

theology. Farrer's fondness for forsaking the footnote makes difficult the task of situating his work in relation to its sources and even its intended interlocutors (cf. p. 216). One way to do this might be to track his published book reviews in relation to his published works. This is facilitated by the helpful bibliography annexed to the volume (pp. 221-22). For instance, it is interesting that his first review published is that of Erich Przywara's *Polarity* (1935). Telling from this index list, he also worked on Barth, John Hick, and Josef Pieper. One may reasonably expect such engagements, but this tool furnishes a more precise navigation. Observations made in this volume regarding the importance of continental personalist ethics are confirmed and deepened by his evident keen interest in French philosophical theology; he reviewed Ortega's seminal *Philosophie de la religion* in 1939. The index is exhaustive, providing future readers a master bibliography of Farrer's publications and those dedicated to him.

It is worth highlighting by way of conclusion that the contributors of this volume exemplify an important methodology for studying Farrer. As has been fruitfully established in the study of Augustine's works, Farrer developed many of his towering philosophical ideas in the context of sermons. This dynamic itself might merit further, explicit study, and it certainly sets the tone for future scholars wishing to deal with Farrer's thinking in new contexts, whether they be pastoral, theological, scientific or literary.

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Christopher Landau, *A Theology of Disagreement: New Testament Ethics for Ecclesial Conflicts* (London: SCM Press, 2021), pp. 240. ISBN 978-0334060451.  
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The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby's phrase, 'good disagreement', is both stimulating and provocative. Stimulating because, given the state of violent disagreement among Anglicans, we are bound to ask, 'What style of disagreement is acceptable among Christians?' But the phrase is also provocative, because the word 'good' is just not *good* enough to characterize the kind of disagreement that, as Christians, we should aspire to have, given that disagreement there is going to be.

Others have attempted to improve on the mantra 'good disagreement'. Landau mentions Andrew Atherstone and Andrew Goddard's edited volume *Good Disagreement: Grace and Truth in a Divided Church* (Lion Books, 2015). The contributors gather around the theme 'disagreeing with grace' which acknowledges our dependence upon God in this matter, which Landau also wants to underline. He also knows of the collection *The Morally Divided Body: Ethical Disagreement and the Disunity of the Body*, edited by Michael Root and James Buckley (Cascade Books, 2012), but he does not cite Susan K. Wood's powerful contribution which

would have seconded his thesis. Investigating the connection between ethics and ecclesiology, the moral body and the eucharistic body, Wood shows that the deep Christian divisions over moral teaching raise the question whether the church can fulfil its God-given mission. 'A morally divided body creates serious cognitive dissonance with the sacrament that represents the moral life in completion.'

Landau apparently does not know *Sex, Moral Teaching, and the Unity of the Church: A Study of the Episcopal Church* (Morehouse Publishing, 2014), where Timothy F. Sedgwick provides a profound vision of the path to the healing of division through moral discernment in place of inconclusive binary arguments about 'who's right' and 'who's wrong'. Sedgwick insists that we need to ask, 'How do we teach?' and 'How do we learn?', in other words to reflect on the Church's methods of moral pedagogy in the area of moral truth. In turn, our structures of moral authority in oversight (*episkopé*) must be shaped by the pedagogy of moral insight in place of political and ideological posturing. The organic process of moral shaping is always inter-personal and communal and therefore carries with it an imperative towards unity. In *Disagreeing Virtuously: Religious Conflict in Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Eerdmans, 2017) Olli-Pekka Vainio moves from the theology of grace to philosophical ethics. The grace of God, working through human channels, does not bypass ethical virtue, but is at home with it, strengthening and directing it. Landau agrees, but does not mention this book. If Landau misses a few tricks and does not seem to be fully up to date with some useful resources, it is partly because his approach is different to theirs.

