

and arguments. Indeed, to argue according to rigorous rational criteria is to guarantee that the results attained are universally valid. This also confirms the principle that grace does not destroy nature but perfects it: the assent of faith, engaging the intellect and will, does not destroy but perfects the free will of each believer who deep within welcomes what has been revealed.” The church sees the positive value of the autonomy of philosophy which implies respect for nature and its eventual perfection when these ancient Greek philosophies (Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle) encountered the gospel in history.

A not so difficult book to read, Burton helped the readers to once again discover the goodness and beauty of Ancient Greek philosophy. In a world where so much polarization is experienced and truth is oftentimes presented as ideologies, Burton challenges readers to love wisdom lest we become more knowledgeable and yet not saved.

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Hewitt, Simon. *Life after Death after Marx*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2025. pp. 53. ISBN: 978-1-009-52684-5.

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Materialism and idealism are the two primary poles that drive Marxist movements and Marx’s thought; and Marx’s departure from the idealist movement of his time results in a direct critique of the spiritual and non-material, which includes the sphere of religion. It is undeniable that this leads to incompatibility of Marx’s doctrine and Christian doctrine. Amidst this partition and incompatibility, Simon Hewitt attempted to reconcile, if not, re-evaluate Christian theological discourse on the afterlife and the human person’s eschatological status in Marx’s philosophy in order to close the gap between the two.

The author, Simon Hewitt, is an associate professor at the University of Leeds, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures. His interest and inclination to the philosophy of religion was embodied through his discourses against those who are critical of theology, including, but not limited to, Ludwig Feuerbach, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud. By following the thoughts of St. Thomas Aquinas and Fr. Herbert McCabe, O.P. – a Dominican theologian and philosopher – Hewitt develops a profound claim that the negative theological claim that God is unknowable is not a statement that concedes to atheism. In his view, a positive theological claim, like “God is good,” is just an amplification of imperfection, as human beings’ thought can only cover a limited knowledge. So, to say that God is unknowable is a way to prove that God transcends human frailties and

limitations. His scholarship in Aquinas and Philosophy of Religion is evident across his publications, which tackle contemporary issues in theology. With this background, his attempt to locate the intersection between Christian doctrine of the afterlife and the human person's eschatological status in Marx's philosophy is made possible in this book.

In the introductory part of this brief yet comprehensive book, Hewitt strongly asserts that the rewards of the afterlife do not concede to the human experience of exploitation and injustice because, according to him, "God wills goodness and flourishing for God's creatures, not simply in some eschatological future but in the here and now." (p.1) This is contrary to the prevalent assertions made to critique the Christian doctrine of the afterlife, wherein the afterlife serves as the justifiable reward for all the suffering and exploitation that Christians endured during their life *hic et nunc*. Also, Hewitt determined the target audience of this work, which appeals to Christian theologians and Marxist readers and scholars. This invitation among these groups of scholars made by Hewitt helps in opening a dialogue which may lead to a re-evaluation of the two seemingly opposing thoughts. This kind of dialogue, which is presented throughout the discussion in this book, is defined by the author as 'uncomfortable conversation' (p.2) as it delves into directly opposing ideas and movements. Nonetheless, this kind of dialogue is somehow necessary to open new possibilities and views in consideration of the human condition within religion and outside religion. In order to contextualize the entire conversation, in the latter part of the introduction, the author provides essential notes on Christian Theology and some fundamental claims of Marx that concern eschatology or the afterlife. By means of this, the book caters not only to knowledgeable scholars of Christian doctrine or Marxist readers and thinkers, but it also reaches out to the non-scholars who are not yet immersed in deep reading of both Christian eschatology and Marxist doctrine. To put it another way, this book is also a good read for beginners who intend to know the basic difference and relation of the contrasting movements. Though the arguments require a good amount of knowledge on the topic being discussed, the introduction of this book provided the essential knowledge for the readers to understand the flow of the discourse.

