

BOOK REVIEWS

***From the Manger to the Throne: A Theology of Luke.* By Benjamin L. Gladd. *New Testament Theology.* Wheaton: Crossway, 2022, 207 pp., \$24.99.**

Benjamin L. Gladd is professor of New Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary. He is editor of the Essential Studies in Biblical Theology series. *From the Manger to the Throne* is one of a proposed 20-volume series of concise books focusing on the main theological teachings of each NT book or series of books. They examine what the NT writer “says about God and his relations to the world on their own terms, maintaining sight of the Bible’s overarching narrative and Christocentric focus” (11).

It is unusual to examine the theology of Luke without including Acts since Luke is the first of a two-volume work. Yet, Crossway opted for this series to examine them separately. Gladd admits that focusing only on Luke is “cutting against the grain” (14) of how scholars typically examine the books together. However, he does mention Acts many times in the present volume (e.g., 34, 50, 79).

Old Testament Background

Gladd rightly focuses on the importance of Luke’s citations and allusions to the OT in describing significant times in Jesus’s ministry (20). After giving an overview of the major events in Jesus’s earthly life (19–37), Gladd devotes a chapter each to seven theological themes in Luke. He demonstrates one should interpret the OT just as Luke and other NT writers did because their primary teaching source was Jesus (37). This minority scholarly opinion is as refreshing as it is sensible. Gladd describes an OT quotation like “the tip of an iceberg” (105) in which the visible portion is obvious but the broader context of the quotation that lies beneath is important and easy to miss. So, Gladd guides the reader in examining the depths.

New Pathways

This book is especially interesting and thought-provoking when Gladd finds scriptural relations that he says other scholars “fail to connect” (146). For instance, he explores the impact of the meaning of “Son of Man” in Luke’s allusions to Daniel 7:13-14 in Luke 4:6 (rejection of Jesus at Nazareth, 151), 9:26-27 (Peter’s confession, 154), 22:69 (Jesus’s response to the Sanhedrin, 160), and Acts 1:8 (Jesus’s ascension instruction, 161). Gladd says Luke connects the disciples’ obstinacy on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24 with allusions to Isaiah 6:9-10 (113-15). However, other times Gladd’s connections fall short. In tying a second exodus theme with Jesus’s Journey to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51-19:27) and the journey to Emmaus (24:13-35), the connections of the two journeys are tenuous and the descriptions of the first one as “unbelief and confusion” (121) and the second one as “belief and enlightenment” (121) are too generalized.

Helpful Applications

At the end of each chapter, Gladd makes applications of Lukan theology to the modern Christian. For instance, one ought to understand the present humiliation of Christians in light of Jesus’s humiliation and then exaltation (59). The church is continuing to live out God’s story today (97). Christians must trust God’s promises, just as Jesus did (143). However, the chapter conclusions and applications are short. One wishes Gladd devoted more space to these sections.

Ways to Improve

First, at times Gladd “finds” more than what is in the Lukan text. For instance, he may be reading more into Jesus’s three temptations (Luke 4:1-13) than Luke sets forth. Jesus was victorious over Satan’s three temptations, but Gladd says this was the decisive victory over Satan (72, 160). Second, Gladd is sometimes unclear. For instance, who the antichrist is and how he inspires false teachers before he is physically present (157) is a conundrum that Gladd mentions but does not adequately explain. He claims the fourth beast in Daniel 7:14 is both Satan and theocratic Israel (166) but does not explain this seeming contradiction. Third, there are ten helpful tables in the book that compare texts, but additional tables would be beneficial, such as in chapter 6 on the Son of Man.

Conclusion

This reviewer recommends this book as a useful short theology of

Luke. It successfully demonstrates how Luke's quotations and allusions to the OT are an important part of Luke's message. Gladd's book is a helpful volume that accomplishes the purpose of the Crossway series to be an accessible and concise scholarly resource for "students, preachers, and interested laypeople" (11) that is also useful as a textbook "in college and seminary exegesis classes" (12). This book is well written, engaging, and thought provoking.

