

Christian interpretation of the OT); C. Kinbar, 'Messianic Jews and Jewish Tradition'; R. Resnik, 'Messianic Jewish Ethics'; S. Dauermann, 'Messianic Jewish Outreach' (this essay could have been longer and more nuanced in view of the various proposals of a soteriological *Sonderweg* for Jews and the strong stances taken by some churches against mission to Jews and its highly problematic history); R. Wolf, 'Messianic Judaism and Women'; A. Cohen, 'Messianic Jews in the Land of Israel'; M. Glaser, 'Messianic Jewish National Organizations'; M.S. Kinzer, 'Messianic Jews and the Jewish World'; D.C. Juster, 'Messianic Jews and the Gentile Christian World'; J.M. Rosner, 'Messianic Jews and Jewish-Christian Dialogue'.

The *second part*, 'The Church and Messianic Judaism', offers essays 'on biblical and theological issues central to the identity and legitimacy of Messianic Judaism' (11): D.J. Harrington, 'Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community'; D. Bock, 'The Restoration of Israel in Luke-Acts'; R. Bauckham, 'James and the Jerusalem Council Decision'; C. Keener, 'Interdependence and Mutual Blessing in the Church' (a study of Romans); W.S. Campbell, 'The Relationship between Israel and the Church' (addressing mainly Romans 11); S.J. Hafemann, 'The Redemption of Israel for the Sake of the Gentiles'; A. Runesson, 'Paul's Rule in All the *Ekklesiai*'; J.K. Hardin, 'Equality in the Church' (Galatians 3:28 and Ephesians 2:14-18; '... these passages demonstrate full equality between both groups, yet without destroying the ethnic distinctions between them', 233); T.A. Wilson, 'The Supersession and Superfluity of the Law? Another Look at Galatians' ('Paul emphasises in Galatians not so much the supersession or superfluity of the law with the coming of Christ and the advent of the Spirit, but the suspension of the law's curse', 242); J. Willits, 'The Bride of Messiah and the Israel-ness of the New Heavens and New Earth' (a study of Revelation and Isaiah; 'John does not supersede Israel's historical role when he describes the coming of the new heavens and new earth. ... in the eternal state, Israel remains at the very centre of God's work within the history of the world. Eternal life is not ethnicity-less or Israel-less', 253); J. Dickson, 'Mission-Commitment in Second Temple Judaism and the New Testament' (a summary of his substantial monograph *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: The Shape, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission*, WUNT II.159 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003]; see my review in *EJT* 15 [2006] 125-134); M. Bockmuehl, 'The Son of David and the Gospel' (concludes: 'The Son of God was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary as the Son of David – and it is none other than this elect, crucified, and exalted Son of David according to the flesh who is the Son of God with power by the resurrection of the dead', 271); D. Harink, 'Jewish Priority, Election, and the Gospel' and R.K. Soulen, 'The Standard Canonical Narrative and the Problem of Supersessionism'. The essays of part

two indicate an emerging post-supersessionist approach to the New Testament (317) which is characterised by at least four assumptions: 'God's covenant relationship with the Jewish people (Israel) is present and future. Israel has a distinctive role and priority in God's redemptive activity through Messiah Jesus. By God's design and calling, there is a continuing distinction between Jew and Gentile in the Church today. For Jews, distinction takes shape fundamentally through Torah observance as an expression of covenant faithfulness to the God of Israel and the Messiah Jesus' (317).

The instructive volume closes with a summary of the chapters and a conclusion by Willits. Each chapter closes with suggestions for further reading. The volume offers a wealth of easily accessible information, provides in its first part a fine introduction to Messianic Judaism and indicates how the New Testament can and should be interpreted with a fresh post-supersessionist perspective.

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### *Metaphysics: The Creation of Hierarchy*

Adrian Pabst

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012; xxxv + 521 pp,  
\$55.00, pb, ISBN 978-0-8028-6451-2

#### RÉSUMÉ

Dans sa *Métaphysique*, Adrian Pabst s'attaque à l'éternel problème de l'un et du multiple et entreprend une apologie d'une métaphysique néo-platonicienne chrétienne. Il retrace l'histoire de la pensée des pré-socratiques jusqu'à nos jours et tente de montrer que, bien que supplantée par les structures de pensée et la pratique dès la première période de la modernité sécularisée, la métaphysique néo-platonicienne chrétienne n'a jamais été réfutée. L'auteur fonde cette histoire de la pensée sur l'examen d'abondantes sources de première main, en apportant des critiques nuancées de leur compréhension par les spécialistes. Son étude permet d'approfondir une question qui se profile derrière de nombreux débats philosophiques, théologiques et politiques contemporains.

#### ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Adrian Pabsts Werk *Metaphysics* erforscht das fortwährende Problem des Einen und der Vielen und legt eine Apologie für eine christliche, neo-platonistische Metaphysik vor. Der Autor verfolgt die Geschichte dieser Gedankenrichtung von den Vorsokratikern bis in die Gegenwart hinein. Er vertritt die Auffassung, dass die christliche neo-platonistische Metaphysik nie widerlegt worden ist, obwohl sie von frühmodernen proto-säkularen Gedankengebäuden und Praxisstrukturen überholt wurde. Diese Genealogie der Ideen bietet eine umfangreiche und eindrückliche Auseinandersetzung mit primären Quellen und eine nuancierte Kritik sekundärer Quellen. Sie fordert zu



einer gründlicheren Untersuchung eines Problems auf, das im Schatten der gegenwärtigen philosophischen, theologischen und politischen Diskussion lauert.

## SUMMARY

Adrian Pabst's *Metaphysics* explores the perennial problem of the one and the many and in so doing presents an apologia for a Christian Neo-Platonist metaphysic. Pabst traces the history of ideas from the Pre-Socratics to the present and argues that although superseded by early modern proto-secular structures of thought and practice, the Christian Neo-Platonist metaphysic has never been refuted. This genealogy of ideas offers an extensive and impressive engagement with primary sources and nuanced critiques of secondary authorities, provoking deeper consideration of a problem that lurks in the shadows of much contemporary philosophical, theological and political discussion.

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Books on metaphysics do not rank high on the 'to-read' lists of pastors or theologians. Indeed, the discipline is viewed with a certain suspicion, yet it remains that many of our deepest theological differences are in fact metaphysical in character. This is why Adrian Pabst's recent book warrants the attention of pastors and theologians alike.

*Metaphysics: The Creation of Hierarchy* traces the intellectual history of the problem of individuation from the pre-Socratics to the present. Pabst mounts the case that Christianised Neo-Platonism, having rejected the unwarranted assumption that substance is prior to relation, did not treat the one and the many as contrary principles and therefore avoided many of the regrettable outcomes of the intellectual heritage of the West, such as the separation of philosophy and theology or the elevation of self-identity over commonality of being. Although it was superseded by early modern proto-secular structures of thought and practice, Pabst claims that the Christian Neo-Platonist metaphysic has never been refuted.

Pabst presents a grand narrative of ideological conflict stretching back to Aristotle's dismissal of the idea that all goods participate in a single good as a Platonic myth (12-13). This deficit, made good by Augustine, was lost again in the wake of the radical Aristotelianism of the Middle Ages. Although Duns Scotus is portrayed as something of an arch-villain, Pabst traces the decline from the framework of Augustine and Boethius to Gilbert of Porreta. By attributing individuation to an immanent rather than transcendent cause, Gilbert paved the way for the subsequent elevation of essence over existence and substance over relation. The chapter devoted to Avicenna and Islamic Aristotelianism exposes the heart of this problem:

The implication is that the actuality of particular beings discloses nothing other than the dependence of their essence on a higher cause. Since their existence is extrinsic to their essence, knowledge of what actually existent things are does not require or

involve knowledge of why *that* thing exists or what it is that brought *that* thing into actuality (164-165).

In the discussion of Suárez we are shown the problematic consequence of this move. The identification of God's creative action with efficient causality alone results in an 'exclusion of actuality from metaphysics and the shift towards immanent self-individuation' (330). What this does is effectually eliminate the relation between the actualisation of things and their *telos*. Positing an efficient cause without an end cause thus becomes merely arbitrary. Pabst continues to trace the repercussions of the elevation of essence over existence in modern thought, arguing that both Spinoza's *conatus* and Leibniz's monads fail to offer a coherent account of *why* and *how* the finite many are caused by the infinite one.

The jewel of the book is the exposition of Thomas Aquinas who epitomises the position for which Pabst argues. The genealogy of ideas within which this exposition is couched offers extensive and impressive engagement with primary sources and nuanced critiques of secondary authorities. This great strength, however, also constitutes the book's weakness, as the depth of argumentation simply cannot be sustained over its breadth. Certain thinkers receive comparatively superficial treatment; Pabst's meta-narrative slumps at these points and one becomes a little suspicious of some of his claims.

Another weakness of the book as a whole is the way a certain relationship between the order of being and the order of knowing is assumed, but ultimately left unexplained. Pabst demonstrates *that* the Divine infinite is intelligible to the finite human within a Christianised Neo-Platonist metaphysic, yet he says little concerning the *degree* to which the divine infinite may be known or precisely *how* the divine infinite may be known by finite individuals.

The censure of Ockham's restriction of 'human knowledge of divine self-revelation in the world to uncertain intuition and experience' (291), the condemnation of Avicenna's restriction of knowledge of the divine to 'the holy intellect of the Prophet Mohammed' (64), and the threefold acclamation of the 'grandeur of reason' (58, 155, 303) all reveal considerable optimism as to the degree to which the Divine infinite may be known by finite minds. This optimism is, however, left unexplained. In this regard the Reformed theologians who do not feature in Pabst's narrative yet who espoused precisely the Thomist metaphysic he promotes (Vermigli, Zanchius, Polanus, Alsted, Voetius etc.) will be of interest to evangelical readers who wish to investigate Pabst's apologia for Christianised Neo-Platonism further. These men were less optimistic concerning the *degree* to which the divine infinite may be known by finite individuals and offer a clearer explanation of *how* this occurs.

