

objector is not adequate to the possibilities of meaning in life. At other times too Biggar is acute, for example in his response to John Harris who identifies human value only in the self-valuing of the individual and the exercise of choice, abstracting from what is being chosen. As Biggar points out, the use of the word 'value' connotes something that 'transcends the choices of human individuals' and purports to be something more than mere preference, or what we would like.

There is much then to praise in this book, in its structure and approach and in many of its concrete judgements. However, there is a flaw at a key point in the book which blights his whole argument. Against Finnis, Grisez, and O'Donovan, Biggar finds the distinction of 'biological' human life and 'biographical' human life both logically defensible and morally relevant. If someone's brain is irreparably damaged so that he or she cannot think, then according to Biggar we should conclude that he or she is no longer a human *person* and no longer part of the human community. Biggar even describes such individuals as 'irretrievably inaccessible to human care' so that it means nothing to protect them from being killed nor therefore (and this is my deduction) to visit, clothe, or feed them. However, I fail to understand how the inability of a sick person to show conscious gratitude for care renders this care meaningless. O'Donovan is surely correct to say that in such cases what we have is ambiguity which some react to by showing human solidarity and others do not. Biggar, so cautious elsewhere, is strangely dogmatic not only about a diagnosis, which is itself often uncertain, but more profoundly about the criteria for exclusion from human solidarity.

It is in part because he has this 'exception' before his eyes that Biggar is unwilling to make universal his opposition to the deliberate killing of the innocent. His final conclusion, that legalising euthanasia should be resisted, is curiously weak, as it seems on the face of it to have 'reduced itself to essentially pragmatic considerations'. He does have an interesting examination of slippery slope arguments, but this does not advance the argument any further than Keown. For all Biggar's effort, the explicitly theological arguments are left curiously idle, while the debate is finally resolved by appeal to the kind of secular arguments already well explored by others. This is an interesting book and worth engaging with, but it is flawed at a crucial point.

DAVID JONES

**THE GOOD LIFE** by Herbert McCabe OP, *Continuum*, London, 2005, Pp. 160, £9.99 pbk.

In *The Good Life*, Herbert McCabe sets out to produce 'a tourist map of what may be to you, and certainly is to many, an unfamiliar piece of intellectual territory – a map offered by someone who finds the landscape congenial' (p. 1). This is an excellent description of the role admirably fulfilled by his text, which leaves the reader with only one major regret, namely that McCabe died before he was able to complete the work.

In his introduction, Brian Davies explains his role as editor and compiler of McCabe's papers into a number of publications, of which this is the third. *The Good Life* is a work in progress, not a finished product. It deals with issues such as the existence of ethical truth, the role of ethics in relation to the existence of God, and the possibility of whether one can have ethical propriety without believing in God. By the time of his death, McCabe had written the preface and first four chapters of a work that he intended to be somewhat longer, and these are included in the present volume, together with two previously unpublished articles that deal with related issues.

*The Good Life* begins with a discussion of the nature of ethics and the good, looking to demonstrate the existence of 'transcultural moral judgements' (p. 14) in contrast with modes of behaviour that are perceived as ethically good because they cohere with the conventions and customs of that particular culture. McCabe then moves on to describe the transcultural nature of the good and its links with the corporate nature of humanity and human society. He uses the model of linguistic ability to demonstrate this, particularly how the individual self necessarily functions within the larger, corporate whole. He then discusses the acquisition of the capacity for justice by comparison with the analogy of a child learning to read; this is then developed into the far more complex notion of an adult learning to be just. McCabe argues that being just is fundamentally part of being human, as it is also linked in with participation in the divine life. It is at this point that the work reaches its abrupt halt, leaving the reader grateful to the guide whose map has served him so well thus far, and wishing further territory had been as expertly charted for him.

The two articles at the end of the work, 'Virtue and Truth' and 'Animals and Us', deal with similar themes. The first article looks at how we experience the world, and particularly at how we make choices within it. McCabe develops his understanding of human experience primarily through analogy with language usage, and notes one of the primary characteristics of being human is the ability to make choices. The link with the freedom to make moral choices is then developed and so the idea of living a virtuous life. In the second article, McCabe contrasts animals and machines, noting how the Cartesian understanding of humanity makes the body into nothing more than a machine. He challenges such an understanding of animals, and particularly with respect to humans. Having further noted differences between humans and other animals he then begins to develop notions as to how human society should be organised, again employing language acquisition and usage to develop the necessary analogies.