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***Jesus the Purifier: John's Gospel and the Fourth Quest for the Historical Jesus.* By Craig L. Blomberg. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023, 394 pp., \$49.99.**

Craig L. Blomberg is distinguished professor emeritus of New Testament at Denver Seminary. The author of numerous books, he has distinguished himself in Johannine studies with *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel* (2011) and *Jesus and the Gospels* (3rd ed., 2022).

Three Quests or Not?

The first five chapters (58 percent) of *Jesus the Purifier* is an excellent overview of almost 250 years of the quests for the historical Jesus: scholarly attempts to find what is historical in the Synoptic Gospels, often ignoring the Fourth Gospel. Although most scholars classify them as three quests, Blomberg effectively argues they could be viewed as "three phases of one quest" (xviii). Part of his argument shows the "no quest" period followed by a "new quest" (the second quest) was an interrupted period of scholarly productivity (43-46).

The Fourth Gospel: Now Ready for Prime Time

The sixth chapter covers research on the Fourth Gospel in the last sixty years, and Blomberg demonstrates the usual lack of interest in the Fourth Gospel by most scholars involved in the quests for the historical Jesus (180). He seeks to correct that lacuna in the current beginning of the fourth quest. As an example of what ought to be done, he inspects the motif of Jesus and purity.

Jesus the Purifier

The remainder of the book is an examination of material in the Fourth Gospel dealing with Jesus the purifier (xix). He seeks to make a good case for the authenticity of this material; thus, helping to encourage scholars involved in the “fledgling fourth quest” (xviii) for the historical Jesus to give parity to the Fourth Gospel with the Synoptic Gospels (220-21).

Strengths

Blomberg is an excellent scholar and an effective writer. His research is well written, very organized, and thoroughly documented. Here are some strengths of the book in order of importance. First, Blomberg gives an innovative approach in chapters 7-9 of how to incorporate the Fourth Gospel in the fourth quest by using the criterion of “cutting against the grain” (227-30). Second, his proposal of an underlying motif of Jesus the purifier in the Fourth Gospel is creative and provides a good model for affirming historical accuracy in the Fourth Gospel (223-332). Third, he lists and explains fourteen differences in John’s Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels that point to the historical trustworthiness of all four Gospels despite their differences. Fourth, he gives good correctives and additions to the typical categories of the first three quests (9-19, 43-46). Fifth, his evaluation of the Jesus Seminar is on target, including his colorful critique (123-25). Sixth, his touches of humor are welcome when, for example, he uses many clever heading titles, such as “A Webb of Key Events: Taking Us Back to Jesus the Messiah” (153), a pun involving Darrell Bock and Robert Webb’s book *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus* (2009). “Jesus in a Funk” (125) headlines the section describing the bizarre picture of Jesus by Robert Funk in *Honest to Jesus* (1996). Seventh, Blomberg gives helpful applications to the current church from his Johannine study (380-82) while admitting this is an area he needs to grow in as well (xxi).

Minor Issues

Here are some minor issues/questions this writer has about this excellent book. First, although Blomberg used a tried-and-true criterion for the authenticity of material in the Fourth Gospel, one wishes he developed new criteria or interacted with new ones, such as the ones developed by Paul Anderson (208). Second, an appendix of terms would be helpful. For instance, a student may wish to see where Blomberg describes source, form, and redaction criticisms. For instance,

this reader does not recall him specifically defining source criticism, although he did describe the period of its use (2-9; see 34, 50). Third, it seems preferable to say a person can let Jesus be Lord of his or her life rather than “make him Lord” (80), since He is Lord regardless of what anyone else does. Fourth, this reviewer is uncomfortable with the thought of John putting words in Jesus’s mouth that he never actually said but implicitly claimed (380); rather, Jesus actually said the words. Fifth, it seems better to consider John the Baptist’s baptism as preparatory rather than equivalent to believer’s baptism (249, 340).

Conclusion

Those who, such as Blomberg and this reviewer, accept the accuracy of the historical details in the four Gospels might be inclined to ignore the quests for the historical Jesus. However, this disregard would be a mistake, and biblically conservative voices such as that of Blomberg are invaluable in this ongoing scholarly endeavor. *Jesus the Purifier* is helpful for students and scholars in its case for parity of the Fourth Gospel with the Synoptic Gospels in the fourth quest for the historical Jesus.

