

that natural law teleological accounts of the moral life will ultimately inspire a self-love and lead to a kind of imprisonment within an immanent frame. By contrast, an ethics that focuses on ‘value’ allows us to account for the supernatural activity of charity as something necessary for becoming a good person.

Given his articulation of ethics in a non-Thomistic mode, it is difficult to estimate Hildebrand’s long-term legacy as a Catholic philosopher. More work needs to be done in analysing and comparing Hildebrand’s approach *vis-à-vis* Thomism (there is at least one very admirable attempt at this penned by Michael Waldstein, ‘Dietrich von Hildebrand and St. Thomas Aquinas on Goodness and Happiness’, *Nova et Vetera* 1.2 (2003), pp. 403–464). Meanwhile, the writings of John Paul II and much of twentieth-century Catholic social doctrine are littered with the language of ‘value’. Hildebrand’s *Ethics* provides a realist interpretation of such language that exorcises the spectre of Hume and invokes the spirit of St Augustine. We can be grateful to the Hildebrand Project for re-issuing Hildebrand’s works and for provoking Catholic theologians and moralists to think more deeply about his personalist proposal.

Demetrios Harper, *The Analogy of Love*

(Yonkers, NY: SVS Press, 2019). 320 pp. US\$35.00. ISBN 978-0-8814-1633-6 (pbk).

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This monograph situates the thought of Maximus the Confessor within the tradition of philosophical ethics, comparing it to Kant in the first part of the volume and to ancient sources, predominantly Aristotle, in the latter. Whilst Harper presents the volume as setting forth the foundations of ethics in Maximus and doing so as a kind of virtue ethics, the volume would have been better framed as a dialogue with deontological ethics. Two-thirds of the volume consist of presentations of Kant’s ethics and comparisons to Maximus, particularly on the topic of law and natural law. Only in the final third of the book do we see the beginnings of a discussion that moves beyond deontology to outline how one might understand deliberation and virtue within the Confessor’s thought.

On the former topic, the volume provides an excellent comparative overview of deontological themes within Kant and Maximus. The main purpose of Kant in Harper’s dialogue is to emphasise that there has been a decoupling of morality from nature, such that the importance of the divine and the importance of human purpose have been removed from a discussion of what humans ought to do. This has led to nature being characterised as impulse, whilst the human ability to choose to act in a moral way—‘human autonomy’—has become its antithesis. The former becomes associated with necessity and evil, and the latter with freedom and moral choice. Kant thus poses a battleground between human autonomy and the impulsiveness of nature as the main forum in which his ethics is situated. Harper explains that this background is important for explaining the logic behind recent Orthodox personalist theology, especially that of John Zizioulas and Christos Yannaras, and characterises it as a spiritual successor to

Kantian understandings of nature, contradistinct to Maximus. Harper offers welcome clarity here, explaining how Maximus's understanding of nature differs to Kant's and, in the process, shedding light on assumptions in personalist theology that cannot be squared with a reading of the original Maximus texts.

Harper's argument against misunderstandings of Maximus in personalist theology is an important and timely one, and one of the principal innovations in the volume. However, the heavy emphasis on explaining Kant's wider works and in returning to reiterate his thought in later chapters could have been greatly abridged, leaving space for important untouched topics such as the meta-ethics of virtue ethics, or the origins of Maximus's understanding of virtue (in its theological as well as philosophical roots). Harper offers a corrective to a deontological focus in what he describes as a kind of Maximian virtue ethics, but this section of the book is underdeveloped, with little real engagement with contemporary virtue ethics as an ethical framework in its own right. Critical engagement with Alasdair MacIntyre, for example, would have been welcome, or at least citation of existing scholarship on Maximus and MacIntyre, since MacIntyre's view of virtue ethics is incompatible with Maximus's in many significant places.

Despite these shortcomings, the book is a welcome addition to literature that focuses on nuances in Maximus's understanding of nature. Harper gives a clear overview of the dynamism in Maximus's understanding of nature and ties this in to contemporary oversights in ethics that have made strong distinctions between ontology and morality, that is, between becoming human and doing what is good. For Maximus, becoming a full human is dependent on doing what is good, casting his entire cosmology into the sphere of the ethical, and rendering nature and ethics inseparable. The real interest of the monograph is in teasing out these important distinctions between nature as ethical trajectory and nature as necessity, along with a survey of what is meant by natural law and how this differs in Aristotelian, Maximian and Kantian contexts. The book certainly succeeds in providing a thorough philosophical exploration of this topic and in challenging the primacy of Kantian moral influence in contemporary ethics.

The book purports to be the only study of Maximus as an ethic of love, which is a little disingenuous to other literature on the topic, all of which discuss love in relation to virtue as being at the core of a Maximian ethics (A. Papanikolaou, 'Learning How to Love: Saint Maximus on Virtue', in *Knowing the Purpose of Creation Through the Resurrection: Proceedings of the Symposium on St. Maximus the Confessor*, Sebastian Press & The Faculty of Orthodox Theology, 2013; P.T. Hamalis and A. Papanikolaou, 'Toward a Godly Mode of Being: Virtue as Embodied Deification', *Studies in Christian Ethics* 26.3 (2013): 271–80; A. Louth, 'Virtue Ethics: St Maximus the Confessor and Aquinas Compared', *Studies in Christian Ethics* 26.3 (2013): 351–63; P. Blowers, 'Aligning and Reorienting the Passible Self: Maximus the Confessor's Virtue Ethics', *Studies in Christian Ethics* 26.3 (2013): 333–50; E. Brown Dewhurst, 'The Ontology of Virtue as Participation in Divine Love in the Works of St Maximus the Confessor', *Forum Philosophicum* 20.2 (2015): 157–69; E. Brown Dewhurst, 'Revolution in the Microcosm: Love and Virtue in the Cosmological Ethics of St Maximus the Confessor', PhD diss., Durham University, 2017). Whilst Harper acknowledges the existence of some of these works, he does not significantly engage with or build

on these arguments, suggesting that perhaps the monograph needed further updating on its journey from doctoral thesis to published work. Louth's article 'Virtue Ethics: St Maximus the Confessor and Aquinas Compared' surely would have been a welcome interlocutor in the body of Harper's work, as well as providing a much-needed entry into discussion of ascetic themes in Maximus's theology in relation to virtue.

