

Lee Beach. *The Church in Exile: Living in Hope After Christendom*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015, pp. 240. \$25 (paperback).

In *The Church in Exile*, Lee Beach lifts up a biblical theology of exile as a hopeful way to understand the current state of the Western church. By engaging biblical scholarship and practical theology, Beach explores the similarities between the post-Christendom existence of the Western church and the exilic communities found in the Old and New Testaments. He believes that this motif can not only help explain the present struggles of the Western church, but can also provide a hopeful view of God's people as a people who thrive in the margins of society.

The book begins with a broad assessment of the church in the West. Beach, a professor of Christian ministry and a pastor with the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada, writes from the context of the North American church. He explains, "The church is one of those former power brokers who once enjoyed a place of influence at the cultural table but has been chased away from its place of privilege and is now seeking to find where it belongs amid the ever-changing dynamics of contemporary culture" (46). Because of the declining social significance of the church in the West, Beach believes that it has entered a form of exile, where it should "stand apart from culture and offer an alternative way of life" (47).

In order to make his point, Beach examines biblical stories, such as those of Esther, Jonah, and Peter. He sees in these stories clear examples of God's people as an exiled people who are called to live in holiness, hope, and prophetic imagination. Using these biblical examples as a framework through which to view the current church's situation, Beach offers practical steps for today's exiled communities to take. The last few chapters of the book lift up a potential way forward for the Western church today, including a call to recognize its situatedness as exiles, to focus on orthopraxy, and to develop a robust eschatology.

With a vantage-point that is unabashedly Western and conservative, Beach might not be easy to swallow for a global or theologically liberal audience. For example, he strongly condemns certain ecclesiologies and somewhat trivializes exile and marginalization. Although he claims that the church in the West has moved from the center to the margins, the reality might be much more complicated (47). The Western church is certainly less centered in society than it was, but it maintains significant power and entanglement with the surrounding culture. While Beach addresses some of these complexities, they do not seem to adequately account for the variety of theological traditions and for the global nature of the church, even in the West.

However, Beach's book is timely and extremely accessible, offering to pastors and scholars alike a gentle way into the missional church conversation. With one hand, he skillfully puts influential biblical and missional theologians in dialogue, and with the other he lays out practical implications for exilic language in local churches. Even if his readers disagree with some of his insights, they would certainly find within the book's pages thought-provoking critiques of culture and hopeful visions for the future of the church.

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Belden C. Lane. *Backpacking with the Saints: Wilderness Hiking as Spiritual Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. pp. 288. \$24.95 (hardcover).

Backpacking with the Saints, serves as both a hiking memoir and a collection of spiritual reflections by Belden Lane, Professor of Theological Studies at Saint Louis University. Lane organizes the book into two sections. The first part presents a survey of overarching themes. These themes are more like principles to take on the trail. In arriving at these guiding principles in wilderness spirituality, Lane relies on his own experience in the wilderness coupled with the writings of select spiritual giants in Christian history. In the second part, Lane draws on the voices of a variety of saints and theologians ranging from Therese of Lisieux on disillusionment to Søren Kierkegaard on solitude. Far from a manual on spirituality, Lane reflects and draws powerful insights on the ways in which hiking and backpacking become a spiritual experience.

Through the pages of his book, Lane invites the reader to accompany him while meandering down obscure trails, scaling steep mountains, and standing in awe on the precipice of a canyon. The stories he spins not only describe a journey past clear rivers and towering boulders, but they detail a wild landscape for the reader to immerse herself in. Many of Lane's discerning thoughts are accompanied by personal narratives. He tells his own story while providing a metanarrative of his reflections. In analyzing his life and wilderness experiences, he skillfully includes the voices of specific saints to illuminate his point. For example, after detailing some of Thomas Traherne's work on the importance of felicity, Lane applies the theory to his own narrative. He shares about the struggle he has felt as a son who lost his father and the way reading about felicity enabled him to let go of this burden and find joy.

The chapters are interspersed with these short personal narratives. This method of writing does two things that are helpful for the reader. First, it breaks up the theory. Writing on the works of the saints can be tedious, but Lane inserts his own narrative to give abstract theory theology a practical application to real life, illuminating the text by analogy. Secondly, personal narrative invites the reader to include herself in the book. When Lane shares about a struggle of his, it makes the text relatable and accessible. The reader can see herself in the pages and thus identify more readily with the conclusions he draws.