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***Simply Trinity: The Unmanipulated Father, Son, and Spirit.* By Matthew Barrett. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2021, 364 pp., \$20.99.**

Since the original 2016 flare up within evangelical circles over whether the Son is subordinate to the Father in their ad intra relations, what began as primarily an online debate has shifted to publication form. Within this context, Matthew Barrett’s recent *Simply Trinity* seeks to reorient contemporaries to the Great Tradition’s formulation of pro-Nicene theology while demonstrating that social trinitarian “revivals” in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries are distortions that move away from orthodoxy. Specifically, what makes Barrett’s work provocative is the indictment that certain evangelicals have unwittingly drifted into social trinitarianism through their advocacy of complementarianism, specifically in the Eternal Functional Subordination (EFS) doctrines of Wayne Grudem and Bruce Ware.

Methodologically, Barrett returns to the Church Fathers, comparing

their formulations against modern social trinitarianism, and then returns to Scripture (38-39). As the title suggests, Barrett's purpose is that "the real Trinity stands up. It is time the church comes face-to-face with the God who is *simply Trinity*. Unadulterated. Uncorrupted. Unmanipulated. I have written this book to wake us up..." (32).

Through analogy to the 1990s Dream Team, Barrett assembles his own team representative of the "greats of the Great Tradition" to bolster his argument: Athanasius of Alexandria, Hilary of Poitiers, Augustine of Hippo, the Cappadocian Fathers, Anselm of Canterbury, John of Damascus, Thomas Aquinas, Francis Turretin, John Owen, and John Gill (33-35).

"Part 1: How Did we Drift Away?" returns to the Arian controversy that led to the Trinitarian Nicene formulation and later clarification at Constantinople in 381. Barrett stresses that the fathers affirmed *homousion* because of the prior commitment to eternal generation, making Jesus a Son by nature in eternity, not by grace temporally after the Father (49-52). Moreover, if what binds each mode of subsistence is the one simple divine essence, what distinguishes each person from each other are *only* eternal relations of origin: unbegotten, eternally begotten, and spiration (57-61). The God of the Christian Faith is *Simply Trinity*.

In comparison to the Great Tradition, Barrett claims that beginning with Rahner's axiom, Trinity and society became intertwined in the twentieth century. "Rahner's Rule gave modern theologians the opportunity to rethink everything, and most importantly, to close the gap between Creature and creature... *God is as God does... God becomes Trinity when he acts like one in history*" (77). With this gap closed, the Trinity has since been used as a paradigm for socialist communities (Jürgen Moltmann), for church and society (Miroslav Volf), as liberation program (Leonardo Boff), as well as to support complementarian theology (Grudem and Ware) (77-93). This so-called revival is in fact a departure which distorts the Triune God into becoming a means for other ends instead of being an end in himself (92).

"Part 2: How Do we Find Our Way Home?" begins with a critique of Rahner, arguing that the immanent cannot be conflated into the economic, but rather God's *opera ad extra* reveals the *opera ad intra*, yet not entirely (118-119). Failing to get the order right (moving from God's transcendence to the Son's incarnate mission) inappropriately projects aspects of economy onto immanency (123). Concerning the divine

essence, the doctrine of divine simplicity is required to affirm that all that is in God is present in each divine person, protecting from modalism, tritheism, social trinitarianism as well as Arianism (137, 145–54). Chapters 6–7 argue for the doctrine of eternal generation through reliance on John Gill and certain biblical evidence (the names “Father” and “Son,” *monogenēs* as “only-begotten” in John 1:4, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9, and images that point to the Son as Radiance, Image, Wisdom, and Ancient of Days).

With this groundwork laid, the reader must wait until chapter 8 for a full-throated assessment of EFS. Several charges are laid: (1) “EFSers” have radicalized their position further by recently affirming eternal generation, and yet “embedding subordination deeper within the eternal, immanent identity of God...” (225); (2) EFS is novel and should be categorized alongside other social trinitarian models; (3) EFS flirts with tritheism, Sabellianism and subordinationism; (4) EFS makes the initiative for the incarnation pointless, since the Son must obey out of necessity, not grace (249); and (5) finally, EFS prioritizes worship to the Father over the Son (257–59).

