

Reviews

Harm J. M. J. Goris. *Free Creatures of an Eternal God: Thomas Aquinas on God's Infallible Foreknowledge and Irresistible Will*. (Nijmegen: Thomas Instituut te Utrecht, 1997.) Pp. 345, 1260 BF.

This is an ambitious and exceptionally well-researched book. In it, Goris aims to reconcile Thomas Aquinas's commitment to the irresistible efficacy of God's will with contingency in the sublunary world and human freedom. The discussion is conducted at a high level of scholarship and philosophical sophistication, and displays insight both into medieval thinking on a diverse range of topics, including time, tense, modality, free will, meaning and knowledge, and into its precedents in classical philosophy.

Goris's solution to the problem he sets himself is to claim that Aquinas, in effect, legislates for consistency between divine causation and creaturely freedom: 'God is the unique cause of being as being, including its modalities' (p. 303). And he refuses, on Aquinas's behalf, any demand for further explanation, stating that 'we do not know how God gives being' (p. 304), and that 'for Thomas Aquinas, all our speech and understanding *in divinis* is ineluctably deficient and imbued with negativity' (p. 305). Thus the book as a whole ends on a note of mystery and indeed mysticism, with the reader feeling somewhat short-changed: what, one is inclined to protest, was the point of all the arduous labour of argument and refutation, if in the end a mystical silence is imposed on the debate? Still, the perverse alliance of an intense reliance on the power of words with their ultimate rejection is true to one's experience of reading Aquinas, and one must at least be grateful that the adjuration to silence is postponed until the very end: before that point Goris does not shirk the hard labour of teasing out the confused and confusing strands of our, and Aquinas's, intuitions about time, tense and freedom. But here, while I found many of Goris's contentions and much of his historical analysis persuasive, I had a few qualms. I have only space in this short review to mention one of them.

Goris, like Aquinas, is attracted by an Aristotelian approach to the problem of future contingency, which consists in denying that statements about the contingent future have a determinate truth-value. For Goris, like Aristotle and Aquinas, takes it that if the principle of bivalence applies unrestrictedly to statements about the future, as well as the present and past, fatalism will be the consequence. But if the actual future is not fully determinate, there can be no question of divine or any other *foreknowledge*: and such indeed seems to have been Aquinas's position, forcing him into the

adoption of a Boethian conception of divine knowledge as located in an eternal present, rather than in the past. Now if the actual future is not fully determinate, the hypothetical future cannot be fully determinate either (for the actual future is – at least – one possible future), so that if divine *foreknowledge* is ruled out on the basis that the actual future is indeed not fully determinate, divine *middle* knowledge must equally be ruled out on the same basis. But here it seems to me that Goris is not quite consequential in his argumentation. He discusses the issue of middle knowledge before that of simple foreknowledge, and his arguments against its coherence – perforce offered in advance of his rejection of foreknowledge – are flawed, partly because he does not formulate the doctrine of middle knowledge correctly. The doctrine has it that subjunctive conditionals stating what an agent *would* do if placed in certain circumstances (‘conditionals of freedom’) can be *determinately but contingently* true or false. God knows, for example, that if David were to stay in Keilah Saul would besiege it – not that he *would probably* do so, nor yet that he *would necessarily* do so, but that he *would freely* (and so *contingently*) besiege it. The contingency amounts to this: if David stayed in Keilah, Saul *might* decide not to besiege it – that is still a genuine option for Saul in the hypothetical scenario – and if he *were* so to decide (supposing David were to stay in Keilah), the content of God’s middle knowledge *would* be appropriately different – but in point of fact God knows that if David stayed in Keilah Saul *would* decide to besiege it. The objections Goris brings against the doctrine of middle knowledge (especially around pp. 77–9) seem to me to miss their target, partly because Goris misformulates the doctrine (he claims that a true conditional of freedom can at best be probabilistically true), and partly because he evidently expects the doctrine to provide an explanatory basis for divine foreknowledge. But that is something it cannot do, and was not intended by its proponents to do – at least not on its own. God’s middle knowledge needs to *combine* with His independent decision to actualize a particular world, out of a range of actualizable worlds, before simple foreknowledge can eventuate. Middle knowledge does not, then, presuppose foreknowledge; on the contrary, the relation of presupposition runs in the reverse direction. Hence Kenny’s accusation of circularity, which Goris repeats without adducing a satisfactory argument, is spurious.

