

proper to ordinary Christian life – the Christocentric character of the experience described. In fact, for Balthasar, ‘the object of spiritual-corporeal perception is the Incarnate Word’ (p. 126) and ‘Christ is present in the world, the Church, liturgy, and the neighbour’ (p. 127).

This conception is deepened in the fifth chapter, where – as McInroy himself claims – the study proposes its central assertion: ‘Balthasar’s theological aesthetic calls for perception of the ‘form’ (*Gestalt*), and that form consists of both sensory and ‘supersensory’ aspects’ (p. 12). Just as in the *forma* we can perceive the *splendour*, so in Jesus Christ we can perceive the Father (cf. *Jo* 14:9). The sixth and last chapter, which is one of the most interesting, describes the role of Swiss theologian within the context of the main theological issues of his time. Considering Balthasar in dialogue with the Neo-Scholastic approach, with Karl Rahner, and Karl Barth, McInroy shows how his intellectual strategy relating to the spiritual senses matters in dealing with issues such as ‘the nature of faith, natural theology, apologetics, aesthetic experience, and the relationship between nature and grace’ (p. 13).

*Balthasar on the Spiritual Senses* is a very instructive thought-provoking and fully documented book. It makes a solid contribution to studies devoted to the Swiss theologian’s work, underlining – beyond the use of the word itself – the phenomenological character of his theological project. In this sense, it can be useful in order to safeguard the realism of Christian experience. However, even the most complete research can have some deficiencies. In this case, I might point out the lack of discussion of an important thinker in the genesis of Balthasar’s work as Pierre Rousselot (cf. the article ‘Les yeux de la foi’, in *Recherches de Sciences Religieuses* I (1910), 241–259; 444–475). Moreover, the rich bibliography does not mention the important collection on the topic of the spiritual senses edited by the Theological Faculty of Northern Italy (Milan) (A. Montanari (ed.), *I sensi spirituali. Tra corpo e spirito*, Milan, 2012).

MARCO SALVIOLI OP

**FAITH AND WISDOM IN SCIENCE** by Tom McLeish, *Oxford University Press*, Oxford, 2014, pp. x + 284, £18.99, hbk

Theology is too important a subject to be just left to theologians, so it is to be commended when an expert from another discipline has the confidence to venture into the theological arena and do some serious reflection. Tom McLeish is a professor of physics who does just that. As the title might suggest, this is not the typical confrontational book where faith and science are pitted against each other, but rather, McLeish takes faith in God as a given and he uses this perspective to reflect on how science might be viewed in the light of faith and how faith might be viewed in the light of science.

McLeish begins by considering the way science is perceived among the general public and from his own experience he feels that many people view science with suspicion. He finds that whilst people are hopeful with regards to the many benefits science might deliver, e.g. cures for cancer, this is mingled with a great fear of the power that science can unleash in the world, e.g. nuclear weapons. But more than this, McLeish finds that there is a general perception that science undermines our own humanity, that it explains away all that is most precious to us.

This sets the scene for McLeish’s contention that there is something wrong with humanity’s place in the universe, a broken contract with nature that makes us feel strangers in the presence of ‘the sheer inhuman otherness of matter.’ This

phrase, 'the sheer inhuman otherness of matter' is one that McLeish borrows from George Steiner's book *Real Presences* and it is a phrase McLeish keeps coming back to, a genuine challenge that needs to be faced up to. Is it possible to bridge the great chasm between 'the sheer inhuman otherness of matter' and our own humanity?

Still, one has to question whether viewing matter in terms of sheer inhuman otherness is really anything more than a view. Whenever we see another person, are we not seeing matter which is very definitely human rather than nonhuman? If one believes that a thing is what it is in virtue of its substantial form, then there could be many different types of matter, both human and nonhuman, depending on the substantial form of which the matter was the subject. But it is clear that McLeish is not talking about matter in any Aristotelian sense. Rather he is talking about atomic particles. According to the Nobel laureate, Richard Feynman, whom McLeish quotes, the greatest scientific discovery of all time is that 'all things are made of atoms – little particles that move around in perpetual motion, attracting each other when they are a little distance apart, but repelling upon being squeezed into one another'.

McLeish goes on to recount how this atomic hypothesis allowed him to solve a scientific mystery a young chemist presented to him – why should a weak solution of peptides set into a jelly? After much head scratching McLeish came up with a convincing answer – the peptides are able to self-assemble to form a jelly, not because of any new principle acting as a guiding force, but because the peptides are randomly moving about, and so if given time, there is a high probability they will eventually bump into each other enough times and in the right way so as to stick together and form a jelly. But the atomic hypothesis, although it has great explanatory power, does have its cost. If the atomic hypothesis is true, then there are not lots of different types of matter after all, but only the relatively few types of matter, the fundamental particles which are known to physicists, and these particles certainly are not human. This then is rather disconcerting, because it looks like the same random and purposeless motion that accounts for peptide solutions forming into jelly is at the heart of all biological processes including our own. There is, therefore, this huge chasm between what we think we are and what the atomic hypothesis says we actually are. In the light of faith, though, McLeish believes that this chasm can be bridged, and he finds in the bible a divine mandate for people to investigate the natural world so that humanity can be reconciled with it. This is McLeish's 'theology of science', of how humankind's scientific endeavours are meant to fit within God's divine plan.