The remaining chapters explain how the Spirit’s eternal spiration corresponds to his economic work of being sent by the Father and the Son as breath, gift, and love (Ch. 9). Moreover, the one Divine Lord works inseparably in his work of creation, salvation, and adoption according to each person’s divine appropriation (Ch. 10).

On the one hand, *Simply Trinity* is challenging to classify as either a popular or academic level work. While its subject material is clearly abstract in its ontological focus, Barrett’s usage of the 1990s Dream Team, *A Christmas Carol*, life in California, and the DeLorean from *Back to the Future* attempt to bring the discussion down to earth to engage the popular level reader (also through blurbs, charts, and a helpful glossary to orient oneself to technical terminology).

On the other hand, perhaps a work that defies categorization, but which enters into the depths of the current Trinitarian debate while remaining accessible is exactly what modern evangelicals need, especially pastors, leaders, and scholars whose complementarianism has been impacted by EFS. These readers need to be confronted with how such an anti-Nicene approach distorts the Trinity for the sake of gender relations and has come dangerously close to several heresies, undermined the grace of the incarnation by making the Divine Son’s

condescension necessary, and prioritized the glory of the Father over and against that of the Son and the Spirit. Barrett accomplishes this confrontation precisely in chapter 8, which is worth the price of the book.

As a gentle critique, this reviewer will seek elsewhere for a more thorough argument in favor of the *filioque* (Latin “and the Son.” Augustine’s doctrine of the double procession of the Holy Spirit was thereby inserted later into the Western version of the Nicene Creed). After spending considerable time arguing against reading the economic back onto the immanent Trinity inappropriately, Barrett builds his case for the *filioque* not on texts that obviously speak of *ad intra relations* but only on those that speak of the economy of sending (266–72). This is not to deny the *filioque*, but to observe that the exegetical foundation in this case is not as strong. In the divide between East and West, perhaps it would be better to affirm with scholars like Malcolm Yarnell that the Spirit proceeds *from* the Father and *through* the Son.¹ Nevertheless, the clarity of Barrett’s presentation of the Great Tradition’s Pro-Nicene Trinitarianism in contradistinction to modern social Trinitarianism in all its forms is a much-needed confrontation for modern evangelicalism.

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***A Handbook of Theology: Theology for the People of God.* Edited by Daniel L. Akin, David S. Dockery, and Nathan A. Finn. Brentwood, TN: B&H, 2023, xi+634 pp., \$49.99.**

A Handbook of Theology is an introductory work on theology from an evangelical (primarily Southern Baptist) view. It is primarily written for the Bible college or seminary student’s introductory theology courses. It is also beneficial for the pastor, church leader, or lay Christian needing to consult a solid overview of theology.

The editors chose some of the top theologians in their fields to contribute to the volume. Examples include Malcolm Yarnell’s essay on “The Trinity,” Craig Blaising’s contribution to “Last Things,” and

¹Malcolm B. Yarnell III, *Who is the Holy Spirit? Biblical Insights into His Divine Person* (Nashville: B&H, 2019), 89.

Jeffery Bingham's overview of "Patristic Theology." The work is divided into six parts. Part 1 covers "Theological Foundations," including topics such as "God's Existence," "Revelation," "The Role of Tradition," and "Faith and Experience." Part 2 surveys the various "Types of Theology," including biblical, historical, philosophic, systematic, and historical theology. Part 3 is a historical tour through "Theology, History, and Geography," covering the eras of "Patristic Theology" through "Modern Theology" and concluding with "Global Theology." Part 4 is a survey of the major "Christian Doctrines," including "The Trinity," "The Person (and work) of Christ," "Justification," and "The Church." Part 5 elaborates on "Theology and the Christian Life," with topics including "Church Membership," "Spiritual Formation and Discipleship," and "Theology for Evangelism and Missions." Part 6 tackles important issues in "Theology in Culture," including "Religious Liberty," "Racial Reconciliation," and "Marriage and Sexuality."

