

welcome, though I confess I hadn't thought of him as a member of the postliberal movement), William Placher, and Bruce Marshall. The figure who unites these theologians is Thomas Aquinas but I was disappointed that the interplay of their interpretations of him was not brought more into the foreground of the discussion. I also felt the author was perhaps a bit too dependent on secondary works of interpretation (for example, Charles Wood on Marshall and David Ford on Hans Frei's *Types of Christian Theology*), but the author's tone throughout the book is moderate and cautious, and this makes him all the more compelling an advocate for the position he upholds.

One of the advantages of the survey format is that it enables students to be introduced in a clear way to the distinctive outlooks and arguments of a range of thinkers, but it can also make it more difficult for an author to present a sustained argument for his own perspective, to adhere to a precise technical vocabulary, and to make clearly evident the sometimes submerged themes which unite the thinkers discussed. At the risk of making this review sound like it's intended to say, 'If I'd have written this book, I'd have done it this way', I felt a more thematic treatment of its topics would have suited it better. For example, Don Cupitt, whose ideas are perhaps the central focus of the book's themes, is only introduced in the penultimate chapter. Up until then, I was not clear as to why the author thinks that the realism/non-realism debate is of more than academic interest to contemporary theology – which he clearly does since he is keen to move his readers in the direction of his own 'left-wing postliberal' (p. 194), pluralist, non-dogmatic understanding of Christianity. Further, had the approach been more thematic, the author might have been able to weave into his argument what is in fact curiously absent: Bruce Marshall's important and challenging work on realism and truth in relation to the doctrine of God which forms the climax to his book *Trinity and Truth*.

As it is, the reader is treated to a survey of a range of imprecisely outlined positions on realism but without their coordination with the doctrines of God discussed being worked through in the kind of detail that the author's own stance warrants. Gordon Kaufman is introduced in chapter one but Nelson Goodman's philosophically cognate thought – a welcome introduction to which we are given in chapter three – is not brought into dialogue with him. Likewise, it would have been worthwhile bringing Goodman's constructivism, elements of which Cathey seems to favour, into the hypothetical debate staged between Cupitt and Garrett Green on the topic of the constructive role of the imagination in theology. But these are just one reader's response: the book provides a provocative survey of some of the debates initiated by post-liberalism and we can look forward to the author's fuller presentation of his own position on another occasion.

ANDREW MOORE

FAITH IN A HARD GROUND: ESSAYS ON RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS BY G.E.M. ANSCOMBE edited by Mary Geach and Luke Gormally (*St Andrews Studies in Philosophy and Public Affairs, Imprint Academic, Exeter, 2008*) Pp. 273, £17.95

The appearance of *Faith in a Hard Ground* ("FHG"), the second in a projected series of volumes collecting together papers by the late Catholic analytic philosopher, Elizabeth Anscombe, following upon *Human Life, Action, and Ethics* ("HLAE", 2005), invites a doubt about the editorial principles underlying the series. Anscombe's collected papers were published in 1981 in three volumes; she was active as a philosopher until her death in 2001. One might think, then,

that some volumes in the series would be devoted to (A) published papers not captured by the earlier collection, whereas others would exclusively collect (B) unpublished papers which were valuable and interesting nonetheless. However, *HFAE* and *FHG* combine both: *FHG* has 6 papers from category (A) and 15 from category (B), whereas *HFAE* has papers in both categories, too, although with an opposite weighting. Both volumes also have papers from the 1981 collection, and widely available papers (such as “Modern Moral Philosophy”). Nor are the volumes distinguished thematically, such as “ethics” for the first and “religion” for the second, since *FHG* has several papers on ethics, and *HFAE* has several papers that are as much related to Anscombe’s commitments as a Catholic as most papers in *FHG*.

This is not a mere editorial meta-squabble, because presumably papers which a philosopher might have published, but left unpublished, need to be presented differently from published work, just as papers deliberately left out of comprehensive collections by an author arguably have a different standing. For instance, when Anscombe writes in one unpublished paper that the Catholic laity “have chosen a form of life that is the opposite of renunciation” and “are a suspect sort of Christian” (p. 64) for not becoming priests or religious, this remark, included originally in a private communication to a friend in 1965, and therefore before the dispute over *Humanae vitae*, simply cannot be taken to represent her considered view – since from the four remarkable essays in *FHG* criticizing contraception, it would appear that Anscombe post-1968 recognized a considerable degree of heroism among Catholics who continued to be open to large families in the new circumstances.

