

the Gospel of alien influences' (p. 44). Meredith juxtaposes St Paul's rhetorical *tour de force* in *1st Corinthians* with the Apostle's proof of the existence of God in *Romans* (1, 19–21) whereby St Paul's argumentation, as Meredith indicates, is borrowed from the Stoics.

Armed with a watchful eye on a common scholarly propensity to homogenise views and attitudes towards the question of christian philosophy in the early church, Meredith invites his reader to a journey along the Patristic age and beyond. Notable legs of the journey are Alexandrian Judaism and Hellenism that together left the christian Church with the legacy of Philo. Other Alexandrian ports of call are the contributions of Clement and Origen. The Latin West is explored as well, and here the towering figures are of course Tertullian and St Augustine. An important bonus is Meredith's fourth chapter, 'The Influence of Philosophy on the Language and Thought of the Council', which makes it its business to outline the ways in which philosophy was at work during the stormy period of doctrinal controversies from the Council of Nicaea (325) to the Council of Chalcedon (451). The book concludes with an appendix that, like the preceding chapters, treats with brevity, lucidity and with a debonair elegance St Thomas Aquinas's distinction between theology and philosophy which – as Meredith does not neglect to mention – was made about the same time that St Bonaventure wrote his fairly Platonic *The Ascent of the Mind to God*.

In conclusion, this is a very useful tool for Patristics, philosophy and church history students and is likely to become a standard book in those fields.

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THOMISM IN JOHN OWEN by Christopher Cleveland, *Ashgate*, Farnham, 2013, pp. xi + 173, £50, hbk

Typically the work of St. Thomas Aquinas has been regarded as a paradigmatic example of Catholic orthodoxy. As a result, one would not expect it to have influenced any Reformation theology. Christopher Cleveland, however, contends that it did, so in *Thomism in John Owen*, Cleveland documents the extent to which the reformation theologian John Owen (1616–1683) drew on elements of Thomas's work in his own theological project.

Cleveland divides the book into six chapters. In the first chapter Cleveland introduces the work, setting Owen's thought in its scholarly context. Cleveland also distinguishes four ways in which he thinks Aquinas's work influenced Owen: 'direct quotation' (p.3), 'the use of a Thomistic theological concept, with identical or similar terminology to Thomas or Thomist authors' (*ibid.*), 'the use of similar but not identical principles' (*ibid.*), and 'times at which Owen and Thomas merely coincide in their thoughts' (*ibid.*). Cleveland identifies three areas to which such influence can be traced: Aquinas's 'concept of God as pure act of being' (p.4), 'the concept of infused habits of grace' (*ibid.*), and 'the Thomistic understanding of the hypostatic union' (*ibid.*).

The four chapters that follow then discuss how Cleveland thinks Aquinas's work in these areas influenced Owen. Hence the second chapter examines the use Owen made of St. Thomas's concept of God as pure act of being. It shows Owen using this idea to argue the divine will cannot change, for divine premotion, and for perseverance through grace. Chapters three and four discuss the role of infused habits in Owen's theology. Chapter three introduces the account of habits found in Aristotle and Aquinas and then goes on to show how Owen employed infused habits in his account of regeneration. Chapter four extends the analysis

into Owen's account of sanctification. Chapter five discusses the influence of Thomism on Owen's Christology. Chapter six concludes the study, providing summary and overview.

As one reads Cleveland's book the manner and frequency with which Owen availed of Aquinas's work and of the work of Thomists who followed Aquinas is striking. And on that basis, certainly, one must accept in some sense Aquinas's work influenced Owen. But deciding whether that influence accurately reflected Aquinas's thought or the thought of Aquinas's Thomistic successors is a more difficult task. It forces us to think about what Aquinas meant in the passages Owen cited and drew on, how Aquinas's thought relates to its sources and to its intellectual context, which sense of 'influence' Cleveland is employing in a given discussion, and then repeat much of that process in relation to Aquinas's Thomistic successors.

At times, certainly, Cleveland is right; there do seem to be genuine cases of Aquinas influencing Owen. Thus in chapter two, for example, when Cleveland discusses Owen's argument that God's will cannot change because God is pure act and consequently God cannot change, we do seem to have a good example of Aquinas genuinely influencing Owen. Other times, however, Cleveland is less convincing. For example, when Cleveland discusses Owen's view 'unless it is argued that man needs grace to do good, one falls into Pelagianism' (p. 49), it is not clear whether we should understand Owen's view to mean (a) 'every good action requires grace' or (b) 'every meritorious good action requires grace'. The two claims are different; Aquinas takes different views in regard to them and it would be contentious to employ Aquinas's view 'every creature needs the power of divine movement to enable it to act' (*ibid.*) in support of (a) without further argument. Consequently, absent of clarification it is difficult to assess whether Aquinas's work provides the support for Owen's view that Cleveland thinks it does.

To his credit, Cleveland readily acknowledges that there are differences between Aquinas and Owen, highlighting as examples Owen's rejection of the sacramental principle *ex opere operato* (p.52), and Aquinas and Owen's 'directly contradictory views on justification' (p.119). Despite these differences, Cleveland thinks 'the thought of Thomas Aquinas on infused habits and virtues played a major role in John Owen's formulation of the infused habit of grace' (p.116). But if sacraments are not efficacious causes of grace, infused habits 'can have no place in justification' (p.92), and justification 'brings about no internal change in the individual' (p.91), then we are a long way from Aquinas's account of infused habits. Consequently, one is entitled to question whether there is any reasonable sense of 'influence' in which Aquinas influenced Owen's views in these matters.

Cleveland has written an interesting book. He succeeds in showing that Owen availed of Aquinas's work frequently and consequently we can say Aquinas influenced Owen. Cleveland also succeeds in showing that at times Owen used Aquinas's work in a way that legitimately reflected Aquinas's thought. And that is worth saying, even if at other times Owen did not use Aquinas's work in a way that legitimately reflected Aquinas's thought.

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