even though he was “the son of perdition” foretold in the Scriptures and the New Testament tells us Jesus anticipated his treachery. (Gottfried Leibniz expressed a similar view, although he did so without appealing to Traducianism.) One worries, though, whether or not Loke’s Traducianism sufficiently dodges accusations of determinism: Since God is the one who shapes souls such that an individual person is created, and it is from this shape that their actions are determined, then it seems as though God is still ultimately responsible for making Judas the kind of being that would choose to betray Jesus. While Loke’s use of an agent-causal theory of freedom allows him to claim that the actions of humans truly result from the agent and not an outside force, it does so at the cost of asserting that God knowingly chose to create beings in such a way that they were destined to sin; this is the sort of fear that motivates objections to Molinism based on the influential consequence argument for the incompatibility of free will with causal determinism. Because of this, Loke’s view does not address the theological worries that motivate many accounts of freedom and foreknowledge to begin with. This does not seem to trouble Loke, however, as he notes, “Given this account, it would be false to say that God made Judas this way. Rather, what one should say is that, if God chooses to create Judas, then there would be someone who would freely choose to reject Jesus given the circumstances Judas had” (179). It is unclear in which way this averts a troublingly determinist picture. To my understanding, the picture painted by Loke resembles Leibnizian determinism more than it does Molinism, primarily because of the way he invokes God’s involvement in the creation of human persons as an explanation for contingent human actions. The introduction of a seemingly direct connection between God’s actions and human choices makes the type of freedom in play arguably weaker than the libertarian freedom Molinists claim to embrace. Leibniz, for his part, defended himself against theological objections by stipulating that “God inclines our souls without necessitating them.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See *Discourse on Metaphysics*, §30. I should note that it has recently been a subject of discussion whether or not Leibniz is most accurately described as a determinist or if he might in fact express a view quite similar to Molinism. Furthermore, the question of whether the freedom Molinists describe is truly libertarian or, in fact, just a variety of compatibilism, has also quite recently been addressed. For Leibniz, see Juan Garcia, “Leibniz, a Friend of Molinism,” *Res Philosophica* 95:3 (2018), 397–420) and Sean Greenberg, “Leibniz Against Molinism: Freedom, Indifference, and the Nature of the Will” in *Leibniz: Nature and Freedom*, edited by Donald Rutherford and J. A. Cover (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). For Molinism and compatibilism, see Kenneth J. Perszyk, “Molinism and Compatibilism,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 48:1 (2000), 11-33; Christoph Jäger, “Molinism and Theological Compatibilism,” *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 5: (2013), 71-92; and Yishai Cohen, “Molinists (Still) Cannot Endorse the Consequence Argument,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 77:3 (2015), 231-246.

An additional strength is that *Being Saved* includes essays in overlooked theological subjects, and it was refreshing to read works on topics seldom addressed elsewhere. Adonis Vidu, in particular, provides an unusual though much needed contribution that pays special attention to the Ascension and Pentecost. In doing so, he tries to address the puzzling question: Why did Jesus need to ascend to heaven before he could send the Holy Spirit to his followers? Similarly, Myk Habets' attention to "Third Article Theology" provides many insights on the Spirit's role in creaturely life such that it is no wonder that Lyle Dabney, as cited by Habets, called for the Church to "act its age" and engage in more serious study of the Spirit (143). Even Paul Helm gets in on the pneumatological fun, explicating Stephen Charnock's and Jonathan Edward's respective formulations of regeneration, noting that while both are Augustinian and monergistic, the Holy Spirit's work is described differently in these two accounts: On Charnock's, the Holy Spirit gives the human soul a new form and thereby infuses new habits into the believer; on Edward's, the Spirit deposits Lockean "simple ideas" that, in turn, transform the believer's affections, among other things.

