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Preview Response

HOW TO BALANCE CULTIVATING VIRTUES WITH GRACE?

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The humanist in me cannot but welcome a focus on virtue, although the word “virtue” occurs only four times in the New Testament (Moulton and Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*, London 1929). The most likely reason is that the NT de-emphasizes human merit and emphasizes divine grace, with Christian qualities the fruit of the Spirit rather than innate. Professor Herdt already shows that she is fully conscious of this; most notably, “infused and cultivated” is a good formula. While there may be good reason to re-emphasize virtue ethics, it requires a fine balance; otherwise, un-deconstructed notions of virtue as merit may easily creep back in. Could the author, therefore, be even more direct and transparent about both sides of this balance, as underpinning her reasoning about the virtues? As mentioned, she already expresses this inside the brief; but maybe the text could state it right from the beginning, as a point of departure?

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