A Handbook of Theology offers a wealth of strengths. Each essay is concise and understandable for the lay Christian yet doctrinally solid from an evangelical and Southern Baptist view. Each scholar brings the best of their field knowledge to the table in their contributions. The work does not limit itself to being an overview of systematic theology, but in a similar manner to previous theological handbooks (such as *Moody Handbook of Theology*), the work includes discussions on other major types of theology and other useful theological discussions to introduce readers to the vast field of theology. The work also tackles current issues affecting the church such as a biblical understanding of marriage and sexuality (presented in both its own chapter and in the chapter on "Humanity") and the sanctity of human life. The work presents readers with both a solid academic foundation in understanding theology and showing readers how theological belief affects one's understanding of practical and current issues.

Introductory courses on theology should include *A Handbook of Theology* as one of the required textbooks for students to read and consult. It will be most useful in introductory systematic theology and Bible doctrine courses, although some of the essays will also be useful for introductory courses in other theological fields. The work is also useful for the busy pastor or church leader who needs a solid yet concise survey on theology. It should also be used in a church Sunday School or small group Bible study to train church members in a firm foundation

of studying theology and Bible doctrines. If there is any “weakness” with the work, it is only that the reader would want to read more on each theological topic than what is presented in each essay, although each chapter ends with a “For Additional Study” section and additional articles one can consult to further research each theological topic.

Daniel Akin, David Dockery, and Nathan Finn, along with the contributors to this volume, have provided in *A Handbook of Theology* a work that will serve the church for years. Readers will be blessed with theological riches from this concise yet informative text.

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Natural Theology: Geerhardus Vos. Translated by Albert Gootjes. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2022, 184pp., \$25.00.

In recent years discussions concerning natural theology have become vogue in Reformed circles of the Christian academy. Protestant proponents of natural theology have undertaken a staunch effort aimed at substantiating their use of natural theology through citing Reformed theologians of renowned. Such an undertaking links these well-known Reformed theologians to the theological method employed by Thomas Aquinas. Their intentions are to legitimize and normalize the use of natural theology within the Reformed tradition.

The treatise reviewed here seeks to assist that effort by submitting a collection of translated class notes from Geerhardus Vos’s lectures on natural theology as evidence. Vos is not only one of the patron saints of Reformed dogma but also a connoisseur of biblical theology, and if it can be demonstrated such a grandiose figure in the Reformed world appropriated Thomistic methods then everyone else should obviously do the same. Divided into two parts, the present treatise first introduces the reader to natural theology, then its history in the Reformed tradition, and finally presents notes from Vos’s class on natural theology.

Part one contains an introduction authored by J. V. Fesko. The introduction is divided into three sections. The first includes a history of natural theology in the Reformed tradition. Fesko offers a helpful distinction between “natural revelation” and “natural theology”; the

former includes data made available by God's creative activity, the latter anticipates the collection, interpretation, and systemization of that data. Fesko attempts to establish a lineage of natural theology traversing Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas into the Reformed tradition through John Calvin. Fesko then attempts to explain the state of natural theology in the Reformed tradition during the nineteenth century. The Thomistic tradition was employed by Herman Bavinck, setting the stage for the theological milieu in which Vos abided. The final section of the introduction familiarizes the reader with Vos the man and his notes, divulging his sources, methods, and backgrounds.

Part two offers the notes themselves, which were delivered in the catechetical form of question and answer. The notes are divided into three sections, including a prolegomenon, a discourse on various systems of religion, and a brief dialogue on the immortality of the soul. Of these, natural theology is dealt with in the prolegomenon. Vos deals with natural theology in this section because, based on the structure of the notes, natural theology is the starting point of an apologetic for the existence of the Christian God presented in Scripture. For Vos natural theology serves the purpose of leaving unbelievers without an excuse for their rejection of the Christian God (see question 12). Vos in no way apprehends natural theology as used by Aquinas and does not believe such a use is consistent with Reformed thought (see question 25).

The editors reimagine Vos as a Thomistic natural theologian despite his primary contributions elsewhere, especially in biblical theology. Moreover, "natural theology" perennially evades a universally agreed upon objective definition. Some, like Anselm, reckon faith as necessarily *a priori* for theology, while others, like Aquinas, assign a certain priority to human reasoning. Vos is clearly in the former category, and any fair reading of the notes afforded here seems to demonstrate as much. These previously unpublished lecture notes, while full of helpful information, remain sparse and simply do not establish Vos as a Thomistic natural theologian.