Whilst McLeish draws on many scriptural passages, he pays particular attention to the book of *Job*. For McLeish, the book of *Job* is not primarily about the problem of suffering, but rather it is about the disconnect between humanity and the chaotic disorderliness of the rest of creation. Furthermore, McLeish understands the Lord's answer to Job as saying that 'chaos is part of the fruitfulness of nature – we cannot hope to control it any more than we can bridle Leviathan, but by understanding we might channel it'.

The role of reconciling humanity with the rest of nature that McLeish sees as science's primary purpose is a far more honourable goal than merely improving a country's competitiveness and quality of life. But it seems possible to share in McLeish's vision of science without necessarily conceding that humanity's uneasy relationship with the natural world is because of the 'sheer inhuman otherness of matter', though to see beyond the problem of matter might require a more critical evaluation of the atomic hypothesis than McLeish is willing to give. But given that elementary particles can be in two places at once, can interfere with each other as though they were waves and cannot be separated as distinct entities from each other without destroying their quantum state, is this really just a fine tuning of the atomic hypothesis? Or might not this be an invitation to seek a new and

richer hypothesis, perhaps one in which we could genuinely recognise the matter in which we are formed as being truly human.

ROBERT VERRILL OP

**HOPE: PROMISE, POSSIBILITY, AND FULFILLMENT** edited by Richard Lennan and Nancy Pineda-Madrid, *Paulist Press*, Mahwah NJ, 2013, pp. xvi + 261, £19.99, pbk

This book, an exploration of the theological virtue of hope for the 21st century, has considerable coherence and unity of vision. It is striking and unusual for a book comprised of 17 short essays by as many different authors to exhibit such internal resonance and cross-referencing between them – kudos to the editors for accomplishing this, which is a strength. The drawback of this unity, though, is that the weaknesses in the collection also tend to be evident throughout.

The essays are grouped into four sections or ‘movements’ (p.239). The first is called ‘grounding hope’ which offers a scriptural and theological foundation for Christian hope. Much is made of the Pauline triad of faith, hope, and charity, and how the three theological virtues, as they came to be called, are interlinked and even inseparable (cf p.37). So Doyle, in an otherwise cogent and helpful article, says that ‘because these three virtues are so integrated, they cannot be separated’ (p.20). However, although the theological virtues are infused altogether with the gift of sanctifying grace, this is not to say that they ‘cannot be separated’. On the contrary, as the Council of Trent taught definitively, ‘by every mortal sin, grace is lost, but not faith’; nor is hope necessarily lost. This is not just Catholic doctrine, of course. Hence John Henry Newman said in one of his (Anglican) parochial sermons: ‘Balaam had faith and hope, but not love. “May I die the death of the righteous!” is an act of hope. “The word that the Lord putteth into my mouth, that will I speak,” is an act of faith; but his conduct showed that neither his faith nor his hope was loving’. So, the teaching of the Church is that charity may be lost, even though hope and faith are not; these three are thus separable.

That this does not appear to be kept in view is a weakness in this volume. Lennan, for example, wonders if ‘the grim truth of clerical sexual abuse might lead us to abandon any attempt to connect the church and hope’ (p.45), and then in the next paragraph he argues that because there is ‘trust in God as the object of our faith, which is foundation of our hope, can enable us to retain hope’ (p.45f). But this is because the grievous sins of the institutional Church have principally harmed charity, and only impaired hope and faith; the loss of charity has important ramifications for her mission and what we should do in response. So, it seems to me the question that should be posed is not whether a sinful Church is an obstacle to hope (p.42) but whether she is an obstacle to charity.

If so, then Lennan can go on to argue as he does for us to ‘acknowledge our failings’ in a ‘grace-formed surrender to God in hope’ (p.51) for charity is restored by repentance. That one can do so is because one still has hope in God’s mercy and forgiveness, ‘even within our flawed church’ (p.42), as Lennan says, and this is precisely because faith and hope may yet remain even if charity is lost through unrepented mortal sin. My conclusion here matches Lennan’s, but the approach takes into account the dynamic of the three theological virtues and how mortal sin affects them. Within the Body of the Christ, such sins are clerical but they do affect us all as a Church, thus each of us individually needs to turn to God in repentance over this serious issue so that charity may be restored to the entire Body. As St Catherine of Siena has said, each of us is in need of conversion, of taking on what Lennan calls ‘an aspirational attitude to the church [that] prompts