

moral theology, only now the determining factor is not law, but the developing sense of the faithful as they mature in their Christian lives. The old law-bound Church with authority exercised top-down is contrasted with the newly developing Church of the faithful, who live out their lives in authentic discipleship, taking responsibility for their lives and as they grow in maturity. The final figure in Levering's German pantheon, Joseph Ratzinger, although influenced by the German tradition, moves away from conscience-based morality by arguing for a primary level of recollection of God's truth prior to the formation of conscience. Rather than contrasting authority to freedom, Ratzinger argues that freedom is not autonomous, and that the formation of conscience depends upon a truth that is exterior to us, but which accords with our desire for happiness (p. 189).

Levering's book provides a wealth of material which not only helps the reader to assess the role of conscience in contemporary Catholic moral theology, but also provides an overview of key developments in moral theology over the last one hundred years. The conclusion contrasts two contemporary theologians, James F. Keenan SJ and Reinhard Hüter; but I am sure that Levering would be the first to say that there is far more that can be said about where moral theology goes from here. Levering has provided a diagnosis of contemporary moral theology and the problems which come with a one-sided diet. The challenge is now to provide nourishment for the faithful by furnishing a varied diet; rooted in Scripture, tradition and the best of philosophical reflection.

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NEO-ARISTOTELIAN METAPHYSICS AND THE THEOLOGY OF NATURE
edited by William M.R. Simpson, Robert C. Koons, and James Orr, *Routledge*,
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Although by no-means insignificant, the number of Christian theologians and philosophers who embrace neo-Aristotelian metaphysics is still relatively small. One of the goals of this book is, therefore, to encourage a greater interest in neo-Aristotelian metaphysics, and it does this by bringing together a series of sixteen essays that highlight what neo-Aristotelianism has to offer in contemporary debates in the philosophy of science and religion.

Since the rise of the modern scientific world view and the abandonment of Aristotelianism, the Christian world view has come under a lot of pressure. The medieval Church of course had its own struggles to face, but

at least the central tenets of the Christian faith were not obviously unreasonable. For this it had the Christian-Aristotelian synthesis to thank. According to both Christianity and Aristotelian philosophy there was a hierarchy of being. Human beings had a special place in this hierarchy – they were the most superior of the animals since they were endowed with an intellect, yet they were lower than the angels since angels were pure intellects in the Christian-Aristotelian synthesis. And at the top of this hierarchy was God, the being identified with Aristotle's First Mover which ultimately moved everything in accordance with Divine Providence.

Central to this ontological hierarchy was the Aristotelian doctrine of hylomorphism. According to hylomorphism, every kind of being had a form, and every physical being was a composite of both form and matter. Form was the intrinsic principle by which a thing could act, whereas matter was the intrinsic principle by which a thing could be acted upon. Thus, the more formal something was, the higher up the hierarchy it would be since it would be more in command of its own actions and capable of governing the things below it, whereas the more material something was, the lower down it would be since it would be more subject to being governed. In the case of animals, the form of an animated body was the animal's soul, and in particular, human beings had a rational soul. This meant human beings had the capacity to make moral choices and hence be subject to reward or punishment. This Aristotelian picture of moral agency fitted in well with a Christian understanding of sin in which every human person was liable to divine punishment unless he or she was saved by the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. The Aristotelian understanding of embodied human existence also suggested that any true redemption would need to include the human body, and this is just what Christianity offered in its doctrine of the general resurrection.

It is therefore understandable why the Christian world view came under so much pressure when the Aristotelian philosophy that made it seem so reasonable was jettisoned in favour of a mechanistic picture of reality. But according to the editors of this book, many of Aristotle's ideas are now ripe for rehabilitation. Having been cleansed of what was erroneous in Aristotelianism, neo-Aristotelianism presents itself as a serious philosophical position. Not only can it offer a defence for traditional theological beliefs concerning God's providence and the place of humanity in an ontological hierarchy, but neo-Aristotelianism can also provide an antidote to some of the problems that plague the modern mechanistic picture of reality.

