

clear-cut as Schellenberg. Further, one can ask in this context how far anyone could give the kind of assent to propositions Schellenberg has in mind under his notion of faith in the absence of evidence, that is truth-indicators. And finally, one can wonder how far it is right to contend that belief is as involuntary as Schellenberg makes out.

I raise the above criticisms while fully accepting the main thrust of this book: the philosophy of religion needs a more thorough study of prolegomena and that such a study will lead to the broadening of the subject's horizons.

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Michael Purcell *Levinas and Theology*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Pp. ix + 198. £40.00 (hbk), £15.99 (pbk). ISBN 0521813255 (hbk), 0521012805 (pbk).

It is not uncommon for focused thematic applications or overviews of Levinas's writings (e.g. in translators' prefaces to his works in English) to leave the uninitiated reader in a state of greater perplexity about his overall project than would avoiding the secondary commentaries altogether and moving straight into the original texts. *Levinas and Theology* refreshingly avoids that tendency and has many good things to say in its favour. The book contains excellent summary explications of the basic aspects of Husserl and Heidegger on which Levinas's work draws so heavily. These are presented with a clarity, simplicity and conciseness which demonstrates a great depth of understanding of the whole phenomenological tradition on the author's part, and which can thus be illuminating both for readers already familiar with Levinas and those who are not.

The overview of Levinas himself, focused, as it is, specifically on his past and potential contributions to theology, is by and large equally well structured, touching instructively on many of the main Levinasian themes, and generally pursuing clear lines of reasoning within each chapter.

It would have been helpful for a clear chronology of Levinas's works to have been included. Levinas's philosophical thought developed considerably from the earlier to later periods, and there can be a tendency in this book to ignore that, especially when it tries to bring some of the earlier, more easily theologically resonant material, to bear upon his later work, which thus misrepresents it. It can accordingly be made to seem that Levinas's mature (and more powerful) thought is more harmonious with central Christian themes than it really is. This becomes

especially pronounced in the author's treatment of 'incarnation' in Levinas as 'enfleshed', when Levinas himself in his *later* philosophical writings strongly distances himself from incarnation understood in any such way (see e.g. *Totality and Infinity*, 210–218, especially 204, 206, 208). But this is a relatively minor grievance compared to the many other good things the book has to offer.

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