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Neil Messer, *Flourishing: Health, Disease, and Bioethics in Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013), pp. 256. \$35.00.

Issues of health, including disease, illness and general physical and mental well-being, are among the most pertinent and fundamental issues to the living of any life. Having the ability to impact almost everything about the lives we lead, and our ability to enjoy life's benefits, issues of health are not only of practical importance to individuals, but to the church, and thereby provide important grounds for engagement between life and theological belief and faith. Neil Messer provides a theological examination of disease, illness and disability, alongside surrounding bioethical issues, and attempts to equip Christians for engagement with these issues by establishing the unique contributions of Christian theology to these debates. Messer does this with intelligence and sensitivity, and makes important contributions to Christian engagement with the bioethical issues surrounding health and disease.

Messer's unique contributions to a theological perspective of health, disease and bioethics are primarily contained within the sixteen theses he articulates in chapter 4, but the first three chapters serve as the necessary building blocks for these conclusions. Chapter 1 undertakes a literature review framed by contrasting definitions of health provided by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Christopher Boorse. The WHO defines health as not simply being free from disease but also asserts the attainment of well-being, while Boorse's biostatistical model states that health is determined by the extent to which it is without disease and illness. Through a highly interdisciplinary approach which examines evolutionary biology, Aristotelian teleology, the capabilities approach, and issues of embodiment, Messer begins to formulate a theological understanding of health primarily concerned with flourishing in light of one's ability to grow as a part of God's creation. Chapter 2 continues this theme by identifying concepts within disability studies which inspire consideration of what it truly means for humanity to flourish. This understanding challenges traditional assumptions about the quality of life of others and compels an enlarged understanding of what it means to live a flourishing life. Chapter 3 represents an important turning point in Messer's overall project by incorporating scripture and Christian theology. Messer examines healing and caring for the sick within scripture and the Christian tradition, while also acknowledging humility in the face

of pain and suffering. Central to Messer's argument is the integration of Karl Barth's theology of creation and a teleological grounding established by Thomas Aquinas. In chapter 4 Messer articulates the sixteen theses he intends to guide Christians in issues of health, disease and bioethics. Incorporating Barth and Aquinas, Messer makes clear that health is properly understood as a penultimate good, and ultimate union with God is our primary end. Jesus Christ is the lens through which health and illness is interpreted, and our conception of human flourishing, as well as the utilisation of science and medicine, must be understood in that light.

Messer maintains the dignity of life throughout this book, and importantly urges readers to recognise the dignity and worth of others. Particularly demonstrated in his engagement with disability, Messer challenges readers to acknowledge diversity in life. Though unstated by Messer, a point which would complement these assertions is that certain realities of life such as disease, illness, disability and death must not be shielded from everyday view. Too often disease, illness and death are confined to hospitals, and people with disabilities are on the fringes of society. These are realities of life, and Christians must be prepared to act with courage and love towards all. Messer provides an important contribution to theological engagement with bioethics and, in the process, challenges Christians to consider their own reactions to the significant topics of health, disease, disability and death.

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Michael Banner, *The Ethics of Everyday Life: Moral Theology, Social Anthropology, and the Imagination of the Human* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. xiv+224. £20.00 (hbk).

In this volume, Michael Banner engages with social anthropology to resource an approach to moral theology he calls an 'everyday ethics'. He argues that Christian ethics is misconceived when it is conducted as a response to 'hard cases', for an over-emphasis on such questions neglects the significance of 'the social context of our ethical actions' (p. 8). The 'hard case' tradition, Banner argues, identifies the good and the bad without locating either in 'psychologically and socioculturally realistic' narratives (p. 12). He thus advocates a dialogue with social anthropology to enable a more adequate approach by Christian ethicists to the social contexts in which human actions have their appeal and meaning. Anthropology,