RICHARD GASKIN
University of Sussex

Jonathan Reé and Jane Chamberlain (eds.). *Kierkegaard: A Critical Reader*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997.) Pp. x + 186. £45.00 hbk, £14.99 pbk.

According to the editors of this collection of essays a ‘new Kierkegaard is coming forward... comparable perhaps to the proto-deconstructionist “new Nietzsche” who emerged from the shadows in the 1970s’ (1). It is obviously

important to ask what the new Kierkegaard has to say that was not said by the old Kierkegaard. On the evidence of these essays, not a great deal.

Paul Ricoeur suggests that Kierkegaard be thought of as an ‘exception’, a non-philosopher who provides philosophy with material for reflection. For, according to Ricoeur, ‘[p]hilosophy must always be concerned with non-philosophy, because it has no object of its own... It is reflection on experience, on the whole of experience, and on experience as a whole’ (14). However, this robs Kierkegaard of his most significant thought, for he argued that (at any rate with respect to aesthetics, ethics and religion) *there is no such thing* as a philosophy which is not the philosophy of a given human being (‘truth is subjectivity’): the philosopher cannot consider experience as a whole – the only experience he can consider is his own and his only voice is the personal voice. He can have no universal voice. For Kierkegaard, philosophy which goes on as if this were not the case – most of it, he thinks – is compounded out of *naïveté* and dishonesty, and in his talk of Kierkegaard as an exception Ricoeur insulates himself from the latter’s challenge to usual philosophical practice, a point which is only confirmed when he suggests that the ‘properly philosophical’ aspects of Kierkegaard’s work can be assimilated to the tradition running from Kant through Fichte and Schelling to Hegel.

Still, if Kierkegaard thinks that a philosopher must speak in a personal voice, this marks only the beginning, not the end, of his work. As Joakim Garff stresses, Kierkegaard was forever struggling to find such a voice, always suspicious that his words lacked authenticity and authority. Garff understands this problem in Kierkegaard in terms of the idea that the ‘empirical “I”’ has been written off by the ‘textual “I”’, but this latter ‘I’ outruns Kierkegaard’s control because ‘writers always write *in* a language and *in* a logic, whose total system they cannot master in their own discourse’ (95). There are, I think, at least two related reasons to worry about his interpretation. Firstly, it tends to be reductive in that it claims that what Kierkegaard called the ‘Divine Guidance’ of his work is simply the ‘surplus’ which Kierkegaard found in his own writings and which comes from the uncontrollability of the language in which any writer writes. Secondly, Kierkegaard’s problem about finding a personal voice was central to his being spiritually tormented, and to interpret him as Garff does comes close to an inability to see that this spiritual torment could have anything much to do with something which cannot be captured by discourse about ‘texts’.

Emmanuel Levinas takes up Kierkegaard’s notion of the stages of existence and argues that Kierkegaard’s hostility to the ethical stage and his emphasis upon subjectivity are mistaken. ‘[D]oes our relation with Others really entail our incorporation and dispersal into generality?’, he asks (32). But to whom is Levinas referring when he speaks of ‘our relations with Others’? Who are ‘we’? Perhaps Levinas means simply to be using the authorial ‘we’. If so, when he returns a negative answer to his question, all well and good: that

is his view on others. But, one might ask in Kierkegaardian spirit, what business has he answering the question for me or anyone else? The worry here may be seen in the reflection that there may be no ‘Others’, but just – others: these and these individuals, some of whom might rob me of my individuality and others of whom might nurture it. This worry is all the more pressing when Levinas characterizes the ethical as the area of ‘total altruism’ (32), going on: ‘The Self is infinitely responsible when it stands before Others’ (33). Insofar as one knows what this means, this hardly sounds like the liberation of self which Levinas claims the ethical realm to be, and would be enough to make me retreat into my subjectivity: life makes enough demands without the ‘Levinasian ethical’, compared to which the Kierkegaardian ethical seems like a holiday.

Jacques Derrida, who discusses Kierkegaard’s reflections on Abraham’s willingness to slay Isaac (Genesis 22), is also concerned with the question of absolute responsibility. Following Kierkegaard, he says that Abraham bears such a responsibility, for he cannot justify his actions. However, in trying to understand this notion, he trivializes things by claiming that we are all every day in the position of Abraham: by paying attention to any particular ‘other’ we ignore all the other others, and this is as unjustifiable as Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac. ‘By preferring my work, simply by giving it time and attention... I am sacrificing and betraying every moment all my other obligations... to... the billions of my fellows... who are dying of starvation or sickness...’ (163). But it is not just his philosophical work which seems to Derrida of such tragic significance: he also finds his domestic arrangements burdensome. ‘How would you ever justify the fact that you sacrifice all the cats in the world to the cat that you feed at home every morning for years, whereas other cats die of hunger at every instant? Not to mention other people?’ (164). But who really cares about other people when opening a tin of Whiskas is such a tragically shattering experience?