Similarly, it will feel odd for evangelical readers that one must wait until page 439 to hear Pabst affirm that 'we know the Creator God because he made himself



known to us, as the living God of Israel and the incarnate God in Jesus of Nazareth'. There is much about knowing God through our participation in the *scala naturae* before we get to this fundamentally important datum, yet the overall metaphysical framework Pabst commends is by no means opposed to evangelical convictions or alien to their tradition.

These criticisms aside, Adrian Pabst's *Metaphysics* is a tour de force. The argument is clearly articulated, the conclusions well defended, and the book as a whole provokes deeper consideration of a problem that lurks in the shadows of much contemporary philosophical, theological and political discussion.

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### *Science, Religion, and the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence*

David Wilkinson

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013; 227 pp, hb,  
£25, ISBN 978-0-1-99680-207

#### RÉSUMÉ

Voilà un excellent ouvrage qui permet d'appréhender une question intrigante se situant à la jonction entre la science et la religion et qui montre de façon exemplaire que la rencontre entre la théorie scientifique et la réflexion théologique peut fournir des résultats fascinants. Cependant, sa plus évidente faiblesse potentielle provient de l'hypothèse de départ selon laquelle on finira un jour par découvrir des formes de vie extra-terrestre. Selon la perspective que l'on adopte, une autre faiblesse vient du fait que l'auteur semble bien davantage à l'aise avec la matière scientifique qu'avec la réflexion philosophique ou théologique.

#### SUMMARY

This is an excellent book which sheds light on a question on the boundaries between science and theology. It shows in an exemplary way how the meeting of scientific theory and theological reflexion can yield fascinating results. Its most obvious weakness is that it is based on the hypothesis that the search for extra-terrestrial intelligence will one day indeed reveal such forms of life. Another issue, connected to the author's perspective, is that he seems to be more at home in the world of science than in that of philosophy and theology.

#### ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Ein herausragendes Buch, das einen spannenden Berührungspunkt zwischen Wissenschaft und Religion beleuchtet und beispielhaft demonstriert, wie wissenschaftliche Theorie und theologische Betrachtung auf eine Weise zusammenspielen, die faszinierende Einblicke vermittelt. Dennoch besteht die offensichtlichste potentielle Schwäche des Buches darin, dass es auf der Hypothese fußt, die Suche nach außerirdischer Intelligenz (SETI) werde

eines schönen Tages außerirdische Formen von Leben ans Licht bringen. Ein weiteres Versäumnis – und dies hängt von der Perspektive des Betrachters ab – liegt darin, dass der Autor mehr in der wissenschaftlichen Welt daheim zu sein scheint als in der philosophischen oder theologischen Materie.

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This is a superb book that elucidates an intriguing point of interface between science and religion and offers an exemplary demonstration of how scientific theory and theological reflection can interact in a way that yields fascinating insights. Given the apparent anthropocentric nature of Christianity, it is sometimes assumed that any discovery of extraterrestrial intelligence would gravely compromise or perhaps even invalidate the credibility of Christian faith. With sensitivity to the nuances of science and theology, Wilkinson follows Wolfhart Pannenberg in asserting that, 'It is hard to see ... why the discovery of non-terrestrial intelligent beings should be shattering to Christian teaching' (169). Moreover, he argues that such a discovery may actually be fruitful for religious belief and present new opportunities for Christian theology to develop a richer understanding of the meaning and significance of crucial doctrines, such as creation and redemption.

David Wilkinson already has a proven track record of producing quality books that combine careful scientific research with thoughtful theological insights. As a former leading astrophysicist and an academic who holds a PhD in Systematic Theology, there are few people as well qualified as Professor Wilkinson to address the profound theological questions raised by the possibility of the existence of extraterrestrial intelligence (ETI).

There can be little doubt that the discovery of ETI would be one of the most important events in the history of humankind, but what would be the impact on the way we as theologians think about the ultimate issues concerning what it means to be human, the nature and destiny of life and our place in the cosmos? If ETI is discovered, is Christ's atonement effective only for the inhabitants of planet earth or does it also apply to denizens of other worlds? If life were to be discovered on other planets and Christ's incarnation, as we understand it, applies only to human beings made in God's image, would that mean that God would need to incarnate himself into the image and likeness of other non-human intelligent life forms in order to render salvation effective for them? In light of these considerations, Wilkinson argues that, 'theologians need to take seriously SETI and to examine some central doctrines of religious belief in the light of the possibility of extraterrestrial life' (3-4).

Acknowledging the difficulties of establishing contact with potential extraterrestrial civilisations, Wilkinson uses humour to emphasise the immense distances that separate us from even our 'closest' galactic neighbours: 'any civilisation in our close neighbour galaxy in Andromeda which beamed a radio message towards