which he associates with the great hunger of the human heart, and the critical importance that doctrine and religious practice have in responding to that need. He accomplishes the latter by way of the former, and in the process takes the reader on a rollicking and sometimes breathtaking romp through the history of largely Western Christian spirituality. This book will serve as a helpful resource to both critical scholars in the field and pastoral care workers, and may just help to answer, at least for some, why 'spiritual, but not religious' just won't cut it for serious thinkers.

DOMINIC McMANUS OP

PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY, ETHICS, SOCIETY AND CULTURE by John Haldane, *Imprint-Academic*, Exeter 2009, pp. xv + 400, £17.95 pbk
REASONABLE FAITH by John Haldane, *Routledge*, London 2010, pp. xi + 201, £23.99 pbk

Both books collect earlier articles, dating from 1989 to 2008 in *Practical Philosophy* (PP), and from 1994 to 2009 in *Reasonable Faith* (RF), edited to make a sustained argument. Not popularized philosophy, they are addressed to the non-professional, not exclusively Catholic, reader.

PP is divided into a long introduction followed by three parts with six chapters on ethics, five on society, and four on culture. Professor Haldane (JH) explicitly rejects both idea and image of society as invented by pre-existing individuals (PP 225–26). We are social animals who nonetheless choose the way we live together; to that extent human living is ethical and 'arguably the deepest source of ethical experience lies in the recognition of human beings as subjects and fellow persons, and as bearers of various kinds of mutual normative relations. Some of the latter may plausibly be regarded as contractual, such as marriage, but others, such as parenthood are culturally transformed relations rooted in our animal nature' (PP 76). How we choose to live together reveals our values.

The common good is a social order in which good values may be realized. Consequently, to know the common good is to choose, both [a] what and [b] how values are to be realized. Because both [a] and [b] will often be contentious, so also will be what is thought to constitute the common good. In chapter 9, which, with chapter 10, discusses the relationship between the individual, society, and state with reference to the liberalism of John Rawls, JH considers how the 'common good' is properly to be understood. 'The apparently radical anti-individualism [of 'the idea that *every* law should have as its proper goal the well-being of society as a whole'] is sometimes moderated by commentators who urge an interpretation of society as an aggregate, and thereby treat the "common good" as a distributive notion, equivalent to "the good of each and every member"' (PP 226). JH opposes that position on the grounds that it is an implausible interpretation of Aquinas (PP 227) and that it misunderstands society. (PP ch. 9 *passim*). For JH 'The common good is essentially shared. It is a *good-for-many*, taken collectively, rather than a '*good-to-many*' taken distributively' (PP 227). He clarifies his meaning: 'the common good [includes], for example, the notion that what justifies the expenditure of society's resources upon universities wherein people are supported in their thinking about these very issues is the fact that the goods attained thereby are 'communicable', reverting to each member'. This is genuinely thought provoking. Two caveats: first, it does not follow from the fact that something enhances the common good that the state ought to provide it through 'the expenditure of society's resources', if 'society's resources' refers to tax revenue; secondly, precisely how '... within a community *we* are *all* better when some of us achieve understanding' (PP *loc.cit.*) needs more analysis.

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In the liberal tradition, in opposition to the encroachment of the modern state on the lives of its citizens, individual freedom became an explicit and fundamental value. Mill's *On Liberty* became the foundational text in English. The 'common good' had fused with the 'good of the state', and the liberal resistance to ever increasing state organization and control almost inevitably became a resistance to 'the common good'. Liberalism, by its opponents, and by at least some of its supporters, was understood to be the pursuit of individual good, largely irrespective of the good of others. John Rawls' 'conception of justice is a private one' (PP228), Ronald Dworkin's insistence on rights is on the rights of the individual (PP 175), but is not also the Roman definition of justice as the settled and enduring willingness to render to each what is due individualist? What is due is due to individuals and the common good in the domain of the just is achieved when each has what is due. Both Rawls and Dworkin may be read as suggesting that the good society is achieved only when certain individual rights are honoured. Perhaps it is that aspect of those writers that leads JH to hesitate to align himself with communitarianism.

RF is divided into two parts: Reason, Faith and God (chapters 1–6) and Reason, Faith and the Soul (chapters 7–13). In both parts the word 'Faith' is used more to refer to the religious domain than to Christian belief. Christians, religious Jews and Muslims, believe in God; most have not been convinced by a proof. But within Christianity, Judaism and Islam it has commonly been held that God's existence can be proved. JH is concerned less to present a proof than to show the presuppositions upon which a proof can arise. He makes the very interesting suggestion in chapters 2 and 3 that 'the traditional arguments can be worked on the basis of [how he understands] idealism as well as of realism' (RF 36).