What kind of 'theology' is *A Theology of Disagreement* intended to be: systematic? historical? philosophical? practical? None of the above apparently. It is more of a biblical theology than any other kind, though insight from extra-biblical Christian resources is welcomed in principle. Landau's argument takes its rise from his response to Richard B. Hays' classic *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (T & T Clark, 1996) and Landau spars with Hays all the way through, excessively, though he understandably finds fault with Hays's approach for a procrustean hermeneutic that excludes both inconvenient biblical texts and insight from non-biblical sources.

Landau works through extensive biblical material from the Gospels and Epistles to see how Jesus and Paul dealt with disagreement. In spite of the wealth of exposition that Landau provides, his method here is flawed in two ways. First, the texts are mainly taken at face value, without critical, contextual probing into what may lie behind them in the transmission and shaping of the Gospel narratives within the histories of early Christian communities. For example, a snippet from the Synoptics will be naively related to the Pauline image of the body of Christ. Secondly, not all the examples given from the New Testament are of disagreements; some are simply conversations, examples of human interaction and inter-personal rapport (e.g. Jesus and the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well in Jn 4). In addition, Landau concedes that there are examples of Jesus dealing angrily, scornfully and provocatively with opponents. He points out that these are situations where the mission of Jesus with regard to the coming of the reign of God was being fundamentally challenged, and not pastoral situations with needy people or teaching opportunities

for the disciples. This anomaly needed addressing in relation to the Evangelists' possible rationales for their inclusion and their portrayal of the character of Christ. Incidentally, Landau speaks repeatedly of the 'biography' of Jesus in the Gospels and of the 'narrative' status of the love-commandment texts, which – without denying that there are biographical elements in the Gospels or that a narrative-genre approach has its place – does not strike quite the right note. What the author may be groping for is the theological-ethical concept of the 'character of Christ'.

Landau rightly points to the double love commandment (God and neighbour) in Mt. 22.36-40, reinforced by the 'new commandment' that Jesus gives his disciples in Jn 13.34-35, that they should love one another as he has loved them. However, Landau does not examine the meanings of 'love', or expound its cognitive, conative and affective dimensions. He does not point out that love is essentially a steadfast disposition and intention of the will to seek the good, the well-being, of the other. It is not possible to do this while disrespecting, insulting and caricaturing the other, as we find in so much intra-Christian discourse.

A major strength of the book is that it brings us back to the love commandment that runs, in various forms, throughout the New Testament. In practice love does not form the reference point for disagreeing Christians. They do not speak or act in love but in hate. A related concern is that all too often disagreeing Christians ignore the place given to the Holy Spirit – the pneumatological dimension. Are all parties who are engaged in disagreements overtly dependent on the Holy Spirit of God? If they were, it is implied, disagreements would be kinder and more loving. But are the Pentecostal churches and other charismatic communities, for whom the Holy Spirit is pivotal to their faith, any less prone to bitter and divisive disagreements? I think not. Looking to the Holy Spirit cannot be a panacea; it cannot override other factors that need to be addressed. Another strength is the emphasis given to various practices of church life, especially liturgical worship, as inculcating in us a virtuous response to disagreement. Yes, liturgy is a building block, but liturgical churches are not preserved from damaging disagreements by their liturgies.

Finally, the febleness of mere exhortations to 'good' or even 'gracious', 'virtuous' or 'loving' disagreement is exposed when one is dealing with professing Christians who will not even sit down to talk to those with whom they disagree, as the episcopal absences from the 2008 Lambeth Conference revealed. An even more dire situation is created when they condemn to hell those with whom they disagree (usually on questions of gender and sexuality). This is sometimes the case on the extreme right wing of the Anglican Communion,<sup>1</sup> and is a posture which invites an adaptation of Jean-Paul Sartre's saying, 'L'enfer c'est les autres': 'Hell is [for] other people'.

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<sup>1</sup>See Charles Raven (ed.), *The Truth Shall Set You Free: Global Anglicans in the 21st Century* (London: The Latimer Trust, 2014).