

nature in philosophy, medicine, rhetoric, medicine, and theology” (409), a “crossing” of boundaries. An early criticism of psychology claimed that it had “lost its soul,” and K. concludes with a passionate plea to cross boundaries by rediscovering soul. One of the most favorable comments on K.’s text was offered by a Jesuit friend and colleague who observed that, unlike many authors who write about the church, K. “gets it,” and understands the culture of the institution and portrays it without distortion. I hope that K. will invest his considerable erudition and talents as a novelist, historian, and psychologist to extend the story from 1962 up to the present day.

Loyola University Maryland

WILLIAM J. SNECK, S.J.

LIGHT FROM LIGHT: SCIENTISTS AND THEOLOGIANS IN DIALOGUE. Edited by Gerald O’Collins, S.J., and Mary Ann Meyers. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmanns, 2012. Pp. vi + 250. \$35.

Light from Light is a fascinating collection of essays by seven well-known physicists and seven eminent biblical and patristic scholars presenting what we know about both the commonly known and the counterintuitive characteristics of light as a pervasive and fundamental physical phenomenon, and about its rich, profound, and varied symbolic role in Scripture, theology, and spirituality. As the fruit of their dialogue, each author in different ways and to varying degrees reflects on how our contemporary knowledge of physics might further reinforce or enrich the symbolic or metaphorical function of light in theological and religious discourse. Several authors also explore how the significance of light in Scripture and in theology might indirectly affect how we appreciate and experience light, physically, biologically, psychologically. The collection originates from a 2009 meeting of all 14 scholars in Istanbul, and a follow-up meeting a year later in Oxford, precisely to explore together the possible connections between what both physics and theology reveal to us about the mysteries and the transcendent significance of the reality and the concepts of light. The two organizers and editors, O’Collins and Meyers, have provided a very insightful and helpful introduction to the volume.

In Part One, which consists of the more scientifically oriented contributions, the authors carefully and very accessibly present the key features light manifests, in itself and in its interaction with matter. Its wave-particle character, some of its other quantum properties (e.g., entanglement, the observer as participant, deep interrelationality), the velocity of light as the limit of causal interactions, and its central role in early evolution of the universe from the Big Bang on are all lucidly treated. Several of the scientists, John Polkinghorne, Michael Heller, and Marco Bersanelli, who are all well-known interdisciplinary scholars and writers—in theology and science, philosophy and science, and culture and science, respectively—focus more

specifically on the ways our knowledge of light from physics and cosmology provides metaphorical or symbolic (but short of analogical) depth to theological reflection. Markus Aspelmeyer and Anton Zeilinger, Andrew W. Steane, and Robert W. Boyd explore more the impact of the physics of light on philosophy, which can indirectly affect theological language and understanding. All these chapters are well crafted and insightful.

The biblical, patristic, and theological contributions in Part Two are also outstanding and very readable. Each author focuses on two or three related aspects of the many different ways the analogy, or the metaphor, of light—or correlatives of light, e.g., darkness or shadows—is used in Scripture, in patristic literature, or in theological and spiritual writings, primarily those up to and including the medieval period, but also including Karl Barth (George Hunsinger). And most of the authors reflect, at least briefly, on the ways our deeper understanding of the physics of light can enhance the divine realities and spiritual experiences to which “light” symbolically refers. This collection certainly represents a broad, accessible, and interesting summary of the use of the symbol of light in Christian literature.

Among these scholars, both the scientists and the theologians, there were many worthwhile discussions and some mild disagreement particularly as to whether “light” functions as an analogy, or only as a metaphor or a symbol. Polkinghorne, Ware, and Hunsinger, for instance, argue compellingly for limiting “light” to the metaphorical and the symbolic—something less than an analogy and more in the form of deep consonance between physical light and uncreated or divine light. O’Collins, Kathryn E. Tanner, and Robert Dodaro are more at home with the stronger connection “analogy” connotes.

Though each set of contributions is outstanding, the dialogue and interaction between the scientists and theologians could have been more substantial. A brief summary of interdisciplinary conclusions and disagreements would have added significantly to the book. Furthermore, some focus on the important, more pedestrian functions of light within nature itself, in physical, chemical, and biological relationships, and in our engagement with the world around us would have added to the discussions.

This volume is a good example of the fruitful interdisciplinary dialogue between the natural sciences and theology that enriches both communities and the educated public. In exploring together the reality and image of light, both sets of scholars concluded that, though the significance of the physics of light for theology is modest, it does provide some metaphorical and symbolic insights, and a rather compelling example for theology of how our knowledge and understanding always falls far short of the realities we are trying to investigate and articulate.

*Vatican Observatory Research Group,
Tucson, AZ*

WILLIAM R. STOEGER, S. J.