

rejecting a historical Fall, they have reduced nature to evil, excluded infants from the need for Christ, or failed in some other way. On Houck's view, we are all by nature turned to God, but without the supernatural means to meet our heavenly goal, and it is a humanity naturally lacking grace that is transmitted by human generation. Such a view of original sin, set out in chapter seven, is also compatible with the challenges from evolution which Houck outlines in chapter six, since original sin is a lack of grace rather than a corruption of nature or DNA. Admittedly this is a far easier task than facing the challenges of evolution to a historical Fall, such as the question of monogenism and polygenism, on which Houck gives some pointers.

Houck's final chapter, where he responds to what he supposes to be relevant objections to his proposal, takes him wide off course. I was surprised he devoted space to a possible incompatibility of his theory with de Lubac's notion of natural desire for the supernatural – a consequence which would surely strike no careful reader. My own concerns were more closely tied to original sin itself. Although Houck speaks of it as a 'privation' (p. 201), he in fact seems to regard it as a lack rather than a loss. Though he speaks of it, even in infants, as 'a sinful act of being' (p. 219), he does not treat it in terms of being turned away from God, as Aquinas does. Instead he derives from Aquinas the view that the 'formal cause of original sin' is 'the natural orientation to nature's author' (p. 202). Such a lack as Houck proposes at the point of origin of each one of us may be 'original' – but is it 'sin'?

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THEOSOMNIA: A CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY OF SLEEP by Andrew Bishop,
Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London, 2018, pp. 168, £45.00, pbk

In question thirty-eight of the *Prima Secundae*, Thomas Aquinas quotes a hymn from Ambrose that says 'Sleep restores the tired limbs to labor, refreshes the weary mind, and banishes sorrow' (*Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 38, a. 5 s.c.). Thus, alongside a hot bath, Thomas wisely lists sleep among the primary remedies for sorrow and pain, though he hardly could have grasped just how far this is true. In recent decades, an explosion of scientific discoveries has transformed our understanding of sleep from a mere 'privation of waking', as Aristotle put it (*De Somno*, 453b25) to one of the most important, complex, and beneficial processes undertaken by the human body. While this has evoked renewed interest in the significance of sleep across a range of disciplines, theology has not been prominent

among them. Andrew Bishop, Priest-in-charge of Croydon Minster, London, has set out to correct this oversight. He points out that if systematic theologians have not tended to devote sustained attention to sleep, the same cannot be said for Christian traditions of liturgy and prayer, and he therefore takes the latter as his primary source material in this timely monograph.

The introduction illustrates well both the promise of Bishop's chosen topic and the limitations of his study. He argues that any phenomenon of central importance to human life is worthy of theological reflection and that some, such as food and sex, are subjects of exhaustive consideration, despite occupying substantially less time than sleep. If, as Aquinas put it when discussing sleep, 'every good disposition of the body reacts somewhat on the heart' (*STI-II*, q. 38, a. 5 *ad 3*), then sleep ought to garner more of our attention. While he is clearly aware of its importance, Bishop's engagement with the literature on sleep itself is limited. He rightly notes the centrality of neuroscience in contemporary sleep studies, but only scratches the surface of the insights it has to offer. Similarly, he tells us that philosophers have written on sleep but relays very little of what they actually wrote. Much more could have been said on this topic, including discussion of medieval commentaries on Aristotle and the work of thinkers as diverse as Kant, Bergson, and Freud. Bishop suggests, citing an Oxford *Very Short Introduction*, that the question of 'why we sleep' remains unresolved. Yet numerous recent scientific studies, none of which appears in his bibliography, show that sleep is essential to the immune system, digestive and cardiovascular health, cognitive and emotional intelligence, the regulation of both appetite and emotion, the consolidation of memory and creativity, and the acquisition of new skills, among other things. Far from wondering why we sleep, today's researchers are likely to question why we wake up.

Taking sleep as a theme of (often metaphorical) use and reflection in Scripture and portions of the Christian tradition, Bishop's study unfolds across four main chapters on preparation for sleep, sleep itself, vigilance in the night, and waking. The first chapter emphasizes sleep as gift: a state of grace that cannot be willed, but is received under the right conditions. Bishop notes that, in certain theological traditions and liturgies, sleep is confused with sloth—an error that he equates with mistaking grace for indulgence. Following Karl Rahner, he offers an alternative view of sleep that mirrors the inner structure of prayer. Trusting and letting go, in sleep we accept our biological rhythms as in prayer we accept God's providence. This has ramifications for how we prepare for sleep, directing us to practices of recollection and confession, entrusting God to preserve us from dangers and guard our dreams in the night. Bishop sees these insights exemplified in the structure of compline.

