

Professor Bhala has preferred to spend his energies in building the positives rather than the negatives of the case. Hence, he has appealed to the supreme Christian virtue of charity, rather than to the self-interest of nations. Having done his work as a true doctor of Christianity, he closes his case and is ready to accept neglect and perhaps even scorn (520) at the hand of jaded secularists and practitioners of political correctness who control the arguments and the counterarguments in the international trade arena. It is at this juncture that the reviewer and eventually the reader have to intervene to offer an open defense of this effort by providing another torque to the arguments. Is it not proper to direct the torch of charity lit by Professor Bhala to illuminate those who take advantage of the structural weaknesses of developing countries? At the end of the day, are theirs not quixotic and empty victories?

Fullness of life is derived from the position of the samurai who, refusing to be aided by an ally who had denied salt to his enemy, did himself send salt to the enemy and said: "I do not fight with salt but with the sword."

What honor does an international trade lawyer bring home when winning so unequal a battle? Does not self-love in the international community call for equalizing the field by at least, as Professor Bhala proposes, increasing the number of lawyers from low-income countries who specialize in international law, reducing conditionality, and improving the chance for export diversification in the Third World?

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Economics and Religion

Paul Oslington (Editor)

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In the mid-1980s, I was a young Christian Ph.D. student in economics. I vividly remember meeting with a few other graduate students to discuss A. B. Cramp's "Economics in Christian Perspective: A Sketch Map." Cramp's work really was a sketch: There was no book to study, just photocopies of Cramp's lecture notes. In 1986, that was all there was for a graduate student hungry for serious Christian reflection on the discipline of economics.

These two volumes document what a difference twenty years have made and how much more is now available to the Christian economist eager to reflect on the implications of faith for economic scholarship. Here, Cramp's work appears for the first time in print, as part of a rich selection of work at the intersection of economics and religion. Paul Oslington, the editor, and Edward Elgar, the publisher, have done a real service in bringing this work together in one place.

The two volumes are divided into three parts, corresponding to the three ways that economists have approached the intersection of economics and religion. Part 1 (which takes up the entire first volume) documents the influence of religion on the develop-

ment of economic thought from biblical times to the present. Part 2 documents the attempts of economists to grapple with the role of their faith commitments and perspectives in their work as economists. Part 3 is a sample of work from, and critiques of, the new discipline of the economic analysis of religion.

Part 1, which traces the role of religion in the history of economic thought, begins with Scripture and ends in modern times. Dominating this section (at 200 of 500 pages) is the magisterial but incomplete work of Jacob Viner, who documented the interplay of theological and economic thought from early Christianity through the Enlightenment. In this section, I was struck by the willingness of the various authors to take seriously the role of theology in economic thought. Where one expects a dismissal of theological thought as a smokescreen, as a rationalization for economic interest, one instead finds researchers who take ideas seriously as autonomous forces in history. For example, Viner takes at face value the otherworldliness of the church fathers and defends it as a foundation of their economic analysis: “In no case that I know of did any of the fathers approve, propose, or condemn any law or activity of an economic character solely or predominantly on the basis of its consequences for temporal prosperity” (76). He likewise rejects a liberationist analysis of heresy as implicit rebellion of the poor against the powerful on the basis of economic interest. Both the church fathers and Viner take theological ideas seriously, not simply as window dressing for social power struggles.

The transition from theological economics to modern value-neutral science is addressed over the course of ten selections, beginning with an essay by Viner on secularization and ending with an essay by A. M. C. Waterman on the development of boundaries between theology and economics. The story is familiar (although there are some surprises), but two important themes emerge from this selection of readings. The first is that the economics of Smith and Malthus was part of a larger cultural project to understand the workings of divine providence in the seemingly impersonal laws of the economy; it was an attempt to show that a seemingly impersonal social order was in fact good and providential. The second is that the secularization of economics and social science was not brought about solely by the irreligious. Religious people (such as the Jansenists, Malthus, and Chalmers) offered social analysis that was independent of theology. The first section ends with an important essay by Robert Nelson, who claims that even modern secular economics is theological—that is, it is founded on claims about happiness, and aims at “heaven on earth.”

Part 2 documents recent attempts by economists to reestablish a religiously informed economics, as well as the criticisms of this enterprise. Often enough, the critics are themselves Christians. There are three broad perspectives represented here. The first asserts that Christian faith should result in a new and improved economics—one built on a richer understanding of human motivation and the created purpose of society. About half of the essays here take this position. Remarkably, Kenneth Boulding’s 1950 essay on religious perspectives is encouraging to the first perspective. He recognizes that an economist who is not a person of faith will not fully understand the power of religion to move the individual and to shape society’s institutions. A second perspective

claims that Christians should draw on their faith in choosing topics for research and should be virtuous colleagues and researchers but that economics is too technical to be anything but value-neutral. Many mainstream Christian economists advocate this second position, which is well represented here. A third perspective avers that religious engagement with economics is positively harmful to economics and to society. This position is advocated in two essays: one by the late Paul Heyne (a Christian), and another, dripping with contempt for religion, by Frank Knight. The section ends with two essays addressing the economics implicit in two other religious traditions: Islam and Judaism.

Part 3 turns the tables on religion, putting it under the microscope of economic analysis. Nothing makes clearer the naturalistic outlook and imperialistic pretensions of economics better than this set of essays. All human action and institutions are to be understood as efficient mechanisms for rational gain, and as subject to scarcity. Whatever one's verdict on this literature, it is well represented here. Ehrenberg's work on the household allocation of time to religious activity is here, as well as Ekelund, Hebert, and Tollison's work on the medieval church as monopoly (expressed in gleefully irreverent language), and Iannacone's groundbreaking application of information economics to sects. Critiques of this work are also presented here: James Montgomery criticizes its informational assumptions, and sociologist Steve Bruce questions the entire enterprise as too reliant on the language of rational choice tradeoffs.

It is hard to summarize a sprawling collection such as this, much less to criticize it. On the whole, Oslington has done a good job of choosing and organizing the two volumes. They would constitute a stimulating set of readings for a course on this topic. The only shortcoming of the work is the slight attention it pays to modern Catholic social teaching. Oslington includes an excellent summary of the principles by Rodger Charles but does not address the history or prospects of this tradition. In a volume that devotes several hundred pages to the ways in which economists might reestablish an engagement with theology, it is puzzling why an account of the ways in which Catholic thought has made this engagement should be left out. The history of this engagement exists from the early twentieth century work on distributive justice and minimum wages by Monsignor John Ryan; to the work of Fr. Oswald von Nell-Breuning, who contributed to papal writings on the economy; to the recent work of Fr. Albino Barrera, who thoughtfully critiques modern economics in light of Catholic social teaching. I can think of three or four readings that could have easily been replaced by several readings in the modern Catholic social tradition.

Aside from this, I am grateful for the volumes, and I hope they are widely read. Economics has come a long way in fifteen years, from behaving as if religion were irrelevant to economics, to a serious, many-faceted engagement with the implications of religion, both as a research topic and as a context within which many economists ply their academic trade.

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