

Supreme Court should not be trusted with the task of making common law conform to natural law. This task should be left rather to the gradual and discreet moderation of state legislatures. Luke Gormally elegantly employs a teleological understanding of human nature to provide a precise definition of the nature of health and the proper goals of medicine. He steers a course between a value-free account of health as statistically typical bodily function and a subjectivist account in terms of preferences. The role of medical professionals is to preserve or restore the natural human good of bodily health, or to control disabling symptoms; he deliberately sets aside mental illness with no physical component. This definition, Gormally shows, has clear practical consequences.

John Rist provides a refreshingly Platonist complement to a volume largely inspired by the Aristotelian tradition. His historical survey of aesthetic theories shows how Platonism gave Christians from Origen onwards the resources to integrate beauty into their understanding of God and of the created order, and indeed to enrich the account of beauty they inherited by equating it with the personal, trinitarian, God. Rist takes his story on through Kant to Postmodernism, arguing that once created beauty is no longer seen as grounded in the beauty of God, it is only to be expected that art will descend into ugliness or banality. Where great art is produced, however, impersonal or individualistic theories of art will not suffice to explain it. Art that is no longer inspired by divine beauty will no longer itself be a source of genuine inspiration.

A minority of the essays in this substantial volume are rather narrowly specialist or over-concerned with the author's position within a subtle academic debate. The contrast between these and the essay by the then Cardinal Ratzinger is particularly striking: perhaps religion can purify 'reason' also in terms of academic topics and style!

MARGARET ATKINS OSA

**RETHINKING FUNDAMENTAL THEOLOGY** by Gerald O'Collins SJ, *Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2011, pp. xiv + 384, £35, hbk*

Pascal's famous wager is much misunderstood. Pascal was too much of a Catholic to think that faith could ever be a mere act of will, unsustainable by grace. The context of the wager was Catholic France in the seventeenth century where Pascal invites someone to take the first steps in looking for faith by going through the motions, visiting churches, using holy water and so forth. This is as far as the wager goes. Everything after that depends on God's grace.

Gerald O'Collins has been writing on the subject of Theology for so many years that it might seem strange to now engage in a 'Rethinking' of the subject but what he is trying to do is to get back to what fundamental theology really is. The obstacle to doing this, is the tendency to move toward subjects which are closely related, but are not in his view the true foundations. Whether it is philosophical theology, the philosophy of religion or dogmatic theology, to give three of his examples, these are not the essence of foundational theology which lives within the grace of God.

Like Pascal, O'Collins is trying not to dispense with the historical reality, which has grown up around us, and the human situation which has grown with this reality. We live in a building with foundations, we don't live on the foundations themselves. So fundamental theology concerns itself not just with the revelation of God but how that revelation has developed. He goes further than Pascal, in being aware of the wider world of other religious traditions and asks how the revelation of Jesus is to be seen in these traditions. As he puts it, 'the impact on them of the Risen Christ and his Holy Spirit'.

That quotation should leave us in no doubt that this is a work which does not prescind from faith. The likeliness of the truth of the message is not separated from the meaning of the message. At the beginning, and the end of the book, he pays tribute to another Jesuit, Bernard Lonergan and his influential work, *Method in Theology*. From Lonergan, he takes the importance of conversion for any theologian. O'Connell compares theologians to teachers of drama, who should not teach drama unless they are themselves frequent attenders of theatre. This does not quite work as some drama critics happily attend theatre with a view to sharing their sneers with the wider populace. It is true though, that negative criticism is of no value, unless the critic admits the possibility of true greatness in a dramatic performance. We have to believe, if our disbelief is to have any value.

A concern for me in the use of Lonergan, is the way that, at least as he is taught in seminaries, his four buzzwords, 'Experience, Understanding, Judgement and Decision', can suggest a linear approach. We understand our experience, judge our understanding and decide on that basis. So for decades, seminarians have come out of their colleges, chanting the acronym, 'EUJD', often forgetting what the letters stand for. (They sometimes don't know what INRI means either).

Yet as St Thomas says, '*voluntas et intellectus mutuo se includunt, nam intellectus intelligit voluntatem, et voluntas vult intellectum intelligere*' (I q. 16 a. 4 ad 1). 'Will and understanding include each other, for the understanding understands the will, and the will wants to understand our understanding'. To put it simply, knowledge precedes love but then love precedes knowledge. In terms of Lonergan's work, we can go from experience to decision but we also have to decide what we will experience. Pascal's wager is a call for a decision.

In practice, *Rethinking Fundamental Theology* in its survey of the ways we come to revelation bears witness to the interpenetration of our understanding and our desires. It is written in a specific sequence, but any book has been written in a sequence, because books are material objects. How we understand a book, after we have read it, brings us into that interpenetration of thought and love which comes from our being images of the Trinity.

The book is packed with the extensive learning and wisdom that Fr O'Collins has acquired in his long career. Much of his work has been on Christology and in this book, the resurrected Jesus, is seen as the fullness of revelation. It is the Resurrection which gives credence to that revelation. Christ reveals and we can find that revelation through a faith in him. In reaching out to the larger world, we can find the presence of Jesus in other religions, and if we have faith, we should expect to find him there, a finding which continues throughout history.

EUAN MARLEY OP

**GEORGE AMIROUTZES: THE PHILOSOPHER AND HIS TRACTATES** by John Monfasani, *Peeters, Leuven-Paris-Walpole MA, 2011, pp. vi + 211, € 45, pbk*

The story behind John Monfasani's recent publications on George Amiroutzes is worth retelling by way of an introduction in this review: it is of an enviably dramatic nature. Until very recently, Amiroutzes's known works were very few, and the main work, the *Dialogus de fide*, was known only through a Renaissance Latin translation. Monfasani's work has changed all that. Asked to review the edition of the *Dialogus de fide* published in 2000 by Oscar de la Cruz Palma, Monfasani started on a voyage of discovery. First, he was able to rediscover the fifth part of the Latin translation itself: the edition was based on the translator's autograph manuscript, located in Paris, from which a fifth of the text was missing. Monfasani realised that three Vatican manuscripts contained the full text, and