Chapter two considers sleep itself through the contrasting figures of Jonah and Jesus, highlighting the fact that, although sleep can be a means of avoidance or dereliction, it can and should embody *shalom*, a

participation in Sabbath rest that stems from intimacy with God. In the hands of mystics such as Gregory the Great, Thérèse of Lisieux, and Bernard of Clairvaux, the sleep of Christ takes on deeper figurative significance, illuminating the nature of contemplation in terms of silence, illumination, and embrace. Most intriguing is Bishop's discussion of Augustine on the role of memory and self-image in the construction of personal identity and the ways that these are unsettled by sleep. While sleep loosens the power of the will to uphold fabricated self-identities, it also places us in interactive contact with images drawn from our waking lives beyond our conscious control, raising the question, 'which is my true face: my waking or my sleeping face?' (p. 77). Sleep is a poignant testament to the limited control we wield over our own lives; a limitation which Bishop sees as an opportunity for greater receptivity to God.

Chapter three turns to vigilance in the night and the variety of negative theological associations with sleep. (Aquinas comments similarly on the biblical polyvalence of 'sleep' in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, ch. 11, lect. 3, §1495). In parables, theological reflections, and liturgy, sleep frequently stands for a lack of watchfulness and expectation. By contrast, vigils are habits that intrude upon our sleep as expressions of our longing for a promise not yet fulfilled. Far from restlessness or insomnia, vigilance is an eschatological posture of self-denial and hope. The error of the disciples in Gethsemane was not that they slept, but that in sleeping they failed to pray. If, as much of the tradition has it, sleep is a kind of death, chapter four considers waking in terms of resurrection. Bishop considers the state between death and resurrection and the nature of resurrected embodiment, arguing that the Pauline imagery of sleeping and waking offers an inaugurated eschatology in which we are awakened to resurrection through baptism, even while we await our final awakening from which sleep will issue no more.

Despite the promising subject matter, the nature of Bishop's project remains ambiguous. While he claims to offer a systematic treatment of the theology of sleep (pp.13–14), he also appears to question whether such a thing is possible or desirable (p.11). This ambiguity marks the book throughout, which reads more as a commentary on an eclectic range of biblical, liturgical, and theological texts and images than as a sustained and systematic theological proposal. This is particularly noticeable in his exegetical approach, where he frequently cites a range of commentators without attempting a critical synthesis. At times, this disjointed theological approach combines with his limited engagement with sleep studies to derail his argument. For example, Bishop mentions the early-modern European practice of sleeping in two distinct intervals with a period of waking in the middle of the night as if it were the natural practice of all pre-modern humans. He cites this as a possible context for understanding *Psalms* 63:6. However, we have no evidence of a single pre-industrial culture exhibiting this practice, which suggests that it was a Victorian cultural

fad rather than a natural biological rhythm. It is highly unlikely to be the background to an ancient Psalm.

In his conclusion, Bishop's pastoral gifts are on display as his reflections helpfully touch ground in issues of ethical and practical import, offering insights worthy of more prominent treatment in the central chapters. Given its shortcomings, the value of the book lies primarily in the sources it compiles, the themes it highlights, and the questions it raises. Nevertheless, we can be grateful to Bishop for undertaking this creative and pioneering work on the subject.

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF BEING IN THE ANALYTIC, CONTINENTAL, AND THOMISTIC TRADITIONS: DIVERGENCE AND DIALOGUE by Joseph P. Li Vecchi, Frank Scalabrino, and David K. Kovacs, *Bloomsbury Academic*, London, 2020, pp. 208, £85.00, hbk

Since the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, and particularly his *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (1988) and *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (1990), we have become more sensitive to the 'tradition-constituted' character of rationality. Even if we do not accept MacIntyre's view in its entirety, we must be attentive to the ways that philosophical inquiries are always bound up in actual communities and the ways that those communities pass on questions and modes of inquiry, shaping the very intuitions of those who become and are informed by that tradition. In addition to good arguments and clear thinking, we must attend to the history of a tradition and its discourses, the actual persons who have formed what that tradition takes to be foundational, and the material elements, the specific works or texts, that either explicitly or implicitly form and inform that tradition's philosophical output.

The work under review here, while not aiming at as grand a vision as MacIntyre's, may well be seen as a practical engagement with how one might begin a philosophical discussion across traditions while being attentive to the particular history and character of each tradition. *The Philosophy of Being in the Analytic, Continental, and Thomistic Traditions: Divergence and Dialogue*, is co-authored by philosophers representing three 'rival versions' of inquiry into *being*: Joseph Li Vecchi, an assistant professor at the University of Akron, representing Thomism; Frank Scalabrino, a registered psychotherapist and professor of philosophy and psychology, representing the Continental Tradition (always presented in capital letters); and David K. Kovacs, postdoctoral fellow at Loyola Marymount