

Erickson, Millard J. *The Evangelical Mind and Heart: Perspectives on Theological and Practical Issues*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993. 240 pp. \$14.99.

This work consists of occasional pieces produced over the past few years. For those who have come to appreciate the moderate but firm Reformed perspective of Erickson and his even-handed, analytical style, these pieces will be cordially greeted. For the uninitiated, they can serve as an excellent introduction to Millard Erickson.

The book's ten chapters cover a variety of issues arranged in five "parts." The subjects addressed include evangelicalism and society (part 1), evangelicalism and environmental concerns (part 2), evangelical Christology (part 3), issues dealing with salvation and Christian mission (part 4), and the future of evangelicalism (part 5). The essays in part 5 are must reading for all seminary applied-theology teachers and church-growth devotees.

While the parts on "Evangelicalism and Society" and environmental issues are solid (though somewhat prophetically timid), one gets the distinct impression that Erickson's evangelical theological juices do not really begin to flow until the last three sections.

Erickson's comments on "Contemporary Evangelical Christology" are informative (chap. 5), but chapters 6 and 7 on contemporary debates on soteriology reveal more forcibly his mind and heart. In his analysis and critiques of these issues Erickson is at the top of his theological form. This is especially true of his handling of the "free grace" versus "Lordship salvation" controversy. For those not familiar with this debate, the central issue deals with the relationship between the experience of saving grace and subsequent developments in Christian experience. This dispute has been primarily carried on within the confines of the dispensationalist wing of Reformed Evangelicalism (the main disputants being Zane Hodges and John MacArthur).

The so called "free grace" advocates strongly contend that salvation is by faith in the "free grace" of Christ alone—plus absolutely nothing having to do with character change and gospel obedience. For them, any other view perverts "the pure grace of the gospel" (108). In strident opposition, the "Lordship" advocates describe the "free grace" position as a "cheap grace" compromise of the true gospel.

While Erickson appeals for a lowered theological temperature in this heated debate and patiently lays out the pros and cons of each position, he does essentially come down on the side of the "lordship" proponents—but not without dishing out a few well-placed critiques of the "Lordship" position's lack of logical consistency.

Arminians might let out an "I told you so" yawn in the face of such dispensational Reformed internecine warfare (possibly wishing a plague on both houses), but the critiques and insights of Erickson should prove quite helpful and stimulating to both Reformed and Arminian students of soteriology. His response is basically that both sides have been too abstract and have not been true enough to the "union with Christ" concept of the NT view of salvation. Forgiveness and obedient discipleship are not things that Christ gives apart from

being "in Him," but are inseparable, personal parts of the total package of salvation (121-122).

The same even-handed analytical and critical restraint is also deftly applied in his treatment of the so-called "signs and wonders" movement (chap. 8). Here again Erickson is rewarding in his analysis and charitable in criticism. But one wishes that the same could be said of chapter 6 which deals with debates about the identity and final destiny of the lost. This chapter could be appropriately entitled "My Gripe with Clark Pinnock's Disturbing Developments." While Erickson is typically fair in laying out the positions of Pinnock and calm in his reply, one senses a thinly veiled impatience with Pinnock, especially in the discussion of "annihilationism." This seems to contribute to a very impoverished biblical response with almost no acknowledgement of the severity of the theological implications involved.

It seems to this reviewer that with the enormity of the theological implications involved (such as: How can the electing God be just and yet damn souls to eternal torment whom He has consciously not elected to salvation?), and the growing number of evangelicals attracted to annihilationism (Pinnock, John Stott, P. E. Hughes, E. W. Fudge), one wonders if a more astute biblical and theological response to Pinnock is not called for. This chapter is the low point of an otherwise rewarding and stimulating book.

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Farris, T. V. *Mighty to Save: A Study in Old Testament Soteriology*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1993. 301 pp. \$19.99.

Finding a dearth of works on OT soteriology, T. V. Farris has sought to fill this lack with *Mighty to Save*. The book consists of 15 chapters which analyze various key texts. In addition to the numbered chapters are a preface, an introduction, a conclusion, an excursus on covenant, and an addendum on penal judgment. Farris has chosen to do exegesis of representative passages rather than to give merely a broad overview or a systematic analysis by category. Due to the uneven and episodic nature of the book, a detailed description of the contents is not practical.

The book is very uneven. Some footnotes are unassimilated into the discussion in the text. Discussing Ezekiel 28, Farris ignores the alternative interpretation of the text found in note 11 (31). Within exegetical passages an inordinate amount of space is often given to exegetical methodology. Over half of the study of Exodus 34:6-7 is a general discussion of the principles of lexicography (121-129). More than a third of the study on Joel 2:21-32 analyzes the elusive nature of the waw consecutive (203-208). These studies in exegetical methodology may be helpful to the student, but they are not the stated topic of the book. This is as much a textbook of hermeneutic methodology as a finished study on soteriology.