As an outdoor enthusiast, I was especially drawn to this book. It became clear that Lane has a deep respect and love for nature. He superbly weaves an intimate picture of the wilderness that both invites and terrifies. By relying on his own adventures and mishaps in nature, he offers a collection of advice, reflections, and perceptions on going into the wilderness and going into the self. His musings offer new insights into the significance of finding peace and solitude in nature drawn from the writings of those saints who came before him.

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John P. Meier. *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the historical Jesus, Volume V: Probing the Authenticity of the Parables*. The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. pp. 464. \$55.00 (cloth).

Surely Jesus spoke parables, yet can we demonstrate that case by case? Did he tease the crowds' imagination with the parable of the unmerciful servant (Mt. 18:23-25), the good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37), or the sower (Mark 4:3-8; Mt. 13:3-8; Luke 8:5-8)? John Meier argues that most parables lack sufficient evidence to be judged authentic (i.e. stemming from Jesus) and instead are historically dubious. In the end only four parables garner enough evidence to be deemed authentic, whereas most are categorized as *non liquet* (not clear either way).

In the introduction, previous volumes of *A Marginal Jew* are summarized to situate this fifth one. Meier also makes notice that the parables have received a free pass as authentic in most historical Jesus scholarship. Lastly, he briefly recapitulates his methodology: the criteria of authenticity (embarrassment, discontinuity, multiple attestation, coherence, rejection, and execution), and responds to recent criticisms of them.

In Chapter 37 (numbered by the series not per volume), Meier delineates seven theses concerning Jesus' parables, starting with the least controversial to the most. He covers the quantity and definition of narrative parables in the synoptic gospels, the use of narrative parables in the Old Testament, that Jesus stood in the prophetic tradition rather than sage, the dependence of the *Coptic Gospel of Thomas (CGT)* upon the Synoptics, and the paucity of authentic parables. Afterwards, he includes an excursus on the nature of allegory to clarify and distinguish it from the parable genre.

Chapter 38 contains the linchpin of Meier's thesis. If the *CGT* is an independent source from the synoptic gospels, the amount of authentic parables skyrockets. Meier exerts fastidious detail and vast erudition to display the *CGT's* dependence upon the Synoptics. He thoroughly shows this using examples from not only parables, but also non-parable sources. The investigation demonstrates that the *CGT* tends to interweave synoptic sources and carries over redactional specificities only found in Luke. Moreover, the *CGT's* Gnosticism explains other redactions, especially of Matthew. Marshaling this evidence, Meier proposes that the *CGT* betrays its sources. Thus, it is more likely than not that *CGT* is dependent and of no use for authenticating purposes.

Chapter 39 contains a survey of narrative parables by sources: Q, Mark, special Matthean (M), and special Lucan (L). This ordering of the parables reveals the lack of multiple attestation and the increase of parables from the earliest sources, Q & Mark, down to the latest, Luke. The few that satisfy some criteria are covered in the next chapter, so what of the rest? Meier gathers them into the *non liquet* category until further investigation. He investigates the Good Samaritan as a test case. Through a study of Luke-Acts theology, motifs, vocabulary, and redactional habits Meier judges the Good Samaritan as a creation of Luke's imagination.

Meier judges the parables of the mustard seed (Mark 4:30-32; Mt. 13:31-32; Luke 13:18-19), the evil tenants of the vineyard (Mark 12:1-11; Mt. 21:33-43; Luke 20:9-18), the great supper (Mt. 22:2-14; Luke 14:16-24), and the talents/pounds (Mt. 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27) as authentic in substance but not in exact wording. Chapter 40 lays out this detailed argument where the mustard seed meets the criterion of multiple attestation and coherence, the vineyard either embarrassment or discontinuity, the great supper multiple attestation and coherence, and the talents/pounds multiple attestation and coherence. Meier's historical-critical method allows these four parables the most plausible claim to authenticity. His probe into the authenticity of the

parables reveals that they are not a surefire route to the historical Jesus as most scholars assume. The concluding remarks recapitulate the ground covered in volume five, grant a sneak preview into volume six (Jesus' identity), and leaves the reader with an array of conclusions.

Meier's book contains many virtues. He writes clearly. He reviews previous volumes of *A Marginal Jew*, summarizes involved arguments, and alerts early on that this monograph does not concern interpreting the parables but is a historical investigation into the authenticity thereof. He interacts with international scholarship: sources from France and Germany inundate the footnotes. Hence, this is a superb resource. Lastly, his overall argument is well ordered. His conclusions reasonably follow upon his assumptions, methods, and premises. He focuses an appropriate amount of space to a vital thesis, i.e., that the *CGT* depends upon the synoptic gospels.