Kierkegaard, meanwhile, was not so keen on self-absorbed and idle chatter, as Wilhelm Anz reminds us, although whether Anz is right to suggest that one can give up such things if one remains always conscious of the fact that one is fated, as a finite being, to die, I do not know. Samuel Johnson, who was so terrified of death that he refused to think or talk about it, does not seem to have had what Anz, in Kierkegaard’s name, calls an authentic relation to death, but one could hardly hope to come across a mind less given over to chit-chat.

As to the other essays in the present collection, David Wood offers a sober discussion of Kierkegaard as a thinker who rejected metaphysics and understood religious belief as a way of being-in-the-world, whilst George Steiner’s contribution, originally published as an introduction to one of Kierkegaard’s works, reads very much as the introduction it is. And Sylviane Agacinski discusses the same topic as Derrida, but fails to advance things beyond the

point where Kierkegaard left them. The one exception to the generally disappointing essays in this collection is that by Gabriel Josipovići, a stylish and thought-provoking set of reflections on the Kierkegaardian idea, mentioned above in connexion with Ricoeur, that philosophers betray their task as soon as they try to speak in a universal voice and seek (as Kierkegaard puts it) to ‘recommend, urge, and offer their beatifying... wisdom for sale’ (122). The irony of the act of writing itself is not lost on Josipovici, and it makes his essay the only one under review which does anything to capture the lightness of touch which – not always, but at its best – characterizes Kierkegaard’s own work.

CHRISTOPHER HAMILTON

Paul Helm, *Faith and Understanding*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997.) Pp. vi + 212.

In this book, Paul Helm ventures to explain and illustrate what has come to be known as the ‘faith seeking understanding’ project (which hereafter I shall refer to as the FSU project). He characterizes this project as the attempt to examine and elucidate fundamental tenets of religion held by the believer, especially by means of philosophical methodology. This will gain for believers not only a deeper understanding of their religious faith, bringing them into a closer relationship with God, but also place that faith on a firmer foundation from which objections to religious belief can be better met. At the heart of this project is the conviction that by using their ability to reason, aided by the help of a divine being, human beings are able to uncover a rational foundation for much of what is simply accepted to be true on faith. Helm compares this notion with the idea born out of the Enlightenment that one ought to believe all and only those ideas for which one has impeccable evidence. According to this tradition, since the tenets of faith, by and large, do not fall under this paradigm of rationality, religious belief is irrational for the most part. The FSU project can be seen, at least in part, as an attempt to establish the claim that religious belief is reasonable, although one must keep in mind that the FSU project originated long before the criticisms of the Enlightenment. In elucidating this project, Helm focusses almost entirely on the Christian tradition. All of the authors and texts he draws upon are Christian, while Jewish, Islamic, and Asian traditions are mentioned only in passing.

The book is organized into two parts. First, Helm discusses the fundamental nature and characteristics of the FSU tradition, while in the second part, he focusses on particular thinkers and texts that exemplify the various ways in which this endeavour is carried out. In the first three chapters, Helm focusses on topics such as the nature of reason, the concept of faith, and the character and goals of the FSU tradition. In these introductory chapters,

Helm also addresses a number of worries, such as the credibility of religious testimony, and the use of theological claims as the starting point for a philosophical endeavour. He also contrasts the FSU project with the tradition of natural theology.

In the second part of the book, Helm builds upon the conceptual framework he has developed by examining specific texts in order to show how they exemplify the FSU project. As would be expected, Helm includes work by Anselm and Augustine, who might very well be thought of as the originators of the FSU tradition. Helm examines Augustine's treatment of time and God's relation to time as Augustine lays them out in the *Confessions*. Not surprisingly, Helm includes Anselm's ontological proof and discussion of God's nature in the *Proslogion*. But he also includes Anselm's defence of the Incarnation in *Cur Deus Homo*. Even more novel is Helm's inclusion of Jonathan Edwards as well as John Calvin. Helm illustrates Jonathan Edwards's FSU project as it is found in his defence of the doctrine of original sin by appeal to his doctrine of identity. Calvin's contribution to this discussion is his doctrine of the *sensus divinitatis*, according to which a basic awareness that there is a God has been implanted in all human beings by their divine creator.

