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Aquinas and the Human Person: Essays in Thomistic Anthropology. By Craig Payne. Ottumwa, IA: Vision Publishing, 2016. 230 pp. ISBN: 12-978-1530951727.

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There are various ways to meet the challenge of those who claim that there is an irreconcilable split between religious belief and science. One important pathway is by promoting a careful understanding of the traditional understanding of the four senses of scripture, so as not to fall into the trap of misinterpreting the meaning of biblical texts.

One of the great dangers here comes with reducing the spiritual levels of meaning (the typological, the moral, and the anagogical—see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 100–130) to the literal level and then misunderstanding the Church's understanding of the literal level. Properly understood, the literal level does not refer to the "plain sense" and need not be historical. Rather, it designates whatever meaning is intended by a human author under divine inspiration (including the historical, but also including stories and figures of speech). With this age-old hermeneutics in place, the conflicts between scripture and science generally disappear, for one who properly employs the fourfold senses of scripture can resolve the alleged discrepancies between science and religion by removing misunderstandings of the meanings of biblical texts.

Another crucial pathway for meeting these challenges requires the use of philosophy, namely, a methodologically rigorous philosophy that is open to religion and not foreclosed to the very possibility of transcendence. Like Gerard Verschuuren's (2016) *Aquinas and the Sciences*, Craig Payne's new volume shows the perennial value of Aquinas's philosophical principles for understanding the human person in light of the best scientific work being done today. In his previous book, Payne (2014) considered questions of bioethics in light of Aquinas and contemporary science: *Aquinas and Bioethics*:

Contemporary Issues in the Light of Medieval Thought. The current volume undertakes a similar task for philosophical anthropology and natural law ethics.

At the core of Payne's argument is the Thomistic insight that personhood involves possession of a rational nature. By contrast, in many current schools of philosophy, personhood is thought to be attributed to an individual only when certain functional abilities can be detected to be operating. For Aquinas, the relevant functions (e.g., meaningful language use) are only possible because of the powers of one's nature (e.g., the abilities that make possible such language use), but an individual whose powers are only at a nascent level of development (or even blocked from development because of a biological impairment) is still a member of the species of human persons. This distinction—sadly so often ignored in debates over abortion or human cloning—makes all the difference.

For Aquinas, it is readily possible to distinguish one species from another by identifying the functional abilities typical of the mature, healthy individuals in one species and those typical of the mature, healthy individuals of another species. But the criterion of functional abilities that distinguish one species from another fails when one attempts to use it for determining the exact contours of species membership, precisely because it would be arbitrary to rule an individual within or outside a given species merely on the basis of some arbitrary choice about the needed degree of development of one's abilities in order to count that individual a member of a given species and thus to accord it the protections and respect due to the members of that species.

For purposes of resolving questions of species membership, Payne thus puts great focus on the use of modern DNA analysis and on genetic descriptions of humanness. This practice allows him to attend to the contributions of contemporary science. At the same time, he is mindful of the ongoing need to speak of the rational soul as what unifies the ever-changing material that constitutes our human bodies

and that is the seat of powers such as thinking and choosing that are incapable of proper description by reductive material explanations.

After an opening chapter about the philosophical lineaments of Thomistic anthropology, he discusses at length the various aspects of human cognition and human volition that cannot, in principle, be explained merely in terms of such biological organs as the brain that satisfy the necessary conditions for these functions. He also critiques various contemporary authors who ignore or misunderstand these aspects of Thomistic anthropology, including Robert Pasnau's (2002) *Aquinas on Human Nature* and Jean Porter's (1999) *Natural and Divine Law*.

These critical reviews of the literature constitute a particularly valuable aspect of Payne's book, for their presentations have contributed to influential misunderstandings of the Thomistic position, often for the sake of the ethical implications they think to flow from their interpretations of Aquinas's texts.

Chapters 5 and 6 provide a sophisticated discussion of certain trends in contemporary science and contemporary theology. Of special importance here is Payne's account of the current understanding of evolutionary theory. He is right to note the misguided emphasis that is often placed on the undisputed part of neo-Darwinian theory, namely, natural selection, while minimizing the more complex and more demanding aspect, namely, the processes by which variations are brought about that can then be subjected to natural selection.

Common explanations of this second element in terms of "chance" often takes the epistemological meaning of the term (our inability to predict an outcome) as if chance named some causal force by which variations are produced. The Thomistic conviction that everything that takes place must have a sufficient reason (an adequate explanation) for its occurrence thus provides a philosophically rigorous framework for the scientific quest for the intelligibility of natural processes that is far more suitable than any philosophical outlook that depends on misconstruing the epistemological notion of chance as it were a causal factor.

In the sixth chapter, Payne treats various theological currents associated with twentieth-century writers (e.g., Karl Barth) and writers from the early modern period (John Calvin and Guido de Bres), particularly with reference to the effects of original sin upon human cognition and volition. In the final three chapters, Payne provides answers to various perennial questions that have remained prominent in the twenty-first century, such as efforts to use a noncorporeal criterion for humanness, efforts to assert progressive humanization in the course of human development, and the confusions associated with tendencies to describe genuinely developmental processes as if they were processes of construction.

As in the fine work done by Valparaiso law professor Richard Stith (see, for instance, his many articles in the *Proceedings of the University Faculty for Life*), this third issue is a question of the proper model when describing human origins: should we envision it in terms of a process in which the powers already present in a nature unfold and mature in the course of time, or should we envision it on the model of building and manufacturing, such that it is human intent that decides the questions about a thing's fundamental constitution and type? Payne makes a solid case here that both Aquinas and the best of contemporary science give evidence of a truly developmental model (not a constructive one) and thus provides a solid basis for drawing out the moral implications that require protection of even the earliest stages of human life as well as those with great vulnerabilities.

In Payne's book, we have a fine use of a sound philosophy, with results that help to resolve many interesting problems that are alleged to separate science and religious belief.

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Health Policymaking in the United States. By Beaufort B. Longest Jr. Chicago, IL: Health Administration Press, 2016. 595 pp. \$120. ISBN: 978-1-56793-719-0.

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Originally started as a guide to students for understanding and navigating the complicated, incremental process of health policy-making, this book by Beaufort B. Longest Jr., of the University of