One of the major highlights of *The Good Life* is the clarity of the explanations, achieved without too great an oversimplification. McCabe notes in his preface that he is dealing in approximation rather than precisely refined arguments (p. 1) and also recognises the limitations of the metaphors and analogies he employs (e.g. p. 4 on the limits of his analogy between learning ethics and learning grammar). He makes his central points clearly, without their losing too much of their nuance. Doubtless something of the subtlety of more technical argumentation has been lost, but that is to be expected in an introductory work. *The Good Life* points out the major landmarks enabling the reader to return later for a more detailed perusal at his own leisure. McCabe also makes good use of inclusive language, using both 'he' and 'she' as generic singular pronouns, giving the text as a whole a more inclusive feel. This is something that is generally to be welcome, although its usage for God (e.g. p. 24) does give some pause for thought.

Another major strength of *The Good Life* is its clear restatement of the Aristotelian understanding of what it means to be human. In the chapter 'Organism, Language and Grace' McCabe explains how Aristotelian terminology has been hijacked and redefined in line with Cartesian dualism. This is by no means an entirely original line of argumentation, but it is very clearly and succinctly put, and the implications are also made admirably plain. It allows McCabe to develop his line of argument regarding the 'Good Life' clearly and convincingly, particularly in relation to the divine life.

Once the nature of the work is understood, for which Brian Davies's Introduction is indispensable, *The Good Life* is an excellent and stimulating read. To use the author's own metaphor, it is a well produced map by an expert guide which will help the tourist familiarise herself with the territory and also refresh

the more experienced, reminding all of us that what we long for is the good life, the satisfying life.

TOM WILSON

**HOLY TEACHING: INTRODUCING THE *SUMMA THEOLOGIAE* OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS** by Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, *Brazos Press*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2005, Pp. 320, \$27 pbk.

In *Holy Teaching: Introducing the Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt provides a significant introduction for individuals aspiring to discover what is arguably Thomas Aquinas's most revered text. On one level, the layout of Bauerschmidt's work is nothing novel. Similar efforts are found in Paul J. Glenn's *A Tour of the Summa* (Tan Books and Publishers, 1978) and Peter Kreeft's *Summa of the Summa* (Ignatius Press, 1990). Both of these works, along with Bauerschmidt's work, include selections from the *Summa Theologiae* and commentary concerning particular passages. On another level, what sets Bauerschmidt's work apart is how his selections highlight the aspects of the *Summa Theologiae* that embody Thomas's larger intention not only to preserve but also to advance *sacra doctrina*, or holy teaching. Like Glenn and Kreeft, Bauerschmidt demonstrates an implicit commitment to the notion that introducing the *Summa Theologiae* is best done when readers are confronted with the text itself. However, the emphasis upon *sacra doctrina* is what also allows Bauerschmidt to argue that Thomas Aquinas was first and foremost a theologian.

Prior to the publication of *Holy Teaching*, Bauerschmidt co-edited *Aquinas in Dialogue: Thomas for the Twenty-First Century* (Blackwell, 2004) with Jim Fodor, with whom he also currently serves as the co-editor of the journal *Modern Philosophy*. Prior to this work concerning Thomas Aquinas, Bauerschmidt published two books that concentrate primarily upon the nature of mysticism: *Julian of Norwich and the Mystical Body Politic of Christ* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1999); and *Why the Mystics Matter Now* (Sorin Books, 2003). In both of these texts concerning mysticism, perhaps a two-pronged effort is in place. Bauerschmidt offers an introduction to the works of various mystics, such as Julian of Norwich, while also demonstrating the significance of such efforts in light of the identity of their respective authors as theologians. *Holy Teaching* appears to be an attempt on Bauerschmidt's part to extend this two-pronged effort to the person and work of Thomas Aquinas as embodied in his *Summa Theologiae*.

In terms of providing his readers with an introduction to the *Summa Theologiae*, Bauerschmidt intends 'to make some of Thomas's texts more readily available' (p. 11). He serves this end not only by offering his own brief introduction to the life and work of Thomas Aquinas, but also through the particular selections he makes from the *Summa Theologiae* and the explanatory notes he offers in relation to such texts. However, what is important to note is that Bauerschmidt's efforts on all of these fronts reflect his conviction that Thomas Aquinas is a theologian. Contemporary scholarship often classifies Thomas as a philosopher; by contrast, Bauerschmidt contends that the identity of the *Summa Theologiae* is most appropriately viewed through Thomas's own assertion that his task is one of *sacra doctrina*. Well-known philosophical components of Thomas's work are what often garner him the reputation of philosopher. Such examples include Thomas's five-proofs for the existence of God and his understanding of natural law. However, Bauerschmidt argues that the true significance of the *Summa Theologiae* is only appreciated when this work is viewed within the context of 'an activity that is first