

rich were rich and the poor were poor through the will of Providence, and while charity was certainly still a requirement, it could and did take on more rigid, institutional forms that hurt as often as helped. These forms, Snow contends, were what Wordsworth (taking cues from evangelical and Quaker thinking) objected to. In opposition to the institutional view of poverty stands Wordsworth's beggar, a man who not only deserves not to be managed by a poorhouse bureaucrat but also deserves to be allowed to determine "where and when he will sit down / Beneath the trees, or by the grassy bank." It is the freedom and dignity of the poor that this poem demands by poetically portraying the free, dignified poor.

In dealing with poverty, the more evangelical goal, and one Wordsworth seems to endorse, is not simply the treatment of an ill but a restoration of kinship where "that first mild touch of sympathy and thought" reveals to the charitable that they have "found their kindred with a world / Where want and sorrow were." Indeed, even "the poorest poor / Long for some moments in a weary life / When they can know and feel that they have been / Themselves the fathers and dealers out / Of some small blessings, have been kind to such / As needed kindness, for this single cause, / That we have all of us one human heart."

The point is similar to one made by a pope two hundred years later, that in loving my neighbor, I must go "beyond exterior appearances, [and] perceive in others an interior desire for a sign of love, of concern.... Seeing with the eyes of Christ, I can give to others much more than their outward necessities; I can give them the look of love which they crave."

As an overview of attitudes toward the poor in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Lake District, Snow's book serves its readers well. As a glimpse into how the poor can be illuminated by art, the book also serves well. If nothing else, *William Wordsworth and the Theology of Poverty* provides a helpful, introductory, theological, and poetic lexicon by which to better understand how poverty can be defined and engaged. Above all, it shows how Wordsworth's poetry instructs us that, when "the poor are allowed to be part of the community, both the poor and the community are richer."

—David Michael Phelps  
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## Distant Markets, Distant Harms: Economic Complicity and Christian Ethics

**Daniel K. Finn (Editor)**

New York: Oxford University Press, 2014 (288 pages)

This is a volume of essays from an interdisciplinary conference aimed at demonstrating how Catholic social thought can provide a foundation for contemporary economic ethics. The editor is Professor of Theology and Clemens Professor of Economics at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota. Both the conference and the volume sprang from the work of the True Wealth of Nations Project of the Institute of Advanced Catholic Studies. There are ten contributors to this volume from an assortment of academic fields, but all are interested in the topic of economic ethics.

After a brief introduction by Finn, the book consists of ten essays. The essays are divided into four parts. Part 1, Sociological Resources, seeks to provide such for the discussion in four chapters. The first essay, by Douglas Porpora, proposes that the complexity of the market economy results in collective responsibility for economic and social harm that can be related to the market. In chapter 2, Margaret Archer explains some of the relationships between cultural structure and personal agency within those structures. Archer's argument is that individuals remain responsible for both existing structures and personal actions; individual accountability is not ameliorated by structural conditioning. In the third essay, Pierpaolo Donati argues for moral responsibility for both direct and indirect results of an agent's actions. According to Donati, because of the relational nature of economics, a moral agent is accountable for both intended and unintended consequences of the action. This seems to undermine an important element of Catholic ethical teaching, the principle of double effect (which posits that unintended negative effects may be tolerated if the principal and intended effect is good), and clouds the decision-making process for moral agents in the market. In the fourth essay, John Coleman builds on the previous three chapters, using global warming as a case study for the ethical significance of structure, moral agency, and accountability. The four chapters in part 1 present a bleak picture for those seeking to make praiseworthy decisions in a complex market.

Part 2 offers discussion of historical solutions to the ethical question of distant harm. Chapter 5 describes the historical Catholic pattern of creating a market for philanthropy. According to historian Brian Matz, there was benefit gained in the Church's pattern of life apart from the simple profit motive. The essay is informative and well argued but could have been improved by explaining that historical elements can be imported into the contemporary milieu and why. In the sixth essay, theologian and economist Mary Hirschfield commends Aquinas as a source for economic ethics, particularly as he has a place for private property in his theology but does not fall prey to the individualism of some Enlightenment philosophers. Part 2 is the most helpful section in this volume.

The first three chapters of part 3 offer an analytical approach to economic ethics. Chapter 7 contains a feminist approach to accountability. Theologian and ethicist Cristina Traina deemphasizes the ability to assign moral praise and blame, thus highlighting the ethical complexity of a market economy. This chapter does little to clarify the difficult moral analysis of the global economy and fails to point toward any solution for moral blame. In the eighth essay, anthropologist Paul Appiah Himin Asante explains the contextual African perspective on moral accountability in the market, commending the broader concern for relationships with people and nature as a positive source for economic ethics. Chapter 9 brings some clarity to an otherwise cloudy ethical scheme by helping to provide a means for determining individual ethical responsibility for collective concerns. While some of its assumptions may be questioned, this essay by Albino Barrera, OP, is the best in the volume. Barrera recognizes that prior philosophical commitments significantly influence the discussion of economic ethics, but he offers a helpful series of items to consider when analyzing market activity ethically.