While Meier buttressed his thesis by arguing at length that *CGT* depends upon the Synoptics, he has omitted discussion of an even more ruinous critique, namely the recent criticisms of the criteria of authenticity. Whereas the independence of the *CGT* on the Synoptics undermines his argument, the demise of the criteria undercuts his entire project. Such skepticism towards the criteria warrants a rebuttal, perhaps in an excursus. In place of that, in the introduction only four pages are given to differing methods, and the most crippling critiques receive notice in two endnotes 22 and 28. The former seems to contain an *ad hominem* fallacy, wherein he says of one author that their "comments radiate more heat than light." In the latter endnote, he cites yet does not substantively engage any essays from the monograph *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*. This comes off as one-sided. Surely he was not convinced, yet why not show the reader this in more detail? Lastly, Meier seems to compose a straw man of Allison's position in *Constructing Jesus*. This negative feedback should not lead one to dismiss the totality of Meier's argument, but *in lieu* of persuasion a critical assessment of his argument leaves the reader *non liquet* about methodological issues.

With volume five complete, John Meier provides another original and controversial contribution to historical Jesus scholarship. Meier's book occludes the way of any scholar's use of the parables for a historical reconstruction of this marginal Jew. Like Jesus' parables, Meier leaves us with a book that "teases the mind into active thought" (so C.H. Dodd, *Parables of the Kingdom*).

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Christian B. Miller, et. al. eds. *Character: New Directions from Philosophy, Psychology, and Theology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. pp. 720. \$74.00 (hardcover).

This anthology features groundbreaking research in character traits from leading scholars in philosophy, psychology, and theology. The book's content is pertinent to both students and experts whose interests lie in the interdisciplinary study of character. The curious layperson will also find it accessible. Within the compilation there are thirty-one essays, written by both budding scholars and the book's four editors, who are established voices within their respective fields. The rising scholars' contributions were selected as a part of a fellowship competition, supported by the Character Project at Wake Forest University. Eight main sections follow a brief introduction. They include: (1) an overview of the study of character in philosophy and psychology, (2) beliefs about character, (3) the existence and nature of character, (4) character and ethical theory, (5) virtue epistemology, (6) particular virtues, (7) character development, and (8) challenges to character and virtue from neuroscience and situationism. Each of the eight main sections subsequently features between two and eight chapters, written by either individual or collective writers. There are a total of thirty-one chapters in the book.

One notable chapter is, *Character Traits and the Neuroscience of Social Behavior*, written by Daniel J. McKaughan. In this chapter, McKaughan considers the role the brain will play in future discussions concerning the feasibility of virtue theory. McKaughan identifies both points of relevance and non-relevance of the significance of neuroscience for ethics. Specifically, he discusses oxytocin, a peptide hormone that a group of neuroscientists, led by Paul Zak, have recently classified, "the Moral Molecule." McKaughan addresses the hype surrounding oxytocin, arguing that calling it "the Moral Molecule" leads to an oversimplification of the role it plays in the brain. In the remaining sections of his chapter, McKaughan offers an alternative perspective on how neuroscience can offer insight for our understanding of character traits. In all, McKaughan's essay is persuasively insightful, while still remaining modestly open to new avenues of convergence between neuroscience and virtue theory.

Another striking chapter authored by Sara Konrath is titled, *Can Text Messages Make People Kinder?* Konrath's research is the first known study to explore cellular technology's potential to alter deeply embedded character traits in humans. As her title suggests, Konrath's experiment aimed to make participants kinder through repetitive text messaging. While the results of her study were convoluted, she was able to show that participants who received empathy-building text messages were rated more empathetic by others, offered more of their time to a distressed person, and reacted more prosocially to a hostile text message. In the future, Konrath hopes her study will prompt others to ask whether text messages can cultivate dispositions such as optimism, thankfulness, and honesty. In sum, this book is a seminal compilation of cutting-edge, interdisciplinary research on character. Featured authors not only offer fresh insights and critiques, but also creatively pave the way for new research that will be formative in the coming years.

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Monica Miller, Anthony B. Pinn, Bernard "Bun B" Freeman, eds. *Religion in Hip-Hop: Mapping the New Terrain in the US*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015. pp. 296 \$34.95 (paperback).