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***40 Questions About Arminianism.* By J. Matthew Pinson. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2022, 395pp., \$27.99.**

Framing the whole book regarding Arminianism, Matthew Pinson, president of Welch College in Gallatin, Tennessee, consciously demarcates the border in “the spirit of catholicity” in the evangelical landscape, away from liberal theology (13-14). Pinson unfolds the confessional differences between Arminianism and Calvinism, boosting the evangelical commitment to orthodoxy and the spirit of catholicity.

The book consists of five parts: (1) historical questions in comparing and contrasting the basic doctrines of Arminianism and Calvinism; (2) penal substitutionary atonement and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness in justification; (3) free will and irresistible grace; (4) unconditional or conditional election and the relationship between faith and regeneration; and (5) perseverance and apostasy. Calling himself a Reformed Arminian who belongs to a minority even in the Arminian community, Pinson explains that the identity of Reformed Arminianism stems from Jacobus Arminius. Arminius “was a confessionally Reformed minister to his dying day” and “publicly affirmed the Belgic Confession and Heidelberg Catechism” (13). Pinson believes “these documents [Belgic and Heidelberg] open us up to everything that is beautiful about confessional Reformed theology, because they were written before Reformed theology was ‘tightened up,’ before it morphed from a theology of sovereignty” (60).

Pinson in part two clarifies that Arminius’s doctrines of penal substitutionary atonement and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness were in line with Reformed theology (87, 106). This indicates that not all Arminians agree with the Reformed Arminians who are with Calvinists on *what it means to be in a state of grace* (41, 55). Throughout parts three and four, however, Pinson shows how the Reformed Arminians, like all Arminians, are different from the Calvinists regarding *how one comes to be in a state of grace* (83).

Pinson corrects, in part three, an assumption that Arminians believe that “some sort of natural free will or ability to respond to the gospel without special grace from the Holy Spirit.” These ideas were asserted by Pelagians and semi-Pelagians (140). Rather, Pinson contends Arminius and the confessional Arminian denominations have insisted

that man's will cannot desire God "without the interposition of special divine grace" (149). Arminians believe God's grace reaches out to everyone, not just to particular persons of humanity (175). This concept of divine grace can be resisted by people. It is because "Scripture throughout paints a picture of a personal God who has created personal beings who think, feel, and make authentic choices. Grace is a personal dynamic between two personal beings, not a cause-and-effect relationship between a personal being and a physical object" (215).

Pinson deals also with a typical doctrine of Calvinism, i.e., unconditional election. With some biblical examples for the doctrine of unconditional election, e.g., Ephesians 1:4-11, Romans 8:28-30, Romans 9:6-23, Pinson interprets those passages in relation to eternal salvation from the point of the gospel; namely, not in a legal mindset but in an evangelical perspective that "is conditioned on one's faith in Jesus the Messiah" (245, 272). Ultimately, Pinson says, "God's election of individuals for eternal salvation was in consideration of the merit of Christ apprehended by faith" (254). Arminianism's idea of conditional election of individuals affects the relation of faith to regeneration. Pinson says, "The New Testament yields the idea that repentance and faith (conversion) results in the new birth (regeneration): One becomes a 'born-again Christian' only as a result of repentance and faith" (294).

Both Arminianism and Calvinism seek to base their soteriology on biblical evidence. Respecting the economy of man's salvation, within Christian orthodoxy one may sharpen his or her soteriological understanding through cross-denominational dialogue with those from a different persuasion. Pinson, from the Arminian perspective, fairly explains what historical Reformed Arminianism has believed. He has successfully delineated the doctrinal justification for the tradition derived from Jacobus Arminius. This book is a must read for those who seek to rightly understand and helpfully interact with Arminianism.