If philosophy of religion and theology are critiqued for being too abstract and removed from human experience, Hans Madueme's and Marc Cortez's respective chapters provide excellent counterexamples to these accusations. Madueme's essay explores the relationship between mental illness and sin; drawing on David Murray's categories of "mental illness maximizers" and "sin maximizers," Madueme discusses the motivations for and dangers of both positions on human behavior. I was delighted to see Madueme engage the enormous body of literature already addressing these issues in the field of psychology. Discourse like Madueme's—that is, on the intersection of psychology and theology—strikes me as much needed in today's church. Thoughtful theological engagement with psychology is both practical and important, especially given the potential harms (for example, the spiritually abusive behavior of some under-informed nouthetic counselors) to individuals when Christian mental healthcare goes wrong. Cortez's essay, on the other hand, lists the implications of embodied resurrection for various accounts of the beatific vision. While he does not arrive at a positive account of the relationship between the human body and beatific vision, he does provide an engaging discussion of Thomist and Edwardsian accounts of the beatific vision and points out several significant problems raised by each interpretation. What both of these papers have in common is that they deal with tangible aspects of human existence and provide interesting seed for thought about how our earthly bodies affect us now and how they might continue to do so in the future.

One worry about the book (and the project of analytic theology at large) is that it weds theological explananda with exotic philosophical ideas. In *Being Saved*, the most obvious candidate for this accusation is the amount of attention given to idealism and panpsychism. For example, in "Divine Hiddenness, the Soteriological Problem of Evil, and Berkeleyan Idealism," Gregory E. Trickett and Tyler Taber tackle what has been dubbed the "soteriological problem of evil," according to which God's hiddenness from those who do not hear the gospel serves, much like the original problem of evil, as evidence against his existence. Trickett and Taber's answer to this problem is lucid and interesting, but it depends entirely on a commitment to idealist

metaphysics. While theologians influenced by continental philosophy might find the appearance of idealism unsurprising (except, perhaps, that it does not appear in the German mode), analytic philosophers are more resistant to idealist metaphysics. This is the case despite the fact that the authors cite a recent “explosion of analysis and exposition” of Berkeley’s idealism in philosophical literature (27). While specialists in the history of philosophy are producing more and more work on Berkeley, this hardly reflects its popularity in the philosophical community at large. A 2020 poll of professional philosophers put acceptance of idealism at a meager 4.3%. Furthermore, a search of the top five philosophy journals produced zero works on contemporary idealist metaphysics; a cursory look at other mainstream journals yielded a mere four papers on the subject in the last four years. The most significant contribution to the field, *Idealism: New Essays in Metaphysics*, even explicitly notes its unpopularity among philosophers, pointing out a “neglect of idealism” in a philosophical landscape characterized by materialism and dualism.<sup>2</sup> The idealism that *is* represented in the literature is usually of a radically different sort that is Leibnizian or post-Kantian, drawing on more recent figures like Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead. While there should always be room in philosophy for views that are out of fashion or unpopular, I can understand why some might find it less than productive to build theological projects on philosophical views that few accept as likely or even possibly true.

Likewise, while panpsychism is currently quite fashionable in theology, it is not similarly popular in mainstream philosophy, although it has a few notable champions like Galen Strawson and David Chalmers (the latter of which has argued both for and against panpsychist metaphysics). A recent poll in a popular blog for professional philosophers listed the view as one of the three most preposterous philosophical views of the moment. While I’m a lover of meritorious preposterous ideas (it is one of the reasons I fell into philosophy), one wonders why theology purportedly drawing on philosophy would be so out of step with its mores. Joanna Leidenhag, commendably, engages with contemporary philosophical literature on panpsychism in her essay, “Saving Panpsychism: A Panpsychist Ontology and Christian Soteriology”; in her essay, she notes the various upshots for theological panpsychism that can be harvested from naturalistic views like Chalmers’. However, there are still other pressing worries about panpsychist metaphysics, such as Philip Goff’s objection that panpsychism does not help us with the problem of consciousness after all, or the worry that Berkeleyan idealism inevitably leads to Spinozist metaphysics (and subsequently, pantheism). (To be fair, Leidenhag mentions Goff’s objection in passing, but she does not engage with it.) Further, it is not at all obvious to me that these contemporary views are so easily reconciled to a theistic position; it would be helpful for Leidenhag to provide a more detailed discussion of her claim that the “disassociation of contemporary panpsychism from larger metaphysical and theological ideologies”—i.e., the naturalistic bent of philosophical panpsychism—“should embolden contemporary theologians to see panpsychism as a fairly