This book is split into three parts. The first part is on naturalism and nature, the second part is on mind and nature, and the third part is on God and nature. Although no explicit justification is given for the choice of essay topics, Anna Marmodoro in her epilogue speculates that the editors may have chosen to focus on issues where the Abrahamic theological traditions have come under most pressure from science and non-Aristotelian philosophy. If Marmodoro is correct, then the inclusion of a brief review

of Aristotle's place in these theological traditions would have been very helpful.

The first two essays on naturalism and nature deal with hylomorphism. William Simpson argues in his essay that the phenomenon of quantum entanglement presents a serious challenge to microphysical reductionism, and that it is more amenable to a hylomorphic interpretation. Simpson gives an account of cosmic hylomorphism in which Bohmian mechanics is assumed, and he also gives an account of hylomorphic pluralism in the context of a contextual wave function collapse model that has been recently proposed by the physicists Barbara Drossel and George Ellis.

Robert Koons in his essay also gives an account of hylomorphism, but this time in the context of quantum chemistry and the work of Hans Primas. The accounts of Simpson and Koon are far from the final word on how hylomorphism can be rehabilitated in the light of contemporary physics, but they can be seen as hypotheses that can stimulate further discussion.

As for the relevance of hylomorphism to traditional theism, Koons's discussion of plural holism makes a good case for this. But the relevance of hylomorphism is seen even more clearly in Christopher Hauser's essay on whether human persons continue to exist after death. Hauser defends a position called survivalism, that human persons can continue to exist without their bodies when their soul is separated from the body in death. This contrasts with corruptionism which posits that after death, only the human soul continues to exist, and that the human person will not exist until the time of the general resurrection. In her epilogue, Marmodoro suggests that the perceived counter-intuitiveness of Hauser's survivalist position could be taken as a *reductio ad absurdum* against hylomorphism. However, Thomists who endorse corruptionism would no doubt argue against the soundness of Hauser's argument. It would, therefore, have been nice to see an argument for the corruptionist case that relied on hylomorphism, but it is understandable that limits on space would make it impossible to include every side of a debate.

Another important topic that the book deals with is the hierarchy of being. David Oderberg in his essay considers how one might rehabilitate this hierarchy in a contemporary setting. Oderberg notes that several factors contributed to the demise of Aristotle's ontological hierarchy such as the influence of Protestantism, Romanticism, and the Scientific Revolution. There were indeed problems with how the hierarchy had come to be understood, and so Oderberg considers what underlying principles of the hierarchy can be salvaged to make it seem more plausible to the contemporary metaphysical mind. He presents a formulation in terms of generic powers by which one might order different species in a hierarchy. Again, we should not think of Oderberg's formulation as the final word on the hierarchy of being, but rather as one that should promote further discussion.

Stephen Boulter's essay considers how evolution can be accommodated in a neo-Aristotelian framework. His train of thought suggests that we

should not claim that one kind of being is higher than another, and so he is in clear disagreement with Oderberg's thesis. Likewise, Boulter's account of rationality is rather materialistic and is at odds with essays in part II of the book such as those by Daniel De Haan, Janice Tzuling Chik, and Antonio Ramos-Diaz, which offer a neo-Aristotelian defence of the special kind of existence and activity that belong to rational animals. But it is good that the editors have included Boulter's essay since it shows the diversity of views that can fall under the umbrella of neo-Aristotelianism. And for those looking for accounts of evolution that are more in line with traditional theism, the essays by Alexander Pruss and Simon Maria Kopf in part III of the book argue how a statistical evolutionary process is compatible with a belief in Divine Providence.

In a short review it is not possible to discuss all sixteen essays, but the quality of the essays and their broad scope of topics mean that this book will be of great interest to anyone who wishes to understand how the theology of nature can benefit from a neo-Aristotelian perspective.

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