Helm takes as his starting point the great historical tradition from which this project developed. But he also incorporates the work of philosophers currently working in this area into the larger discussion framed by the historical figures. These include Norman Kretzmann, Dewey Hoitenga, Alvin Plantinga, Nicholas Wolterstorff, and D. Z. Phillips (whose work on the nature of faith, Helm argues, differs dramatically from the classical tradition developed by Augustine and Anselm and does not count as a FSU project). Moreover, Helm imports conceptual notions from current philosophical (and other) discussions into his own discussion. Thus, he looks at Calvin's *sensus divinitatis* in the light of the internalist-externalist debate in epistemology, current (and historical) theories of identity over time in his examination of Edwards, and Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time* in his discussion of Augustine.

Helm surveys a great deal of literature, both from the historical tradition and the current scholarship. The broad scope of his project necessitates a certain brevity with respect to any one theory or text. Helm has done a nice job characterizing the project and summarizing various treatments and positions, but he has done little to elucidate a deep understanding of any particular position or thinker. His discussions of the issues and the texts are often rather broad and general, and although he has interesting things to say about the theories he considers, his comments are rather cursory. For example, Helm considers an objection to Plantinga's claim that belief in God is a basic belief that results from the proper function of our noetic faculties, a claim that Plantinga develops in part by appeal to Calvin's *sensus divinitatis*

(p. 196). The objection asks why we should think that belief in a deity results from proper function rather than malfunction. Helm points to Plantinga's answer that ultimately, epistemology is grounded by one's commitments in ontology but fails to explain how this resolves the objection or to indicate the extent to which it succeeds in resolving the objection. The reader who is uninformed about these issues will be left mystified and the reader who is familiar with Plantinga's work will find no new insights here.

Now Helm's primary purpose is not to provide any deep insight into Plantinga's work but to illustrate the ways in which Plantinga makes use of Calvin in a FSU project. And here Helm does provide an evaluation. But once again, his remarks, although very interesting, are cursory. Helm argues that because Calvin's purposes in his work does not include establishing the rationality of religious belief, his notion of *sensus divinitatis* will not provide even implied support for Reformed epistemology. But some of the quotations provided by Helm earlier in the chapter suggest that at least some of Calvin's ideas could be taken as implicit support in favour of the rationality of religious belief even if Calvin himself did not explicitly address the subject (see, for example, p. 179).

I am not arguing here that Helm's critique of Plantinga is wrong. I merely wish to provide an example of the summary nature of Helm's work. Thus, while those who are familiar with the literature in this area may be interested in what Helm has to say about lesser known figures and texts, such as Edwards, the book will be of value primarily to readers seeking an introduction to this topic. Those who stand to gain the most from this book are those who lack a background on this topic and want an understanding of the lay of the land, so to speak. But although Helm is conscientious about defining technical terms and philosophical notions, a number of those definitions and explanations are extremely brief. *Scientia*, a complex notion in medieval epistemology, receives a definition of one word. The Gettier problem and its background is described in a paragraph of four sentences. Thus, readers with merely a rudimentary background in philosophy may at times have difficulty following the thread of Helm's discussion.

In conclusion then, I would argue that this book provides the reader with a useful introduction to and overview of the FSU project on the basis of which the reader might further investigate the topic. In addition to the wide body of literature surveyed by Helm, there is a rather extensive bibliography which can be utilized by those wishing to pursue these issues. But the book is less valuable to those familiar with this tradition who are looking to deepen their understanding.

COLLEEN McCLUSKEY
St Louis University

Charles Taliaferro, *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1998.) Pp. x + 435, £50.00 hbk, £15.99 pbk.

At £15.99 the paperback edition of this substantial book is excellent value for money. Taliaferro covers a vast field at an invigorating pace, giving a clear bird's-eye view of the territory, but also drawing attention to some of the details of debate. He has had a more difficult brief than those given to other authors in the Blackwell 'Contemporary Philosophy' series, not only because modern philosophy of religion is notorious for the prolificacy of its practitioners, but also because of the variety of religious traditions which are its object, and indeed the variety of philosophical traditions within it. The emphasis of the book is on discussion within the tradition of analytic philosophy of Christian theism, but many of the issues, as Taliaferro makes clear, are just as relevant to Judaism and Islam as to Christianity, and there is also explicit discussion of Hinduism and Buddhism. There are numerous references to work in the continental tradition, and also to the work of philosophical theologians such as Tillich and Buber.

