

revered in Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist traditions alike. Writing of the death of his saintly mother, Augustine recalls the merit of her charitable acts but does not demand “payment” from God like an accountant. Rather, he appeals to God for mercy on the soul of his mother in light of the merciful deeds she had done to others and calls on his fellow Christians to pray for the soul of his mother when gathered for the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is the memorial of the one great payment of all our debt of sin. Augustine does not deny traditional concepts such as merit or the “heavenly treasury,” but he contextualizes them within a theology of the primacy of God’s grace, acknowledging that divine grace precedes our meritorious acts, and thus, while they are truly ours, they are just as truly the gratuitous gift of God. Anderson implies that Augustine’s understanding of merit, purgatory, prayers for the dead, and the “heavenly treasury” could offer a common theology around which Christian traditions, split during the Reformation, could reunite.

Reformational discomfort with “works righteous” and concepts of human merit, combined with (especially German) Protestant domination of biblical studies for the last two centuries, has led to a neglect of the theology of almsgiving and the “heavenly treasury” in Scripture and tradition. We are greatly in Gary Anderson’s debt for pointing out the great importance of almsgiving in biblical piety, the Rabbinic tradition, and the life of the early Church.

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The Artist and the Trinity: Dorothy L. Sayers’ Theology of Work

Christine M. Fletcher

Pickwick Publications, 2013 (141 pages)

It may come as a surprise to readers of this journal that the work of Dorothy Sayers (1893–1957) would have something profoundly meaningful to offer those concerned with “markets and morality” in the twenty-first century. This oversight is understandable: Sayers is known primarily as the witty, sometimes acerbic, but consistently erudite voice of the main character in her widely read detective novels, Lord Peter Wimsey, an English gentleman with a curious propensity for encountering dead bodies and solving crimes in the midst of an otherwise genteel existence.

That was certainly my first impression of Sayers when I began reading these stories in graduate school. When, after consuming every last book in the series, I still felt hungry for more, I returned to the shelf and selected a collection of her essays, *Unpopular Opinions*. There I encountered Sayers the philosopher instead—and was hooked for life. In Sayers, I discovered an author who is a master at dissecting the issues of her age with the depth of a trained theologian, the precision of a skilled surgeon, and the wit of an astute cultural critic. Her contribution to the Anglo-Catholic theological tradition, in particular her theology of work and her efforts to illuminate its Trinitarian underpinnings

and social implications, are of real consequence, especially because her writing is itself the work of a consummate craftsman. Her thought—and her way of expressing it—not only makes for enjoyable reading, but the reader is also introduced to a writer whose insights deserve the attention more often given to those of her contemporaries and friends, C. S. Lewis and G. K. Chesterton.

Thus, Christine M. Fletcher, associate professor of theology at Benedictine University in Lisle, Illinois, has done us all a valuable service by attempting to provide a systematic account of all these elements of Sayers' body of work. The book is an often insightful if somewhat uneven (and grammatically flawed) tribute to a woman whose writings constitute a valuable "lost prophecy" for anyone concerned with the convergence of Christian theology and the meaning of human work and creativity. As one of the first women to graduate from Oxford (she earned a first-class honors degree in medieval literature in 1915), Sayers went on to a lifelong career as a public intellectual and writer not only of plays and novels but also of notable translations of Dante, apt treatments of the Church's creedal statements, and concrete explorations of the doctrine of the Trinity. Professor Fletcher's account reveals an author whose method and aims have particular significance for us today: Sayers identified her basic task as one of translating the jargon of creedal formulae and theological abstractions into modern idiom and the language of human experience. Fletcher shows that this project can be discerned not only in Sayers' theological works, which were mostly commissioned by the Church as a response to the several crises of the period, but is also found in more subtle form in her plays and stories. In Fletcher's account, Sayers is rightly described as a thinker whose main interest is in refuting attacks against Christian doctrine but in ways that relate them to lived experience while rendering them accessible, coherent, and sound.

As the title implies, Fletcher's primary focus is on Sayers' theology of work and its Trinitarian framework; her contention is that Sayers has a valid insight into creativity as a human analogue of the Trinitarian revelation of God. These notions are linked by Sayers' theological anthropology, an account distinguished by its emphasis on man as the *imago dei* as essentially *homo faber*: Man as made in the image of God is first manifest and only fully expressed in his capacity to create—because he is made in the image of a God whose first act is to create. From this initial insight into the Genesis account, Sayers goes on to develop an analogy between the Divine act of creating and the human act of working, relying primarily on the task of the artist to explore the way in which the Trinity is exhibited in the structure of the human person: Her metaphor is of course threefold, consisting in the Creative Idea (the Father), the Creative Energy (the Son), and the Creative Power (the Spirit). Sayers' argument is that a phenomenological account of the human experience of creativity shows that the process mirrors both the essence and the relationality of the Divine persons and that her metaphorical framework renders the mystery both observable and demonstrable.

Fletcher offers a brief and rather unsatisfying treatment of Trinitarian theology in an effort to validate Sayers' own theory and to locate it both historically and in more or less contemporary thinking on the subject. Setting that aside, she does illuminate what may

be Sayers' most important premise: This threefold reality is to be found in every man and woman—and that, therefore, her theology of work has profound implications for education; for employment; and, indeed, for the entire spectrum of economic and political life. Fletcher points out that Sayers is asking us if it cannot be argued that “in confining most people to uncreative activities and an uncreative outlook, we are not doing violence to their very nature.” Not only does work take on real theological and anthropological significance in Sayers' account, but also Fletcher highlights her argument that this understanding of work can only lead to the conclusion that work supersedes the value placed on leisure, which has historically been the aim of educated persons.

In the last section of the book, Fletcher argues that Alasdair MacIntyre's concepts of a *practice* in *After Virtue* and of *human development* in *Dependent Rational Animals* serve to complete Sayers' account of human work, an important and interesting analysis of the convergence between these two thinkers. Fletcher shows that, when taken together, their work constitutes a vision of the significance of human work and of the practice of virtue required to do it well. Such a vision is precisely what those interested in achieving a morally grounded marketplace need to embrace.

However, though Catholic social teaching is given brief mention in the text, notably missing from Fletcher's treatment is any inclusion of Pope John Paul II's profound contribution on the meaning of work found in *Laborem Exercens*. This seems a strange oversight, given its startling congruence with Sayers' own theory and in light of Professor Fletcher's likely familiarity with Catholic social thought. Also missing is any connection with Josef Pieper's thinking in *Leisure as the Basis of Culture*, something that would have served to support Sayers' exploration of the relationship between work and leisure. Perhaps these links can be explored in future research.

It remains true nonetheless that Christine Fletcher's effort to retrieve the work of Dorothy Sayers is of real benefit to all those looking for a coherent account of how to go about making life more human for all. Dorothy Sayers was indeed a prophet, and *The Artist and the Trinity* is an important contribution to the recovery of her voice.

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Global Perspectives on Subsidiarity

Michelle Evans and Augusto Zimmermann (editors)
 New York: Springer, 2014 (223 pages)

The most popular political versions of liberal individualism and collectivism agree on a negative concept of man: They see him mainly as motivated by low-down and short-term desires. Most liberal individualists call this human nature and propose the free market as a way to turn those private vices into public benefits. Most collectivists, on the other hand, believe that human nature does not exist, and that we could transform our so-called nature by changing social institutions using the central power of the state.