

perspectives. The Pentecostalist account suggests that they find the structures offered by secular charity law a welcome model to use to structure their own internal bodies; this can be juxtaposed to the scepticism about the effect of these laws seen from a Baptist perspective by Paul Goodliff. In this latter case Goodliff's views seem to come not merely from anxiety about the way in which the regulatory burden of the modern state make the existence of small independent congregations ever more precarious and challenging (though indeed this is a good point) but from a wider sense of Baptist identity as a tradition that has experienced more state persecution than most at almost every stage of its existence from seventeenth-century England to twentieth-century Russia.

The authors all then go on to examine how the *Principles* fit with the legal structures of their own respective traditions. This is not some exercise in bland ecumenism: most authors are happy to acknowledge such a fit, even when a certain amount of benign interpretation is needed to demonstrate that, but also to criticise the Statement when it does not seem to fit well. Three areas stand out in this. The first is the tendency of the Statement to suggest that churches 'may' regulate a particular matter (rather than 'must'), which many feel is a not altogether satisfactory attempt to leave space for the reformation idea that church law is *adiaphora*. The second is the attempt to see legal structures existing at a national and international level, which for some of the reformed traditions appears to contradict the basic ecclesiological idea that the local church is the only theologically significant corporate body – here one may hope that not merely wider contacts within each tradition, but the ecumenical movement itself may lead to a more positive approach. Finally, there is the question whether authority in the church can be exercised by individuals or only by groups. Unsurprisingly, these are all vital questions in ecumenical theology – and church law offers a necessary space for them to be explored.

This volume offers a fascinating collection of essays, which should be required reading for all those interested in canon law, ecclesiology and ecumenism. It opens new horizons in all three disciplines and points to further fascinating conversations. Norman Doe is to be warmly thanked for his work.

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**VIRTUE AND GRACE IN THE THEOLOGY OF THOMAS AQUINAS** by Justin M. Anderson, *Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2020, pp.341, £75.00, hbk*

Contemporary book-length treatments of St Thomas's theological understanding of virtue are surprisingly rare. Justin M. Anderson's monograph

is therefore a welcome and important addition to our understanding of virtue in Aquinas and its place within his theology as a whole. Anderson convincingly argues that understanding Aquinas on virtue requires an engagement with wider theological themes in his writings, such as grace, merit, divine providence, and sin.

The book begins with an excellent general introduction to Aquinas on virtue, pursuing a similar path to Nicholas Austin's *Aquinas on Virtue* in bringing out the physical and metaphysical principles which underpin Aquinas' presentation. In second chapter Anderson shows how Aquinas distinguishes various meanings of virtue through the use of analogy. Aquinas draws a distinction between the full sense of virtue (virtue *simpliciter*) and the various types of virtue that fall short of this full sense (virtue *secundum quid*). Anderson acknowledges the difficulty of constructing a schema covering these various senses of virtue in Aquinas, and to make sense of Aquinas's ordering it is necessary to see that whereas he reserves the use of virtue *simpliciter* to graced, infused virtue, virtue *secundum quid* covers a variety of meanings, some of which at first sight may appear contradictory (see p. 41). By paying attention to how Aquinas distinguishes between these various meanings of virtue *secundum quid* Anderson shows us how Aquinas preserves the full Augustinian sense of virtue as that 'which God works in us without us', while maintaining the possibility of genuine Aristotelian pagan virtue.

In chapter three Anderson traces the medieval development of the distinction between grace and nature and how Aquinas's understanding of the necessity of grace for the beginning of and perseverance in virtue *simpliciter* changed in the light of his reading of St Paul and St Augustine. Acquired virtue may point towards the need for infused virtue, but it is not a first stage in the acquisition of virtue *simpliciter*. For Aquinas, without God's grace we cannot begin our journey towards union with him, nor can we persevere on that journey. It would be wrong, however, to conclude that Aquinas divided his treatment of virtue into a theological treatise on graced, infused virtue and a purely philosophical account of natural, acquired virtue. In order to understand acquired virtue it is necessary to attend to theological topics, such as the effects of sin on human nature and how God governs and orders his creation.