Consisting of fourteen original pieces by as many authors, *Religion in Hip-Hop* offers a variety of voices with varying critical lenses the opportunity to examine the nuanced relationship between hip-hop and religion. The resulting work reads more like a cipher than one succinct argument, with authors conversing with one another, bouncing off of each-others work, and riding over the same beats from opposite angles to radically different conclusions. The result is a battleground where the very souls of hip-hop's greatest appear to be on the line. Is Tupac a modern day Christian prophet? A priest for the marginalized? Or is he more nihilistic? You will find arguments for all three here.

While the collection begins in a relatively straightforward manner examining various artists' faith by delving into their art and lives, later chapters quickly move into more dynamic territory. Editors Monica Miller and Anthony B. Pinn describe the volume as holding "Tupac alongside Adorno, [Lupe] Fiasco . . . in balance with Marx, rappers' oratorical skills with preachers, Kanye West with Nietzsche . . . Marcy Projects paralleled with esteemed art galleries . . . West and Derrida over and against performance artists like Marina Abramovic" while also examining hip-hop's "engagement with . . . conspiracy theories, the new humanism in hip-hop that challenges and rejects fundamentalisms" and hip-hop's tenuous relationship with the church (216-217).

The importance of rapper Bernard "Bun B" Freeman's involvement cannot be overstated: while most of the essays are at home in abstract theory, Bun B's contributions remain decidedly and refreshingly in the here and now. His first piece rejects the common notion of hip-hop and religion as diametrically opposed, instead describing the two as parallel paths. Other standout contributions include those of Elonda Clay, Daniel White-Hodge, Greg Dimitriadis, and Joseph Winters.

Those hoping to be spiritually fed may wish to look elsewhere, as the essays generally define religion and God as loose concepts, thus refraining from pushing any particular religious agenda. While the authors are undoubtedly experts in this field, the overall selection of rappers for in-depth exploration is surprisingly narrow. With some overlap, four of the fourteen chapters study Jay-Z, with both Kanye and Tupac being discussed at length in three chapters each. This feels like a missed opportunity, for this collection successfully breaks new ground academically but recycles the same three figures time and time again. The newer generation of rappers is particularly under-represented, with figures such as Jay Electronica, Tyler the Creator, and Kendrick Lamar—each of whom possess a catalog of music with distinct religiosity—being omitted entirely. This is but a minor complaint in a great series of essays destined to advance and expand the field of hip-hop and religion. This collection belongs on the shelves of hip-hop heads and religious scholars alike.

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Raimon Panikkar. *Opera Omnia Vol. III.1: Christianity, Part One: The Christian Tradition*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis. 2015. pp. 370. \$90.00 (cloth).

The Christian Tradition is the latest addition to the compilation of pluralist theologian Raimon Panikkar's (1918-2010) completed works. This is a difficult book to summarize – and that is not only because Panikkar's project is unapologetically cosmic in scope. The volume covers over a decade of intellectual development and is comprised of nine separate works: six articles, two lectures, and one book (1961's *Humanismo y Cruz*, which itself consists of a series of ten articles and lectures from 1948-1961). Suffice to say, then, that it would be a vain undertaking to attempt to condense Panikkar's reflections on Christianity with any adequacy or depth here.

The following may, however, be offered: one of the values of this work is that it offers us a glimpse into the development of Panikkar's thought leading up to his first major publication, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* (1964), which was an adaptation of his Ph.D. thesis in theology. As such, *Christian Tradition* gives us insight into Panikkar's roots as he comes into the mature stage of pioneering a pluralist theology. The volume is worth the price of admission for this alone. Moreover, despite its language feeling sometimes outdated – something Panikkar himself admits (xxii) – his youthful thinking here retains a freshness that is characteristic of all original thought. Indeed, it may be remarked that the quality of every great work of literature is that it less addresses itself less to a known audience as much as it *creates* its audience upon debut. This certainly is the case with *Christian Tradition*, which showcases a younger Panikkar beginning to articulate and shape his own unique understanding of the world. From his musings on science to his reflections on individualism and anthropology, and from his exploration of salvation to his thoughts on monasteries, there is something irreducibly *his own* on every page. This is not an idle observation. Rather, it is a recognition of Panikkar's own insistence that there is something intrinsically “autobiographical” (p. v) to all theologizing – something he reiterates throughout the volume. *Christian Tradition* contains not just the reflections of an academic theologian. It is so much more than that, representing the fruits of a deeply spiritual personality coming to terms with no less than a unique pluralistic vision of Christianity's relationship to reality as a whole. In this light, we can appreciate that each essay is a theoretical-existential *experiment* in spiritual practice – a hybrid of both speculation and praxis. *Christian Tradition* is less united in content (though it certainly is about “the Christian tradition” most generally) than it is united by experimental form.