Moreover, despite being short in format, the book comprehensively determined the arguments that are essential to the discourse; and these were presented in four chapters, excluding the introduction and conclusion. The second chapter of the book focused on the four themes: (1) Marx's critique of religion as the opium of the people, (2) the prophetic origin of the argument that the afterlife enables exploitation, (3) the critique of dualism, and (4) the proposal of a possible

alternative eschatology which is focused on the resurrection of the body. In this manner of presentation, Hewitt does not concede to Marx's treatment of religion; rather, he affirms the truthful observation of Marx concerning society and the suffering that humanity experiences. By citing prophets, specifically Prophet Amos and Prophet Isaiah, the author demonstrates that even the biblical events in the Old Testament condemned the religious rituals that ignored, if not, enabled the oppression of the poor and their exploitation. An important point of this chapter lies in the author's goal to dismantle the prevailing view that the ultimate goal of man is to liberate himself from the material body, and this is demonstrated by the author's recognition of the eschatological event of the resurrection of the body (p.16). Evidently, this serves as the foundation of Hewitt's aforementioned main goal.

In the following chapter, the author returns to the fundamental reality of death, apart from the prevalent political reduction of death that, to a certain degree, justifies war, capital punishment, and sometimes environmental destruction. By affirming some ideas from Freud, Hewitt calls for a genuine outlook on death which leads to the fact that the dead are actually dead until the ultimate resurrection. Accordingly, to support his critique of dualism, Hewitt recognizes Aquinas' claim that the soul is the form of the body. This also serves as an avenue for the author to develop a thought that human souls store our life narrative, which God holds until the ultimate resurrection. Thus, Hewitt noted that humanity's desire to change its material conditions in society – especially, that of Marx – directly shapes the life narratives that will be redeemed in the resurrection, ensuring theology remains tied to liberative action. By means of this, the author establishes a possible harmonious understanding of Christian eschatology and Marx's materialist doctrines – at least, those which are presented in this book. Even so, some scholars and Theologians might not agree with the propositions made by Hewitt, especially considering the exact written doctrine of the Church; or in the case of Marxist scholars, some arguments might be flawed in the strict sense of Marx's works.

The fourth chapter of this book mainly argues that remembering and the recognition of the past of the dead is an essential part of both political struggle and Christian eschatology. This claim of the author recognizes Walter Benjamin's claim that revolt is not motivated by the abstract ideals of the future; rather, it is moved by the image of "enslaved forebears." This leads the book into a more interesting discussion of how the vulnerable dead's life is redeemed socially and politically through the social actions of our time. This is also to say that their death and the death of the saints are not pointless, but they must bear fruit through the remembrance of them and their contribution in reframing our society. Following

this discourse, Hewitt acknowledges in the fifth chapter of this book the failure of Marxist movements to make redemption for the past victims of societal exploitation and suffering; and he highlights the capacity of Christian eschatology to serve the proper redemption for those who suffer from injustices and suffering. Thus, this book, at its core, recognizes the factual and evident points that Marx's assessment of society provides, including its role in reshaping the societal framework; and at the same time seeks the limitation of Marx's doctrines which can be fulfilled by Christian eschatology through its promise of the afterlife. It shows how Christian eschatology becomes completion rather than opposition to the materialist movement presented by Marx – it becomes the completion of Marx's emancipatory project.

At the end of this book, what Hewitt leaves to the readers is a hope that recognizes the betterment and constant critique of society, but in its most profound sense, a hope that is fulfilled in the afterlife – an afterlife that acknowledges the exploitation of humanity and not an afterlife that ignores the suffering of society. Hence, Simon Hewitt's "Life after Death after Marx" is a foundational book that opens new discourse among Christian theologians and Marxist scholars. It challenges the prevalent understanding of the two opposing movements to open an area of dialogue which will lead to a reconciliation of Marx's goal of liberating humanity from alienation and suffering and Christian eschatology's claim that human fulfillment takes place in the afterlife.

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Metaphysics is known as the first philosophy according to Aristotle. The primacy of being has provided the stability of concepts and logic from which all philosophising proceeds. Modern Philosophers have attempted to challenge this as a form of rigidity and dryness, and hence the shift from the search for truth to the search for meaning. While this has led to an important appreciation of irreducible subjectivity, the shift from metaphysics (what is there) to epistemology (what can be known) has been critiqued for introducing instability, as the foundation is ultimately subjective and perspectival. We see this from Descartes onwards until it has been rectified, to an extent by phenomenology and the concept of intentionality. Nevertheless, the hostility or scepticism towards traditional metaphysics has never truly abated, and many thinkers have sought to move from