The first chapter is a rather broad discussion of the nature of religious belief, with reference to the five major religions mentioned above. As Taliaferro justly remarks, philosophy of religion is not simply a logical exercise, but primarily a study of living traditions. The chapter also contains some interesting remarks on the degree to which the philosopher of religion needs to identify with the religion studied, to know what it is like to be a believer. Chapter 2 discusses non-realist positions, as articulated by such writers as D. Z. Phillips and Don Cupitt. The next four chapters are mainly concerned with the nature of God: his knowledge, power, and transcendence from the spatio-temporal and material. Interwoven with these issues is an account of positivist and materialist attacks on theism. Chapter 7 deals with ethical and metathetical issues in religion, including the connection between theism and moral realism. Religious experience is the main subject of Chapter 8, and the problem of evil that of Chapter 9. In the last chapter, the major philosophical arguments for the existence of God are presented.

One novel and very useful feature of the book is an extended 'Suggested Questions and Topics' section at the end of each chapter. This is much more than a list of standard essay questions. Here Taliaferro makes imaginative links with other issues, and invites critical reflection on some of the writings he quotes. As he says, some of the questions are 'downright unconventional'. A few examples will give an idea of the flavour of these sections: 'Offer realist and nonrealist interpretations of the narrative of Elijah's triumph over the priests of Baal' (p. 58); 'How important is it from a religious point of view to achieve a correct philosophical analysis of the divine attributes?' (p. 81); 'Do you think God could create more than one time frame and exist simultaneously with each?' (p. 183). Many of the questions are accompanied by further discussion. One of Taliaferro's more unconventional suggestions

is that we consider an analogy between religion and architectural ruins. ‘Assuming, if only for the sake of argument, that the great world religions are indeed the equivalent of intellectual ruins, you may wish to explore the respects in which they might still serve an important role, aesthetic and intellectual’ (p. 34).

Reading each chapter of the book was for me rather like reading an extended encyclopaedia entry, with its thumb-nail definitions, copious references to other work, and somewhat detached style. But this is no criticism. The very readable prose held my attention throughout, and I found no difficulty in reading through a couple of chapters at one sitting. The style is informed by the author’s interesting remarks at the beginning of the book about the need to set an argument in its right context, including philosophical and theological background, and also about the desirability of adopting a constructive approach to philosophical argument: to use problems and objections as a way of shaping a position rather than to blast one’s opponent to pieces. One cannot fail to be impressed both by the number and range of philosophical positions and arguments covered, and by the efficiency and clarity with which they are summarised.

There are plenty of ideas and novel angles here to invigorate that rather tired lecture course you have been giving for years on end, not to mention the rather tired tutorial discussions on predictable lines. You will not want to follow all of Taliaferro’s suggestions, and you will probably want to use the book as a guide in the design of a course (or courses) and as something thereafter to dip into rather than as your sole text, but it is a must for everyone working in the philosophy of religion: undergraduate, PhD student and teacher alike.

ROBIN LE POIDEVIN
University of Leeds

Dewey J. Hoitenga, *John Calvin and the Will*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Co., 1997.) Pp. 162, pbk.

Pelagianism is the doctrine that post-Adamic, fallen humanity retains two natural capacities: an intellect that suffices to give us knowledge of the content of the moral law, and a will which we are free to exercise so that we keep the law. Christianity has a role to play in salvation – but mainly by counteracting a post-lapsarian tradition of sin that would otherwise have encouraged us to use our freedom wrongly. For we can achieve perfection and righteousness before God simply through the correct, intellect-guided exercise of our freedom of will. Nothing supernatural need be given us to add to these natural capacities of intellect and will; nor have these capacities been damaged in a way that requires any supernatural repair.

Since Augustine, the view that Pelagianism, so understood, is a serious heresy, has been central to the mainstream western Christian theological

tradition. Salvation and righteousness before God is entirely a gift of God's grace, and not anything that fallen humans can achieve through their own independent doing. And that is because the Adamic fall did, after all, damage and corrupt human nature.