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<sup>2</sup> Tyron Goldschmidt and Kenneth L. Pearce, eds., *Idealism: New Directions in Metaphysics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. ix.

theologically neutral and versatile ontology” (306). Such considerations, though, may have simply exceeded the scope of what Leidenhag hoped to achieve in a single paper.

To see why one might be worried about these panpsychist ontologies and their relationship to pantheism, one need only turn to Oliver Crisp’s thought-provoking contribution, “Theosis and Participation,” in which he provides a compelling argument in favor of his view of theosis. In it, Crisp takes great pains to advert the mushy ontologies that would erase the creator/creature distinction in various accounts of theosis. Crisp argues that a doctrine of theosis can illuminate theology by providing a model (although the details of the union might exceed our grasp), and that such a model is possible without blurring the lines between God’s divinity and human participation in said divinity. Once he has set the parameters for candidate theories of theosis, he does not provide a detailed positive account of its metaphysics; rather, he jumps into the fray between Thomas Flint and Ryan Mullins, first defending Flint against Mullin’s objections and then launching new objections against Flint himself. The result is that Crisp’s paper sets an interesting agenda for future discussions of theosis; by setting important theological parameters for an orthodox account of theosis, Crisp lays the groundwork for further work on candidate theories.

In contrast, I found Benjamin Arbour’s essay, in which he implores philosophers to pay more attention to the contributions of theology, less compelling. Perhaps it’s merely because the paper’s success requires an antecedent sympathy to virtue epistemology, as it does not attempt to defend the view in its own right. I am admittedly not inclined to virtue epistemology *because* of theological considerations—for example, that virtue epistemology fails to adequately account for the noetic effects of sin, or that it cannot explain the sometimes dramatically inverted relationship between the (intellectual) virtuousness of an epistemic agent to the amount of knowledge the agent has acquired.

Furthermore, I was puzzled by James Arcadi’s appeal to social ontology as a way of explicating the real presence in the Eucharist. In his contribution he argues the bread may function as Christ’s body much like the way a prosthetic limb functions for the owner of the prosthetic. *Prima facie*, it strikes me as too thin of an account to validate what we take to be happening in the Eucharist. While I was ultimately not persuaded, Arcadi does introduce new ways of thinking about theological metaphysics that will prove stimulating to someone more inclined to social ontology.

A few final comments: While not necessarily the fault of the editors, it was disappointing to see that a volume striving for diversity contained so few contributions from women and people of color. One hopes that in the coming years editors will have many more diverse voices to choose from. Also, while the essays are terrific, here and there one can find grammatical and typesetting mistakes that will hopefully be addressed before any future editions are printed.

Despite these criticisms, the essays described above were nevertheless interesting and clearly presented. And there are yet more essays I do not have space to address that will certainly be intriguing reading for those willing to put in the work to understand interdisciplinary ventures like this one. For those who recognize the need for theology to interact with other guilds of knowledge, the anthology will prove both edifying and interesting. As someone with a background in analytic philosophy, I found this anthology to be a surprisingly accessible read. For those already alienated

by philosophical jargon, it may seem a bit too removed from theological discourse like many other subspecialties in academic theology. The difference between this and most academic jargon is, of course, that here the jargon is doing real work. In my view, it is very much worth the effort to understand the philosophical lexicon if it yields fruitful projects such as this.