Again, it is difficult to think that Anscombe would have liked to see the publication of some of the essays included in *FHG* without the addition of some major qualifications, as, for example, “The Immortality of the Soul” (pp. 69–83), which the editors in a note postulate was written in the late 1950s and delivered to a discussion group of Catholic philosophers which met at Spode House. This would therefore be a relatively early work, and not surprisingly is heavily influenced by Wittgenstein.

In that essay, Anscombe maintains that the human soul is properly described as “spiritual” but not “immaterial”; that to say that it is or has a part which is immaterial is to indulge in a *façon de parler* which typically masks a crude philosophical confusion (substance dualism); that there is no philosophical reason whatsoever for regarding the human soul as something that of itself continues to exist after death; and that personal existence ends for us at death, unless (as the faith teaches) there is a general resurrection. Her grounds seem to be: a mistaken conflation of the Aristotelian-Thomist view with Cartesianism, and faulty interpretations of two passages from Scripture offered as proof-texts.

The texts offered in proof are 2 Maccabees 12:44 (“For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead”, Douay-Rheims), and 1 Corinthians 15:16–18 (“For if the dead rise not again, neither is Christ risen again. And if Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain, for you are yet in your sins. Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ, are perished”). The use of the former for Anscombe’s purposes is odd, since the text has traditionally been used in the Church to support the practice of praying for the souls in purgatory; in any case the interpretation Anscombe favors could account at best for “vain” but not “superfluous”. As regards the text from St. Paul, Anscombe seems to be presupposing that the relevant Greek verb means “to perish” in the sense of “to go out of existence”, as in Plato’s Greek, rather than more plausibly in the context, “to be lost or damned”. Also, Anscombe’s construction has St. Paul supposing counterfactually that Christ ceased to exist when he died on the cross.

She rejects the Aristotelian-Thomist view because, it seems, she fails to distinguish it from Platonism and misconstrues its fundamental argument. “I cannot at present accept... the argument that thought and understanding are immaterial, since no act of a bodily organ is thinking or understanding, as e.g. an act of a bodily organ is seeing; hence thought and understanding are the acts of an immaterial part, and immateriality is spirituality” (p. 69). This seems a reference to the argument of *Summa Theologiae* I 75,2 and *De Anima* III 4. But notwithstanding her language she does *not* give that argument, only its conclusion (the argument depends crucially on premises which she never examines, viz. that to understand something is a kind of *passio*, and that the human intellect in principle can understand everything corporeal). Even the conclusion she seems to get wrong, from an equivocation: St. Thomas’ conclusion is that to think is not an act (sc. *actualization*) of a corporeal organ, but Anscombe was apparently understanding this to mean that to think is not an act (sc. *action*) of a corporeal organ – which then gets subjected to Wittgensteinian scorn for its suggestion that spirituality requires a substance just like a material substance, with parts just like material parts, which act just like material organs, but which nonetheless are all “immaterial”. What gets lost is the opportunity for a philosopher of the first rank to explore how the view that the human intellect *subsists* differs from the view that it is a *substance*.

One might conclude that these reflections on immortality were early and eventually superseded – if it weren’t for another essay in *FHG*, “The Early Embryo” (pp. 214–223), which mirrors a similar and previously published essay in *HLEA* (“Were You a Zygote”). Admittedly, Anscombe presents her thought here as exploratory, as testing whether a certain view is tenable, which she suggests we might become obliged to accept by developments in biology. Yet that view – that a human embryo begins its life merely as “a living thing” and becomes a human being at roughly six weeks, when it has a discernible human form and organs – would seem to be compelled more by medieval than by modern biology; only difficulties about “twinning” might appear to point in that direction, and they extend no later than 14 days after conception.