Concluding the volume, part 4 consists of a single essay wherein Daniel Finn ties the project together. He reflects on the ethical reasoning offered in the previous nine chapters, nicely summarizing them and commending the reader to further study. Finn's conclusion, however, is not definitive, instead leaving the reader wondering how to proceed in a complex market.

The chief contribution of this volume to economic ethics is its emphasis on the difficulty of making moral decisions in a global economy. The concept of emergence recurs throughout the volume, thus providing a way of understanding the real ethical complexity of market economics that stretch the limits of simple, linear, ethical evaluation. Additionally, this volume is helpful in its repeated critiques of exaggerated individualism. Several authors throughout this work point toward the failure of individualism—at least in its extreme form—as a foundation for economic ethics. The authors cogently argue that there must be some consideration for the common good even in the seemingly private decisions of individuals. This is a counterpoint that is sometimes lacking in polemics for free-market economics. The third significant strength is the cohesion of this volume. Many collections of essays provide little continuity in theme or interaction between chapters. This volume, however, has clear thematic links and reasonable engagement among the essayists. That engagement makes this a much more pleasant book to read than many other edited volumes.

The most significant weakness of *Distant Markets, Distant Harms* is the lack of grounding of the ethical discussions. Barrera's essay points toward the central role that philosophical presuppositions play in making ethical determinations but there is no consistent source for ethical norms provided in this text. This weakens the force of the overall argument of the book because unstated presuppositions tend to go unanalyzed. A second significant weakness is an overemphasis on the impact of minor market participants. In an effort to demonstrate the possible structural evils of complex economic systems, some of the authors describe an ethical schema in which purchasing a shirt may bring direct moral accountability for human rights violations in a distant country. Such an understanding of accountability is not livable because no consumer can know the ethical merits of the entire supply chain of a given product. Additionally, because there is no clear accounting for this form of moral reasoning in Scripture, it is not clear that Christ's own market activities could be considered free from moral blame. After all, by the ethical schema presented in this volume, the miracle at the wedding at Cana might have withheld necessary business from a worthy wine merchant or caused someone to commit the sin of drunkenness. While taking a broader view of economic ethics is commendable, more evaluation is necessary before the understanding of moral responsibility offered in this text can be adopted. A third significant weakness of this volume is the absence of a solution. Assuming one accepts the idea of ethical complicity from market participation, a part of the Christian response should be the offer of forgiveness through the gospel. The hope found in Christ's atoning work is notably absent from this volume, which is a major lacuna.

Despite any weaknesses, this volume is an important contribution to the conversation on Christian ethics and market economics. It is readable and accessible for an educated

generalist. At many points these essays are helpfully challenging, and they should provide points of discussion for future debates.

—Andrew J. Spencer

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## Divine Covenants and Moral Order: A Biblical Theology of Natural Law

**David VanDrunen**

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2014 (582 pages)

With *Divine Covenants and Moral Order*, David VanDrunen completes the second part of a planned three-part project in Reformed Protestant social ethics. Following on his historical study, *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms* (Eerdmans, 2010), and with a practical volume yet to come, this volume constitutes the biblical-theological part. Here VanDrunen argues that the existence of natural law is both explicitly and implicitly affirmed in Scripture. Although this is a rather traditional claim in Christian theology, VanDrunen develops it with a Reformed accent by considering the natural law through the lens of the biblical covenants. Part 1 covers the natural, protological law as it applies to humanity in general in the first creation. Part 2 covers the natural law as it applies (or may not apply—more on this below) to God’s redeemed people in the covenants of grace and, therefore, looks at the new creation and its eschatological realities. This two-part structure is also visible in the way he structures the relationship between nature and grace: “(common) grace preserves nature and (saving) grace consummates nature” (34).

VanDrunen appropriately begins with the covenant of creation, which is a natural relationship that God instituted by creating human beings in his own image. This covenant and its obligations are then, in a standard Reformed move, also identified as the covenant of works, which was meant to lead to the eschatological new creation had the first human pair obeyed. Adam and Eve’s breach of this covenant put the eschatological new creation out of the reach of sinful humanity, which set the stage for the Noahic covenant, which, it seems fair to say, is the hinge on which VanDrunen’s entire biblical theology of the natural law turns.

In the Noahic covenant the original creation covenant is adapted to a world ravaged by sin. God did not make redemptive promises in this covenant but instead unconditionally promised to preserve the world and to withhold final judgment for sin “while the earth remains” (Gen. 8:22 ESV). This covenant of preservation, VanDrunen argues, contains a minimalist natural-law ethic, and because it is made with Noah as a representative of all human beings and with all of creation, this ethic endures until the eschaton. The minimalist natural-law ethic consists of the commands to “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen. 9:1, 7 ESV), to not eat animals with their life still in them (Gen. 9:4), and to exercise proportionate retributive justice (Gen. 9:6). These explicit obligations for all of humanity imply deeper natural-law obligations regarding human sexuality and marriage, the