

death, argued that Aquinas's account of motion did not depend upon resistance, whilst Wallace's 1956 *The Thomist* article dealt in detail with Newtonian-based objections to the first way. Similarly, Malcolm's 1979 *Journal of the History of Philosophy* article challenged Geach's thesis that Aquinas *only* availed of the inherence theory of predication. On the contrary Aquinas used the identity theory at times, particularly when discussing God e.g. *ST* Ia q. 13 art. 12, yet O'Grady makes no reference to this.

Still it is unrealistic to expect a book to address every topic in precisely the way its reader would wish and in the final analysis O'Grady's book is excellent. Let us hope he produces the work on Aquinas's philosophical theology he hints at near the end of this one.

DOMINIC RYAN OP

**THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF GOD: A PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION FOR FAITH**  
by Keith Ward, *Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2017, pp. vi + 229, £24.99, pbk*

Early in this book Keith Ward makes the following claim: 'One thing that philosophy can teach us is that reality is ambiguous and its nature difficult to discern' (p.14). Grand explanatory accounts, for example, might exhibit internal coherence and be sufficiently credible to attract adherents, and yet be mutually incompatible on many points. In the spirit of this, Ward's approach is largely to put forward his own preferred account and to allow its merits to speak for themselves. Although he engages with his opponents, especially when establishing the foundations of his own position, for the most part he does not get caught up in the myriad of controversies that each step of his argument might provoke. This book focuses mainly on presenting us with Ward's own big-picture account.

Ward's view of the Christian idea of God is founded on idealism, the view that matter cannot exist without mind and depends on mind for existence. Put like this, pretty much all theists might be construed as idealists. What makes Ward's position more distinctively idealist is the priority given to mind and the extent to which he focuses on mind in his explanatory account. This puts Ward at odds with the current general philosophical climate. Whereas much modern thought, bewitched by a narrow conception of science, veers in the direction of materialism, even to the extent of sometimes raising doubts about the distinctiveness of the mental, Ward tackles this bias head-on.

For a start, a sceptic might doubt the existence of an external world; but, as Ward points out, not even such a sceptic can doubt the reality of mental experience for the simple reason that we experience the

mental even in the act of doubting. Not that Ward is sceptical about the reality of matter. His concern, rather, is to challenge the physicalist bias of much modern thought. Why is it that moderns tend to find the physical relatively unproblematic from a philosophical point of view, but raise doubts about the mental? Pushing this further: Why do most philosophers try to explain the mental in terms of the physical, and not *vice versa*? After all, it is the mental that we experience in direct fashion, but (arguably) not the physical. Unsurprisingly, Ward is not shy in pointing out that according to orthodox interpretations of quantum mechanics, what constitutes the physical is not without its own mysteries.

This sets the scene for what is perhaps the central move in Ward's overall anti-physicalist, idealist, account. The basic question is: If many philosophers simply accept that matter in some way produces minds, then why do so many dismiss that minds could in some way produce matter? Add to this the view that minds can have reasons whereas matter does not, then Ward is able to lay down the gauntlet to the physicalist: 'to me at least it is easier to think of a supreme mind conceiving of possible universes from which finite minds could emerge, and then bringing one or more such universes into being, than to think of blind, unconscious, and apparently rule-bound matter suddenly, unforeseeably, and unexpectedly producing conscious and intelligent beings' (p.76).

In other words, to explain in purely physicalist terms the existence of a universe containing conscious beings like ourselves is to give little informative explanation, apart from asserting some brute facts and a massive cosmic coincidence; whereas to start from the mental is to begin from what is most immediate to us and what allows the philosopher to move towards an explanation in terms of reasons and purpose. And since the nature of the universe suggests the existence of such reasons and purpose, due to the high degree of organisation and what looks like fine-tuning of physical properties to allow conscious beings to come into existence, Ward confidently asserts the existence of a supreme creator mind that is God.

True to his theistic commitments, Ward believes that God does not need to create matter, since God is complete and self-sufficient in himself. Matter is, however, required for human minds to interact with their environment. For Ward matter also allows the Creator God to interact with his creation through creatures like us. In this God's engagement with the universe is not only a self-giving but also a self-realisation in which he realises possibilities that are eternally present in the divine being. In this God comes to experience forms of value that otherwise would not have been actualised. God therefore gives up the pure bliss of own internal life in order to experience values that come into existence through creation (p.195).

The Thomist would want to press Ward hard on many points, for example why he does not give greater consideration to the simple argument

that if God is the creator of all things, then God must be radically different (in a strong sense) from any created thing and not be part of the created universe in any way. To be fair, Ward acknowledges the serious limits of our knowledge of God. The inner life of God in Himself is, he asserts: ‘beautiful and amazing and intricate and glorious, but it is far beyond anything we can imagine’ (p.127). But what in Ward’s philosophical framework justifies this claim? At various points later in this book I was not sure when and to what extent Ward relies on philosophy or on his own Christian beliefs.

The atheist with empiricist leanings would also press Ward hard, in particular regarding his trust in the existence of value on the basis of experience. Even though Ward acknowledges that his arguments do not constitute demonstrative proof (p. 57), there seems little if any awareness of recent discussions around value-scepticism, for example the debate between Gilbert Harman and Nicholas Sturgeon on whether moral properties are explanatorily redundant. Since some of the force of Ward’s overall account relies on the reality of value, this strikes me as a gap in his overall case.

In a short review it is impossible to do justice to this engaging, often highly insightful, and sometimes provocative book. I have, for example, said little about how Ward brings his conception of God to bear on the tenets of specifically Christian doctrine. Whilst Ward certainly provides an interesting account of this, the main achievement of this book, it seems to me, resides in the areas I have discussed. Undoubtedly, the Thomist, and not just the atheist, would wish to take issue with much of what Ward puts forward. But Ward’s case for the existence of God is as fine as any modern attempt at this I have encountered, and he is clearly a Christian philosopher who looks at big questions with rigour and creativity. Even when one disagrees with him, he gives much to think about.

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**MATERIAL EUCHARIST** by David Grumett, *Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2016, pp. xi + 322, £75.00, hbk*

According to David Grumett, systematic theology has often neglected the material aspect of the Eucharist, removing it from the lived faith of Christians. The Eucharist, he affirms, connects flesh-and-blood Christians with the flesh-and-blood Christ, drawing them into his life, death and resurrection. Offering a ‘constructive theology’, rather than systematic, this book connects doctrine and liturgy while aiming for ‘an embodied sacramental realism rooted in material life’ (p. 12). This is also an antidote to secular materialism, whether the Marxist determinist