Anscombe never explains why the visible form of something never meant to be seen proves relevant for signaling its humanity; or how it is that the embryo before six weeks, although not yet human, may nonetheless be identified as an animal, when it so little resembles familiar animals; or indeed why we should accept that an embryo at six weeks looks especially human. (What is a distinctive human form or organ anyway? The tongue? The hand?) Of course if function and mode of life are relevant instead, then we cannot rule out that perception and movement are in some way distinctively human, even from conception. Against the objection that early abortion becomes permissible on her view, as it would not be homicide, Anscombe replies that it would still be the “killing of an individual living thing whose life is at a stage in the development of one or more human lives”: yet she fails to explain why killing this admittedly merely developing thing wouldn’t be justifiable under extreme circumstances of a conflict with the mother’s life or substantive interests.

So her view looks weak and unmotivated – by biology, at least. One might wonder, then, if its motivation is instead philosophical, the result of persisting Wittgensteinian difficulties in accepting immaterial existence. After all, if what distinguishes a human being from a non-rational animal is a “subsistent” intellectual power, then it is unclear why life of that sort must be delayed until six weeks, or why at six weeks the embryo is any better suited to express it than earlier.

Some of the essays in ethics which attractively round out *FHG* cover such important principles as that an erring conscience, although binding, does not yet excuse; and that ignorance of the moral law does not excuse when it is culpable, as

generally it is. Yet not so attractive is a crotchety essay against taking interest on a loan (“Philosophers and Economists: Two Philosophers’ Objections to Usury”), which seems to ignore the changed significance of money in a market economy and the opportunity cost of lending as opposed to investing. Likewise unattractive is a highly-charged essay, “Simony in Africa”, against the then widespread African practice of not administering baptism until the catechumen had made a token but definite commitment of financial support to the parish, which African pastors sought as proof of a correct understanding of the nature of Catholic life. Anscombe charges these pastors with simony, wonders how they were able “to deceive themselves so about what they were actually doing” (p. 242), and with much demonstration laments the practice as “worse than anything that has ever been in the Church” (p. 244).

The essay displays a potential weakness in Anscombe’s distinctive approach to intention. By her own report, she became interested in intention, as a philosophical topic, through a concern to show the error in President Truman’s defense of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, viz. that his intent was *to end the war*, not *to murder civilians*. Anscombe urged against this that we can be wrong about the correct description of our actions: merely thinking that we are doing a certain kind of action does not make it so – an idea which Anscombe uses to devastating effect in her critiques of contraception as well as nuclear warfare. Yet this approach, when misapplied – as it is, we believe, in the simony essay – can lead to an under-appreciation of the role of the agent’s intention in determining the “moral species” of an action, and therefore a certain quickness in attributing bad faith. What results then is not a powerful critique, but overblown moral rhetoric – which in turn leads to a worry, felt by us at least, that through this approach lots of innocent or marginally doubtful practices are open to being counted as “worse than anything that has ever been”.

MICHAEL PAKALUK AND NICHOLAS TEH

INTRODUCING MORAL THEOLOGY: TRUE HAPPINESS AND THE VIRTUES
by William C. Mattison III (*Brazos Press*, 2008) Pp. 432, £16.99

This is, quite simply, an outstanding textbook: any Catholic, or indeed Christian, teacher of an introductory moral theology course ought to welcome it with open arms. It should find an immediate place in seminaries and universities, and would be enormously helpful for those teaching CCRS (the teachers’ Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies). It is superbly organised, accessibly and elegantly written, theologically rich and balanced, simultaneously orthodox and open-minded, consistently intelligent and thought-provoking. It is a book for which both teachers and students will be profoundly grateful.

Introducing Moral Theology is structured around the four cardinal and three theological virtues, with four carefully placed chapters on practical topics: student drinking practices, the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, sex before marriage, and euthanasia. It begins with a discussion of the relation between morality and happiness, arguing strongly for what Servais Pinckaers called ‘freedom-for-flourishing’ (as opposed to ‘freedom-of-indifference’) and the corresponding ‘morality of happiness’ (rather than ‘morality of obligation’). A second chapter clarifies other basic concepts, most notably intention. After covering the cardinal virtues, Mattison moves to the second part of the book via an imaginative chapter on the way in which ‘big-picture beliefs’ shape specific moral views: his example is the understanding of sex in the contrasting ethics of Lucretius and the contemporary Catholic Church. He intersperses the specific discussions of the theological virtues with chapters on sin, Christ and grace, and ends by tying his