Harper clearly intended the monograph to be principally a philosophical work, but there are places where a lack of attention to theology and exegesis lets down some of his analysis. For example, he talks of Maximus 'Christianising' Aristotle's virtues, such as Aristotle's placement of justice as the sum total of all other virtue, which Maximus transforms into love as the total of all other virtue (p. 208). No acknowledgement is given to the fact that Maximus is directly citing St Paul in most of these examples, so Harper would be better placed to argue that *Paul* is Christianising Aristotle. Similarly, it was surprising to see Harper claim that Maximus provides no consistent list of virtues (p. 209), as, whilst this is true on a technicality, Maximus does make frequent direct reference to the list of virtues given by Paul in Colossians. Given that Maximus makes these direct references, looking at the texts Maximus is citing would have given further context to his understanding of love and virtue, especially since Maximus's terms for love as the bond of perfection/end of virtue are taken from Col. 3:12-15. At the very least, one would expect such a list to be discussed fairly early on in a chapter dedicated to Maximus and virtue, even if one then wished to draw attention to other places in Maximus where Platonic references are also frequently used.

Whilst the volume is thorough in its philosophical engagement, greater theological engagement in general would also have been welcome. For the volume to successfully reflect the foundations of Maximus's ethics, attention ought to have been brought both to Maximus's reception of Cappadocian theology, and to how his ethical thought inherits much from a great ascetic theological tradition. There is little treatment of *how* one acquires virtue, something intimately tied into Maximus's ascetic theology and that cannot be passed over given its theological importance to the place of virtue in Maximus's thought. Discussion of how virtue manifests through clearing of the passions in *ascesis*, and what such an activity means both for how one ought to act, and in terms of a contribution to a discussion on the natural inherence of virtue, are largely missing from the volume. Similarly, whilst Maximus is without doubt an important re-inventor of ancient philosophy, he is more immediately an inheritor of a rich theological tradition with an immense wealth of ethical literature, not least of which is to be found in Gregory of Nyssa and Basil of Caesarea. Whilst the volume reiterates in many places that Maximus is a Christian theologian and not a Hellenic philosopher, there is little engagement with the theological and ascetic context that immediately grounds Maximus's thought and helps shape it into a coherent whole. The inseparability of ascetic practice, theology and philosophy in Maximus's thought means that one cannot paint a full picture of virtue in his oeuvre without respecting the intersection of these within his thought.

On a final note, the lack of historical and contemporary intellectual context for Maximus's theology may make parts of the volume more inaccessible to those not already familiar with Maximus. Nonetheless, the monograph will be familiar in structure and language to those in the field of ancient philosophy, who will find the development of

Aristotelian and Stoic terms in Maximus outlined in the monograph to be informative. Those familiar with Kant will also find the comparative introduction of Maximus through Kant to be informative, though a final conclusion concerning Kant (as he is Harper's main interlocutor) might have been expected and is not present. General interest theologians, especially those looking to understand the complexity of the debate between personalist and non-personalist Orthodox theology, will find Harper's explanation of the misunderstanding to be clear, fair and informative. Finally, the volume will be of interest to Maximus scholars not already familiar with approaching Maximus's work through ethical themes. Harper's chapter 4, in particular, provides excellent summaries of the relationship between love and virtue and helps to emphasise that the ethical dimension of Maximus's thought is inseparable from the rest of Maximus's theology, thus hopefully bringing ethics as a central concern in Maximian studies to the forefront of contemporary scholarship.

David P. Henreckson, *The Immortal Commonwealth: Covenant, Community, and Political Resistance in Early Reformed Thought*

Cambridge Studies in Law and Christianity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019). 208 pp. £85.00. ISBN 978-1-1084-7021-6 (hbk).

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Over the last several decades the 'return of religion' to political philosophy has produced a substantial body of literature looking to theology as a historical source of liberal-Democratic polities, and as a meta-discourse that might mediate contemporary political divisions. A substantial strand of this literature has seen Protestant theology as advancing a kind of proto-secularist vision of public life, tracing a line of continuity from Calvin through Hobbes and the contract theorists into modern liberal and authoritarian traditions. On this reading, Protestant theology becomes the site of an immanentist social ethic, one that developed a vision of society and government independent of religious beliefs about the moral order and human ends, grounding them instead in an act of public will.

Though a number of recent works have attempted to complicate this narrative, very little work has been done on the concept of 'covenant' in the theological and political discourses of early Modern Europe. This is a crucial concept for Protestant theology and early Modern political theory more generally. It is a concept dense with moral, social and ontological significance. And yet, contemporary historiography has often assumed the theological and political valences of this term to have operated more or less independently of one another. Henreckson's *The Immortal Commonwealth* examines the conceptual overlap between these discourses, showing how the specifically theological determinations of 'covenant' shaped early Protestant political theory.

After an introduction situating his reading over and against 'disciplinary', 'secular republican' and 'contractarian' readings of early Protestant political theory, Henreckson's first chapter examines Protestant theologies of God, particularly with