depth for breadth; his effort to be comprehensive in treating other thinkers results in a conciseness that too often quickly summarizes a contribution and even more quickly evaluates it by simply noting that another contribution cautions us about the former. However, his interpretations are generally fair minded and perceptive. I thought an exception might be a misleading interpretation of Robert Audi on p. 115, but he interprets Audi correctly on p. 269, though even here Audi is dismissed rather quickly by citing another author. Moreover, frequently the book does have the flavor of the PhD thesis that begot it. The style of writing and terminology used may be fine for academics, but I do wonder how most health-care practitioners will respond to sentences, such as "However Pellegrino's Thomistic elevation of rationality is challenged by O'Donovan's caution that the rationalist tradition tends to move toward a reductive immanentism and premature eschatological fulfillment …" (p. 8; restated, but not much more clearly, on p. 249), or to Dooyeweerdian phrases such as "enkaptic interlacement" (p. 222). For nonacademics, I recommend beginning with the final few chapters (worth the price of the book), and then deciding what else to read. Some of it is slow going, but it is good work.

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FLOURISHING: Health, Disease, and Bioethics in Theological Perspective by Neil Messer. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013. 256 pages. Paperback; $35.00. ISBN: 9780802868992.

Theologian and ethicist Neil Messer (University of Winchester) has produced a thorough and thoughtful review and analysis of the various theories and approaches to foundational issues concerning human health, disease, and disability as they relate to the concept of human flourishing. As such, this book will be of interest to anyone seeking a greater understanding of the major questions and contemporary discussions in these areas.

The first two chapters of the book could serve as a stand-alone text for addressing major modern theories of what constitutes health, disease, and illness and how best to evaluate and differentiate these concepts. In the first of these two chapters, Messer provides a particularly fine overview of several prominent evolutionary theories of what constitutes health and disease, including discussions and critiques from within the community of scholars espousing variations of these interpretations. Contrasting and relating these views to "the Good," as conceptualized classically from an Aristotelian framework, he helpfully illustrates both the strengths and weaknesses of the evolutionary perspective when applied to human health; these serve as a foundation for later theological discussions. Those not well versed in bioethics may find these chapters helpful in appreciating what the secular academy and the philosophical bioethics community contribute constructively to the broader bioethical discussion, and how these contributions can be given more substantial meaning, depth, and coherence within an explicitly theological framework.

Of particular interest to those coming from a background in neuroethics, rehabilitation, or psychology is the inclusion of the respective topics of mental health and disability within the broader discussion of human flourishing. Messer considers the concept of disability from several angles: as disease, as extreme examples of natural human variability, and within the broader social context in which members of a society can impede another's flourishing by their reactions to such variations. Once again—as with health in general—what constitutes disability still appears to be, at least intuitively, based upon an essentialist (Aristotelian) understanding of what constitutes normative human bodily and mental functioning. An intuitively understood normative functioning serves as a vantage point from which to determine what is also likely to constitute bodily and mental disease or disability. As will be apparent to many, philosophical concerns and questions have bedeviled medical and mental health ethics for some time. For instance, at what point does diversity and variability become pathology?

The third and fourth chapters of Messer's text constitute the major theological emphasis of the book, with chapter three providing the basic theological foundations and chapter four providing the application of the major theological ideas. Messer is explicitly indebted to the work of Swiss Reformed theologian Karl Barth and medieval theologian Thomas Aquinas, providing links to the thought of Magisterial Reformation Christianity as well as to the historic Western church and the Roman Catholic tradition. Messer draws heavily from Barth's "ethics of creation" and pairs this approach with the Aristotelian/Thomist emphasis upon teleology and essentialism, especially as teleology and essentialism apply to human beings and their characteristic functions as beings of a particular kind. From this "Barthian Thomism," Messer's main thesis in the second half of his book is that the ends, values, goals, or "goods" that evolutionary approaches found so elusive in the first half of the book can only be properly found in a Christocentric anthropology wherein health is seen as the "'strength

for human life': the God-given ability to answer the summons to flourish as an embodied creature of this particular, human kind" (p. 155). "Our flourishing, as creatures of a particular kind, consists in the fulfillment of the ends proper to that kind of creature" (p. 167). Within this framework that views each human life lived "as creatures of a particular kind," health and human flourishing (physical and mental) are viewed as proximate ends embedded in and given proper context and meaning within the ultimate ends provided in God the Father's revelation in Christ. Thus, the insights of various branches of human learning "can be critically assimilated to this theological understanding" (p. 170).

I believe that Messer's text can be extremely helpful in providing Christians with a lens through which to view analytically much of contemporary culture's focus on health and longevity as ultimate—rather than proximate or penultimate—goals. A focus on health for its own sake may actually keep people from engaging in activities that could contribute more fruitfully and fully to "being human" and relating to others through valued action and compassion.

A recurring element in the second half of Messer's book is Barth's notion of health as the "strength for human life." As someone with professional interests in psychology and neuroscience, my mind immediately went to possible conditions which could be considered threats to such creaturely flourishing from a mental health perspective, notably those conditions that impair our ability to see the good in day-to-day existence and impair our ability to take joy from our relationships with others and from our work.

I recommend Messer's book and hope that it is widely read by ethicists, clergy, and medical and mental health professionals. In addition to helping Christian bioethicists and philosophers to dialogue more constructively with the broader bioethics community, I believe that Messer's text will be very helpful in assisting those in the church (clergy and laity) to understand more profitably the concepts of health and disease from a distinctively Christian point of view.

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AN IMAGE OF GOD: The Catholic Struggle with Eugenics by Sharon M. Leon. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2013. 226 pages. Hardcover; $45.00. ISBN: 9780226038988.

This book offers a detailed account of how American Catholics emerged as the fiercest opponents of sexual sterilization over the course of the first half of the twentieth century. Sharon Leon offers a close reading of texts produced by high-ranking American Catholics in concert with the texts of leading local eugenicists to trace a complicated relationship that at moments overlapped, but over time evolved into a contentious and deeply divided set of views over the sanctity of human life and its reproduction. It provides historians of medicine, eugenics, and Catholicism with a rich study of these high-level debates.

Leon concentrates on some of the leading figures in these discussions and covers nearly four decades of its discourse. In doing so, her study focuses on the period in American history when eugenics and sterilization have been presumed to be in their ascendency. Many scholars suggest that after the Second World War, the discussions changed dramatically, with the concurrent international attention to Nazi eugenics and human experiments, and a contemporary shift in discourse surrounding voluntary birth control, which dramatically altered the course of eugenics. Although historians of medicine such as Rebecca Kluchin, Wendy Kline, and Johanna Schoen have begun to problematize this chronological framing by demonstrating that eugenics programs had a much longer reach and maintained a more complicated relationship with both medical experimentation and birth control, Leon adheres to this periodization. The result is an in-depth look at how Catholic thinkers positioned themselves against eugenicists, and how Catholicism wrestled with eugenic science for the upper hand in moral authority over the modern family.

At its core, this book is an exploration of the battleground between eugenic reformers who harnessed science (however pseudo or incomplete it was) in their efforts to shape American society, and Catholics, who expressed religious and theological explanations for human behavior, and later politically reinserted the church into the domain of welfare and charity. Leon points out, however, that both Catholics and eugenicists borrowed interpretations and strategies from one another as they attempted to shore up support for their positions. At times, this jockeying meant that eugenicists shared or even borrowed perspectives from Catholics, namely support for pronatalism and positive eugenics. Conversely, while Catholics agreed on elements of pronatalism, in practice (whether or not this was consistent with papal doctrine), some even agreed in principle with the need to intervene on issues of mental deficiency