In several chapters he is concerned centrally with truth, reality and realism. In the Catholic tradition the affirmation that God exists is held to be true. For the realist that affirmation is identical with every other affirmation in that, if it is true, its truth is independent of the person affirming it. Truth is a relation of knowing to what is. Realism does not require a distinction between knower and known. JH does not say that it does; nor does he unambiguously say that it does not.

The discussion of Dummett's 'anti-realism' and Berkeley's idealism is very illuminating. JH concludes that 'the argument from anti-realism to theism leads to the conclusion that ultimately and strictly speaking realism is false and that Berkeley was correct: to be is to be known – *by God'* (RF 46). That recalls Ronald Knox's limerick in response to the man who found it odd that a tree in the quad continued to be when no one was there to observe it.:

Dear Sir, Your astonishment's odd.
When there's no one about in the quad,
The tree that you see
Continues to be,
Observed by, Yours faithfully, God.

When realism is understood as the affirmation that being is known in true propositions then that [a] the created universe including ourselves exists because known by God, and that [b] it exists independently of being known by us, are perfectly compatible.

Because, as a matter of fact, God exists and we are, whether or not we realise it, oriented to him, chapter 5 discusses the restless heart, and chapter 6 the idea of finding God in nature: 'God is both the source and the destination of humanity' (RF 94). Chapter 6 is a meditation in part on Hopkins' poem on the grandeur of God. That the world is 'charged with the grandeur of God' becomes, perhaps deliberately, 'the world is changed with the grandeur of God' (RF 94).

The second part of the book discusses the human soul in seven valuable chapters. Eternal life is often overlooked, sometimes disbelieved. I mention only two things. First, in the conclusion of chapter 12 JH discusses very briefly a

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curious and fascinating argument from St Anselm on immortality based on God's love and our desire to know and love God. Secondly, several times JH quotes a passage from St Thomas' commentary on the 15th chapter of St Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians on the resurrection of the dead (c.15, lect.2: the Leonine editor casts some doubt on the authenticity of the section): 'The soul is part of the body. My soul is not I; and if only souls are saved, I am not saved, nor is any man'. The first sentence is untrue. The soul is not part of the body, and in no other passage that I have found does Aquinas say so. The second sentence is consonant with Aquinas but the style is atypical (cf. e.g. *Summa contra Gentiles* II.57.16 and IV.79.11; *Summa Theologiæ* I.29.1 ad 5 and 1.74.4 ad 2). Authentic or not, it evokes the question as to whether the disembodied soul thinks, knows and loves God. If it does, *who* does so? If it does not . . .?

Few will leave these, and other chapters and questions that there is no space to discuss, undisturbed. They may not be convinced of every conclusion but they will have been stimulated, and will not rest easily in sheer asserted disagreement.

GARRETT BARDEN

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF ENGLISH LITERATURE AND THEOLOGY edited by Andrew Hass, David Jasper and Elisabeth Jay, *Oxford University Press*, Oxford 2009 [first published 2007]), pp. 720, £27.50 pbk

This paperback version of *OHELT* is particularly welcome, making a fascinating and pioneering collection of essays accessible to students as well as libraries. The book, despite its title, is not so much a handbook as the representation of an enterprise, its (necessarily tentative) object being, as Elisabeth Jay states in her introduction, 'to provide a sense of what it might mean to indulge in the interdisciplinary study of English Literature and theology'. The Handbook is organised into seven sections: introductory, formation of the tradition, literary ways of reading the Bible, theological ways of reading literature, theology as literature, the 'great themes', and afterword. In the second section, Rhodri Lewis' chapter on the Enlightenment is a particularly thorough and clear introduction for the literary graduate student, whereas Lynne Long's account of Biblical translation and prayer books, perhaps aimed at undergraduates, offers only a perfunctory and partial description of pre-Reformation religious writing, which largely ignores the vast sermon-literature and is apparently unaware of primers such as the widely circulated *Layfolks' Massbook.* Section Three contains some enthralling material new to literary students not familiar with Hebrew, but Yvonne Sherwood writing about prophetic literature perhaps gets closest to describing the strange linguistic wrestlings involved in speaking of God.

The literature/theology nexus is a particularly slippery one to identify and define, and the contributors have interpreted their task in different ways. The essays are in any case valuable in their own right, but it is no derogation of the handbook to say that many, perhaps most, clarify what the interface 'might mean', in Jay's phrase, by falling strictly outside the interdisciplinary remit yet sketching out a serviceable boundary area. A particularly good example is Norman Vance's sympathetic study of George Eliot and Thomas Hardy. Vance's careful examination of the relationship between George Eliot and Christianity serves to show how her concern with human suffering, while it often implies an unfavourable comparison of contemporary Christian practice with precept, is fundamentally moral rather than religious, let alone theological. Again, Stephen Medcalf's essay, which traces the religious experiences and developments that influenced particular poems and attitudes in Auden, David Jones and T.S.Eliot, seems at first sight to grasp the interdisciplinary nettle more securely. One might describe it as a spiritual

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