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***Teaching for Spiritual Formation: A Patristic Approach to Christian Education in a Convulsed Age.* By Kyle R. Hughes. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2022, 198pp., \$27.00.**

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many industries were forced to adjust and revise their methods and models. From a heavier emphasis on remote work, to the further integration of AI technology, to entire new commercial enterprises formed altogether, much has changed since 2020. One of the industries most impacted by the pandemic has been education. Early solutions included a massive shift to online delivery, as well as the increase of homeschool and non-traditional models. While some of these developments have positive effects, the notion of effective pedagogy is constantly being reworked in our modern day. This raises the question of whether looking forward is always the best solution to education. What about ancient wisdom to address modern pedagogical needs? *Teaching for Spiritual Formation: A Patristic Approach to Christian Education in a Convulsed Age* is a practical work of retrieval, applying ancient wisdom for more effective discipleship and Christian education. In seven chapters highlighting different Christian thinkers of early centuries, Kyle Hughes offers readers time-honored methods for Christian educators. Hughes does more than read ancient texts, he reads them in conversation with modern educational philosophy alongside his own pedagogical observations. Thus, it is both a work of close reading and research as well as personal conviction. What comes across in these pages is more than a blueprint or static model, but a summons to consider the multi-faceted and ancient task of Christian education for the good of the soul and the good of the world.

Chapter 1 provides introductory observations on the state of Christian education, establishing the direction of the remaining chapters. Hughes recognizes that our current age is fraught with temptations towards pragmatism, utilitarianism, and hedonism. True Christian education should address these and other prevailing philosophies from God's revelation in Scripture and the church's tradition of theological reflection. Christian educators are called to help students become certain people, not simply prepare for certain tasks. A call to vocation apart from a call to virtue is antithetical to classical Christian pedagogy. Chapter 2 builds on this summons by enlarging our vision of

the teaching vocation, with particular attention to Gregory the Great and his legacy of contemplative spirituality. Drawing from his *Pastoral Rule*, Hughes demonstrates how Christian educators act as shepherds, directing the soul of students out of the overflow of our own life with God. The spiritual and emotional health of educators directly impacts their work in the classroom. Christian administrators must also concern themselves with the spiritual health of their faculty. Hughes argues that biblical meditation and contemplation are just as important (if not more so) for faculty development as a continuing education module.

Chapter 3 moves towards exploring the identity of students in Christian education environments. For this purpose, Hughes turns to John Chrysostom and relates the idea of training athletes for Christ. This includes the ministry of “counter formation” whereby educators are tasked with addressing prevailing cultural concerns as they impact the mind and hearts of students. Through Chrysostom, Hughes advocates for educators “[providing] opportunities to train the ‘muscles’ of their [students’] souls” (p. 45). The teaching vocation is one akin to an athletic trainer. This means Christian educators advocate for what is good and discourage what is damaging to a student’s soul. Christian educators are ministers of virtue formation, even if the content is mathematics or science. This also means that educators submit to the same standards, modeling what receiving correction means with grace and humility. Chrysostom was also concerned with the role of the senses in spiritual formation, and Hughes adapts this to show how different pedagogical approaches are necessary to aid all kinds of students. This also means that Christian education is a team approach, utilizing the gifts and abilities of all educators and administrators to bring about meaningful intellectual and character development.

Hughes dedicates the next several chapters to the content and methods of teaching gleaned from different Patristic voices. Chapter 4 explores the understanding of virtue from Basil of Caesarea, which Hughes argues encompasses the main content of our teaching. Christian educators are tasked with promoting and inculcating Christian virtue, whether teaching Scripture, British literature, or chemistry. Hughes asserts that “the role of the teacher is to provide such opportunities by which students can practice the virtuous life, such that choosing virtue becomes the default course of action for the student” (84). This may require a complete reimagining of curriculum to meet

this goal, a goal that Basil advances (90-91). Chapters 5 and 6 speak to methodology in Christian education, with attention to Benedict of Nursia and Cyril of Jerusalem. Both thinkers provide reflection on the formative practices and the structured approach necessary to give Christian education the proper trellis for student development. Christian educators ought to be concerned with holiness and should not be wary of time-tested methods of catechesis to reinforce ideas and promote spiritual activity. Hughes helpfully navigates the value of both asceticism and catechism for the sake of building healthy disciples of Christ in Christian education, whether in schools or churches.