These reflections on grace and nature bring the first part of the book to its end. In the second part Anderson examines in greater depth the conditions for the beginning (chapter four), perseverance in (chapter five), and end of (chapter six) virtue *simpliciter*. These chapters contain a wealth of material for students to develop their understanding of Aquinas's theological understanding of virtue. Anderson shows how in order to understand Aquinas's conception of virtue we need to attend to his theology of grace and merit, placed within wider theological themes such as beatitude and sin. Part three repeats this pattern by presenting the beginning

(chapter seven), perseverance in (chapter eight), and end of virtue *secundum quid*. Anderson argues that while remaining rooted in an Augustinian understanding of grace Aquinas remained optimistic that pagan virtue is possible. To understand Aquinas's position on pagan virtue it is important to keep in mind that when describing the acts of pagans as good Aquinas means good in some respect, not good in the full sense of acts performed through God's grace which thereby merit a share in God's glory. However, although all can be described as good in some respect, not all are virtuous. The further qualifications for an ungraced act to be virtuous are threefold. First, that their ends are ordainable to God as our ultimate end; secondly, that they issue from some good principle in the agent who performs them (Anderson, using the analogy of unformed faith and hope, argues that such good principles need not be virtues themselves, but contain the seeds of virtue; see p. 186); and, thirdly, such acts must be in conformity with right reason.

The possibility of pagan virtue for Aquinas is thus established when we consider the limited nature of the good they achieve. They bring human happiness, but this is not the perfect happiness promised to the faithful who possess sanctifying grace. Anderson here supports the reading of Aquinas on human natural happiness most recently expounded in depth by Lawrence Feingold, and readers who disagree with Feingold's arguments against de Lubac's are unlikely to be won over. For those who accept that some form of pagan virtue is possible, not merely as a hypothesis in some state of pure nature, but in a world corrupted by sin, the difficulty remains to explain how in conditions of sin pagan virtue can develop and be preserved. Here Anderson argues that Aquinas's doctrine of application is key. For Aquinas, not only does God preserve the universe in existence, but through his wise governance he also orders all things to their end. This includes both non-rational and rational agents, and in the case of human beings involves both nature and grace. While not discounting the workings of grace in those who exercise pagan virtue, Anderson argues that on the level of nature, over and beyond God's action in creating and conserving human beings, which applies to all human acts, God sometimes acts to move a person to perform a good act (p. 213). This is the part of the book which is likely to cause most controversy, particularly when Anderson describes God's action as immediate and distinct from the manner in which God is present in all human actions. The text Anderson cites in support of this reading of Aquinas is from *Summa theologiae* Ia q. 82, a. 4, ad. 3., which considers whether the will moves the understanding, but the response here concerns God as the principle of our understanding, not God in select cases using the intellect to move the will.

There is much to praise in Anderson's book, and it opens several avenues for future reflection on Aquinas's theological account of virtue and its relationship to wider theological themes in his writing. There is still much

to explore, but Anderson provides a beginning and much to help us along the way.

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**AN AVANT-GARDE THEOLOGICAL GENERATION: THE NOUVELLE THEOLOGIE AND THE FRENCH CRISIS OF MODERNITY** by Jon Kirwan, *Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2018, pp. viii + 311, £70.00, hbk*

The movement of *ressourcement* continues to attract attention, if, increasingly, of a controversial kind. Since the Second Vatican Council, mainstream Catholic scholarship had assumed that *nouvelle théologie* – a return to the texts and spirit of the Fathers combined with a certain opening to modern philosophy as the Fathers were likewise open to its ancient equivalent – was altogether benign. But a revival of Thomism, notably in the United States and France, has rather dented confidence that this assumption is well-founded: in particular, the lack of an agreed metaphysics in post-Conciliar Catholic theology – of the kind once represented by the *philosophia perennis* – has not assisted clarity in subsequent doctrinal teaching. At the same time, the willingness of theologians from the stable of the journal *Concilium* to argue for real continuity between the *nouvelle théologie* and start-of-the-century Catholic Modernism has removed one of the defences of the theological inspiration behind the Council – namely, that accusations of ‘semi-Modernism’ brought by Roman curialists against the renovation of theological studies in France in the late 1930s were contemptible slinging of mud.

*In France...* France was the centre of this movement, as is indicated to students by the fact that both the phrase ‘*nouvelle théologie*’ and the word ‘*ressourcement*’ so often remain untranslated in English-language accounts, and that despite the ready availability of English equivalents (‘The New Theology’, ‘The Return to the Sources’). Hence the importance of the study under review here which seeks to find an explanation for the emergence of *nouvelle théologie* in inter-generational tensions in French society and culture in the first half of the twentieth century. It would of course be an example of the genetic fallacy to assume that an explanation of the origins of a set of ideas can also count as an adjudication of their truth. Yet the existence of non-theological factors in promoting the success of innovation in theological life must inevitably be taken into account in any assessment of that innovation as a whole.

An ‘Introduction’ rehearses material well enough known to historians of twentieth-century Catholic theology – the role in transforming the atmosphere of theological study played by the French Jesuit theologate at