But how was human nature corrupted; and what might its repair involve? Calvin has been associated with one particularly bleak view of the Fall. The Fall saw a complete loss, in some relevant sense of 'freedom' of our freedom of will; and that loss of freedom of will is what explains our complete dependence on grace for salvation.

Hoitenga's book is a critical discussion of Calvin's theory of the will from within the Reformed Protestant tradition. Hoitenga alleges that Calvin is involved in two major inconsistencies: in his account of the will's nature, where Calvin allegedly veers between the opposed doctrines of intellectualism and voluntarism; and in his account of the corruption of will that resulted from the fall, where Calvin's denial of freedom is alleged inconsistent with Calvin's view that in the fall the will's nature was damaged but not destroyed. Hoitenga proposes that the Reform tradition remedy matters by teaching a consistent voluntarism, and by teaching that the Fall reduced the will's freedom without wholly removing it. He suggests that the Reformed tradition teach, in particular, that while the will lost the freedom to pursue supernatural goodness, it did not lose the freedom to pursue natural goodness and to lead a life of natural virtue.

The book begins with discussion of the distinction between intellectualist and voluntarist theories of the will. Intellectualism ties the operation of the will to the judgement of the practical intellect; whereas voluntarism loosens this tie. The discussion is fairly general, both philosophically and historically. The central question must be whether Calvin, as Hoitenga alleges, inconsistently gives an intellectualist account of the pre-lapsarian will but a voluntarist account of the post-lapsarian will. The problem that we face is familiar. The terms in which Calvin discusses the question are rhetorical and very vague – at least by comparison with many of the more philosophically accomplished texts in the medieval tradition.

A natural reading of Calvin indeed leaves us with a voluntarist picture of the post-lapsarian will:

But man does not choose by reason and pursue with zeal what is truly good for himself according to the excellence of his immortal nature; nor does he use his reason in deliberation or bend his mind to it. Rather, like an animal, he follows the inclination of his nature, without reason, without deliberation. Therefore whether or not man is impelled to seek after good by an impulse of nature has no bearing on freedom of the will. This instead is required: that he discern good by right reason; that knowing it he choose it; that having chosen it he follow it. (*Institutes* 2.2.26 cited p. 77)

But he alleged intellectualism of Calvin's theory of the pre-lapsarian will is

very much less clear. The pre-lapsarian will follows the practical intellect. But one would after all expect the unfallen will to agree with and apply rational deliberation. That is what original justice involves. And this view of the operation of the pre-lapsarian will is fully consistent with a voluntarist account of its nature. The will might follow the intellect; and as rational appetite it might have the function of doing that. But voluntaristically conceived, the will is not tied to fulfilling this function. It always has the capacity not to follow the practical intellect; and when the will first fails to follow the intellect we arrive at the fall.

And this leads to further difficulties regarding Hoitenga's second claim – that Calvin is inconsistent in his account of the fallen will. Calvin's supposedly incompatible claims are both (a) that the fallen will's nature is corrupted but not destroyed, while also (b) that the fallen will lacks the freedom to follow and apply the intellect's judgements. But why are these claims incompatible? They seem very consistent. The will's nature is given by its status as an appetite which is supposed to follow the intellect. Following the intellect, if you like, is the will's function. This is a function or nature which the will retains after the fall. Indeed, it is precisely this continuing function and nature – the will goes on being that-faculty-which-is-supposed-to-follow-the-intellect – which entails that the fallen will's utter *incapacity* to follow the intellect is a genuine case of corruption.

Another major lacuna in the book is an account of what natural virtue comes to. A natural Augustinian way of looking at things is that there are two possible motivations: self interest, which is sinful, or love, which is morally good. Love requires grace, so that naturally, apart from grace, men can only be motivated by self interest. There is therefore no natural virtue, but only the appearance of it.

If there is natural virtue, these alternatives cannot be exhaustive. But then what is the motivation behind natural virtue going to be? And if it really is a virtuous and morally admirable motivation, if it is genuinely unselfish, isn't it unfair that it does nothing to save its possessors? 'No salvation through selfishness' is a comprehensible principle enough. 'No salvation through genuine moral goodness' looks rather less comprehensible. The problem is clear. If natural virtue really is virtuous, its insufficiency to save looks arbitrary. But if fairness is restored, and natural virtue apart from grace can earn salvation, we are back with the heresy of the Pelagians. Better perhaps to portray human life considered apart from grace in as morally unattractive terms as possible. Hoitenga does little to resolve this question.

THOMAS PINK
King's College London