Christian education has a unique opportunity to offer the world an anchor amidst prevailing waves of doubt and spiritual chaos. Parochial schools, classical Christian schools, Christian liberal arts colleges, and seminaries for training ministers of the gospel ought to be places of virtue formation just as much as intellectual and practical development. Hughes and his ability to elucidate Patristic voices offers readers the perspective needed to recover Christian education as formation in the intellect as well as the heart. While this work is written especially for institutions of Christian education, Hughes offers wider application for any church ministry involved in education and discipleship. Hughes presents a translatable paradigm for ministers and pastors in the local church, as well as leaders in parachurch ministries. Though his insights come from his experience leading in K-12 Christian classical education, these insights have challenged and encouraged me in my own ministry to undergraduates and seminarians. The treasures of biblical wisdom from the Church Fathers should not be neglected for modern methods but should be recovered for timeless results.

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***Christianity and Modern Medicine: Foundations for Bioethics.* By Mark Wesley Foreman and Lindsay C. Leonard. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2022, 384 pp., \$29.99.**

This book is co-authored by former philosophy professor at Liberty University, Mark W. Foreman, and his daughter, Lindsay C. Leonard,

assistant attorney general for the Commonwealth of Virginia. It updates a previous book, *Christianity and Bioethics: Confronting Clinical Issues* (Joplin: College Press, 1999). In 23 years, more bioethical issues have risen, so this update includes approximately 100 more pages.

The first of ten chapters, “Modern Medicine in a Moral Fog,” introduces the current state of medical ethics. The authors offer a Christian appraisal and propose a pluralism of three ethical theories—consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics—to form a God-honoring Christian perspective for addressing each ethical problem. In chapter 2, “Principles of Bioethics,” they start with Beauchamp and Childress’s four principles: respect for autonomy, beneficence, justice, and non-maleficence. These principles are *prima facie* but may be superseded by stronger obligations. This chapter concludes with a manifesto covering God as Creator and Redeemer, the dignity of humanity and sanctity of life, individuals in community, freedom and finitude, suffering, and medicine and healing. These manifest truths trump secular moral justifications.

Chapters 3 to 10 are devoted to special issues: abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, physician assisted suicide, procreational ethics, genetic ethics, treatment clinical ethics, and research clinical ethics. In each area, the authors tell a real-life story first, then provide moral arguments for both sides, present the legal cases, and summarize their position. Chapter 3 concerns abortion and concludes that personhood begins at the moment of conception. Abortion is, therefore, the killing of a person. Next come two chapters concerning infanticide and euthanasia. The authors argue against active euthanasia since human life is given by God, thus overriding the autonomy principle. Chapter 6 discusses physician assisted suicide and, upon evaluating the evidence, concludes Christians should reject it. The next chapter is about procreational ethics, while chapter 8 covers genetic ethics. The authors argue the goal of medicine is to cure, not to kill a person. The goal of genetic intervention should therefore be to cure, not to enhance.

The last two chapters relate to ordinary clinical practice and clinical trials in advancing the treatment of diseases. In chapter 9, the authors discuss the doctor-patient relationship and emphasize that doctors should fully inform patients of disease and treatment. Doctors should not exhibit paternalism or practice deception but maintain confidentiality. The last chapter, concerning ethics in clinical trials, is weak.

This reviewer was a statistician who worked in the Cancer Treatment Evaluation Program of the National Cancer Institute. It must be noted that randomized controlled clinical trial is the gold standard in establishing treatment efficacy, rather than random clinical trial (RCT; 357). A placebo is only used when there is no current effective treatment, so a new treatment is tested against a placebo. Once there is a good treatment for a disease, the new treatment is tested against a current standard treatment, never a placebo. All clinical trials supported by NIH grants must satisfy very stringent ethical requirements. For instance, during the recent COVID-19 vaccine trial, a statistical procedure stopped the clinical trial early when the new vaccine showed strong evidence of being effective. In a footnote (358), the authors describe a “three-armed” trial, but their definition is incorrect and lacks citation. The authors claim the majority of RCTs are nontherapeutic (360), but that contradicts this reviewer’s experience in cancer clinical trials.

Overall, this book is a good handbook for guiding Christians to deal with biomedical ethical issues. It provides Christian perspectives on many issues and is highly recommended as a reading for a course in biomedical ethics. It does not include a subject index or bibliography.

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