Reading Panikkar, one may ultimately come to sense that he was proverbially “ahead of his time.” Perhaps his way of theorizing and practicing interreligious pluralism has much yet to teach us. Indeed, wrestling with him today, Panikkar's work strikes one less as a relic of outdated thinking (a common sentiment in some theology of religion circles) but rather its potential future. We see the seeds of that potential germinating here in this volume.

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Archie J. Spencer. *The Analogy of Faith: The Quest for God's Speakability*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015. pp. 445. \$28.00 (paperback).

One of the great ironies of modern theology is that in attempting to ensure we speak accurately about God we find ourselves with less and less to say. Can we have any confidence that human speech about God 'reaches' God in any meaningful or accurate way? Archie's Spencer's *The Analogy of Faith: The Quest for God's Speakability* labors over this foundational question. His answer—to put it in simple and Barthian fashion—is that we cannot unless God in Christ shows us how. His monograph is meant to establish the preconditions for reliable human speech about God in a Christological "analogy of faith"—that is, in the correspondence between God and humanity enacted in Jesus Christ.

Spencer's work is divided into five chapters, the first four of which provide historical overview and commentary for the concept of analogy, ranging from Plato the present day. In the first chapter, he identifies the cosmological assumptions in Platonic, Neoplatonic, and Aristotelian thoughts, which he delineates as a "Cause Effect Resemblance" (CER)—the idea that every effect bears some resemblance to its cause. In the second chapter, he argues that these assumptions make possible Aquinas' "analogy of being." Reliable human speech about the transcendent reality of God can be guaranteed by way of analogy, as long as one can safely maintain the ontological similarity and dissimilarity inherent within Creator and creation. This, Spencer seeks to argue, is both a difficult task and a shaky assumption. He argues that much of the confusion in later Catholic thought about analogy stems from Aquinas' own inconsistent development of the term.

Chapters 3 and 4 respectively turn to Barth and Jüngel. These chapters present not only a quintessentially Protestant rejection of natural theology, but an interpretation of modern agnosticism and atheism as the inevitable result of a doctrine of God predicated upon the cosmological ontology of antiquity. Following Barth, Spencer argues that reliable speech about God must be sourced in the Word of God—i.e. in Christ as the "analogy of faith." To do so, he looks to Barth's doctrine of election, and holds forth against criticism that Barth's concept of the *analogia relationis* becomes a kind of accidental "analogy of being." His use of Jüngel allows him to extend the content of a Christological "analogy of faith" towards sociolinguistic applications, which serves to set up his final argument. Spencer's fifth chapter contains his own contributions to the "analogy of faith," in which Christ—as Word of God—is conceived of in terms of participation, performance, and parable, thus legitimating all three for analogical use in theological speech.

Spencer's conclusions depend heavily upon the work of Karl Barth and Eberhard Jüngel; those not already predisposed towards Barth will find little new to love. A desire to speak towards a wider audience, both specialist and popular, means that the tempo and pacing of the work can a bit uneven. His journey through the history of major Christian discourses on analogy provides chronological breadth appropriate to a popular work, even while it addresses a question and genealogy of thought that likely appeals more to the specialist. Here, he devotes several

hundred detailed pages to conceptions of analogy that he will comprehensibly reject. The admirable goal of introducing the reader to the full extent of debate runs up against the fact that the prose style, technical discussions, and philosophical terminology are largely unsuited to anyone not already familiar with the subject matter.

Set against this extensive historical backdrop, Spencer's own conclusions seem, by contrast, to be far more quickly sketched. One might ask whether he understands his work to represent a further extension of the Christological applications of Barth and Jüngel's work, or perhaps as a means of drawing connections between the existing Christology of these two thinkers and a larger evangelical tradition. That said, the book is a thorough and academic treatment of the theological uses of analogy. Spencer's comprehensive treatment of his subject matter is a strong-point, as is his ability to appropriate Barth for evangelical audiences in order to bring greater richness to discussions of the doctrine of God.

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John Webster. *God without Measure: Working Papers in Christian Theology. Volume I: God and the Works of God*. New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015. pp. 240. \$120.00 (hardback).

John Webster's new release collects his recent thoughts on a variety of doctrines. The book is thereby accessible for narrow reading on a particular doctrine, but the organization builds on itself with recurring themes and echoes to previously and later developed thoughts. The refrain of the book is the precedence of the trinity before all other doctrines: proper Trinitarian theology is the means of explicating any and every other doctrine. Webster repeatedly shows how any attempt outside of such grounding consistently falls short.

Webster offers frequent quips about the nature of theology which rise to a crescendo in the final essay, "What Makes Theology Theological?" He employs a self-consciousness that invites the reader—even if less equipped in breadth and depth of study which Webster unabashedly betrays—to critical engagement with the texts he utilizes, the thinkers he thinks with, and the ideas he preaches. To be sure, "preaches," I submit, deserves a raise of the eyebrow but not an eye roll. Each essay builds upon and towards beautiful affirmations of faith, such as at the end of his soteriology essay regarding the essence of the history of the Savior: "the accomplishment of the incarnate Son, the servant of God who is exalted and lifted up, and very high" breathing freshness into even the *language* of traditional doctrine (157).

Such attention to detailed phrasing and concise "punches" of argument led me to inquire the details of his thoughts on theological language in general. How might he specify the relationship between human language and theological truth, the ancient problem of the inadequacy of human language to sing divine truth and beauty? One instance of the relation between terms and content arises in his argument regarding the place of the doctrine of justification relative to the trinity: to say the trinity is the only Christian doctrine "might attract the charge of theomonism, however unjust," but "to say that the content of Christian dogmatics is the double theme of God and his external works" (161). Does the alteration resist the charge? If so, we expect a difference in content between the phrases, but I detect little hint that such a change is intended. So what is it to affirm the inadequacy of language and the significance of its precision? How might explicit account of this tension further clarify what makes theology theological? What might a Trinitarian theology of language look like?

Perhaps the structure and organization of the book is most responsible for its engaging nature. Its clarity in detail does not cost its coherence as whole in the slightest. On the contrary, the rhythm of "what is theology all about," "what is this doctrine about," "how does the trinity explain it," and "how have others done it" makes the pace of each essay quick enough to not lose the forest for the trees while slow enough not to get out of breath. His systematic and careful—though not excessive—distinction between doctrines, and pointed arguments within each of the 3-5 sections comprising each article, points the reader always toward the peak of the article which constitutes a brief historical overview and forecast for future work in theology. Demonstrating a talent for utilizing a range of theologians even broader than Aquinas to Barth and contemporary protestants offers an appeal to most every theologically minded reader regarding where theology has been and where it is going.

Webster's commitment to comment on the nature of theology, the place of each doctrine as well as its content, and to wrestle with people who disagree on both topics, makes for a read which is, in a particular sense of the word, entertaining. For example, his criticism of Wolfhart Pannenberg in the third section of the third chapter, "Eternal Generation," functions as a means to illustrate his argument concerning a proper conception of divine aseity as life in Godself.

Webster's Pannenberg prioritizes the person of Jesus over the divine processions, thereby making problematic the proper relationship between the Father and the Son. A proper conception of the Trinity is the bottom line for Webster because with it, the incarnation and processions can be properly explained but if trinity is seconded to the identity of Jesus, cognitive and ontological priorities in the revelation of the Godhead risk confusion and distinction between the Son and the Father risks their unity (39). Rather, Jesus is known through/as "utter incommensurability," which follows directly from an understanding of Jesus as *principally* inseparable from filiation. Here we find an instance of the kind of life Webster pushes us to find in divine aseity: much more than a negation of dependency or external causation, a theme already apparent in the third essay. It's this kind of spiraling construction which makes the process of reading Webster enjoyable in itself.

The pinnacle essay of the work—"What makes Theology Theological"—gives a concise, precise account of what belongs in the domain of theology: all things of God and all things in their relation to God. This chapter may prove convicting in its condemnation of 'curiosity' as seeking to know things in themselves apart from God, on the surface, and for no end but knowledge itself. This coupled with quips about "whether theological institutions possess the willingness or capacity for such a recovery remains unclear" leads me to wonder what a reform of theology on the level of institution may look like (224). Webster accounts for what makes theology theological, but what—and Who and how?—makes theologians, churches, or institutions theological? Webster accounts for the practice of study and the beauty of contemplation in the life of the believer, but how might the lay perspective inform the practice of theological theology? How might such an inversion affect the ways we think about theological institutions and the ongoing reformation of the Church?

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