

a view of both foci of the theological spectrum in regard to how the origin and nature of Scripture is understood within the Protestant tradition.

One of the key issues which this study underlines is how much the two opposite poles of the Protestant theological discussion about Scripture share in common. This is especially highlighted in the fact that Pannenberg and Bloesch, who both view Scripture from different perspectives, in diverse ways and for varying reasons, find themselves at the same place, i.e., the text of the Bible cannot be identified with divine revelation. Hence, Scripture cannot be used authoritatively by either theologian to determine doctrine or ethics. Intimately connected with the aforementioned, which Hasel strongly emphasizes, is the problem of the subjectivity in respect to the determination of what is the true canon within the canon. In the final sense, the determiner of the truth of Scripture for both Pannenberg and Bloesch becomes the reader. Hence, for both theologians, the Bible becomes simply another book filled with partial truth which must be distilled from the text rather than God's eternal truth.

The point of Hasel's book is clear. Both the position of Pannenberg and Bloesch on Scripture have modified the Protestant Scripture principle on the basis of rationalistic and philosophical presuppositions tied to the Enlightenment. These prevent one from allowing the Word of God to interpret itself (*scripturam ex scriptura explicandam esse*). It seems that once Protestantism moves in this direction, it would cut itself off from its *raison d'être*. Thus, as Hasel so aptly points out, one must not try to utilize a philosophical construct when attempting to explain the origin, nature, and even the use of Scripture. Rather, one should accept it as it stands and determine its origin and nature by taking more seriously its own internal witness (257-258). It is only in this context that one can truly understand the Bible's authority and its proper use.

Hasel's work, then, serves a valuable function within today's theological world and is something that needs to be taken seriously. He has clearly demonstrated that the presuppositions that one begins with will determine how authoritative Scripture will be for doctrinal formulation and how that authority will be exercised in theology. If one begins with faulty assumptions, then to that degree the authority and truthfulness of Scripture will be called into question. This direction of thought disassociates Protestant theologians from the very thing which gives their theology its impetus, i.e., an authoritative Bible. Furthermore, Hasel has reminded us that fidelity to the internal witness of God's Word is integral to understanding its message. It is this latter point which underscores the authority of Scripture for determining doctrine and ethics.

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Hebblethwaite, Brian. *Ethics and Religion in a Pluralistic Age: Collected Essays*.
Edinburgh: Clark, 1997. viii + 216 pp. \$43.95.

At least since his enthusiastic defense of christological orthodoxy during the *Myth of God Incarnate* debate, Brian Hebblethwaite has been a consistently visible and helpful contributor to the development of English-language theology. In this

new collection of scholarly essays, Hebblethwaite examines a variety of issues in Christian ethics, the philosophy of religion, Christian theology, and religious studies.

In the first section of the book, Hebblethwaite attends primarily to a range of philosophical issues relevant to Christian belief. The first chapter considers aspects of humanness—including freedom, mortality, love, creativity, and the experience of moral obligation—that point us toward the reality of God. It is a clear and accessible example of a style of argument familiar from the work of such authors as Langdon Gilkey and Peter Berger, who explore the relevant issues in greater detail. In the second, from a theological perspective, Hebblethwaite considers philosophical arguments designed to show that moral language only expresses attitudes but is not even potentially true or false. Hebblethwaite's remarks, which conclude with some suggestions about the contribution of Christian belief to the argument, may serve as an initial guide to theological readers unacquainted with a highly complex discussion. The third chapter, more specialized than the others in the book, addresses the meaning of conscience in the thought of the English bishop and philosopher Joseph Butler.

Chapter 4, a discussion of the varieties of human and Christian goodness, is especially worth the reader's attention. Hebblethwaite's purpose is to argue that, within a thoroughly realist conception of Christian ethics, we must allow for a diverse range of *styles* or *kinds* of Christian living. "Christian discipleship is . . . a matter of relation—of growth in faith and love that permits the Spirit of Christ to work through us and build us up into Christian personalities and groups of very different kinds" (50). He buttresses his argument by noting the importance of supererogatory goodness (citing Albert Schweitzer and Mother Teresa), the developmental character of the Christian life, the role of sometimes imperfect social circumstances in offering us options, and the diversity of "special interests and vocations, both moral and non-moral, of particular Christians" (57). He clearly affirms "that there must be no compromise with evil" (59) while acknowledging that there may be less than ideal goods—though at the same time insisting that diverse forms of Christian goodness can be equally appropriate. Wherever we meet it, in Christians or non-Christians, Hebblethwaite is certain, goodness results from the Spirit's work. References to marriage, sexuality, and politics all enrich his argument. The position he develops is a liberating alternative to relativist and pluralist approaches as well as to monochrome accounts of Christian spirituality and ethics that seek to reduce Christian living to a uniform pattern.

The discussion in chapter 5 of divine goodness is also useful and insightful. Hebblethwaite recognizes, of course, that we can come to see that God is good by attending to the divine love exhibited in the life of Jesus. We can also, however, "deduce it logically from the basic premises of theism" (65). Our talk of God as *good*, he suggests, is analogical: it builds on our use of *good* to characterize human actions and states of character. We can give content to our talk of divine goodness by reflecting on the meaning of human goodness. But of the central traits characteristically associated with human goodness, only love, he maintains, can be predicated of God without qualification. Thus, to speak of God as good is to speak

of God as loving; otherwise, there would be no meaning to our talk of God as love at all. He concludes by arguing, less persuasively, that to conceive of God as necessarily loving provides the basis for a philosophical argument for a "social" rather than a "psychological" understanding of God's Trinity.

More controversy is likely to be evoked by Hebblethwaite's proposals regarding the Christian view of atonement in chapter 6. He maintains on moral grounds that we can best understand the work of Jesus as *expressing* God's eternal forgiving and transforming love, not as *enabling* God to save humanity. God's suffering presence with humanity is costly; salvation is not, therefore, cheap. Views of atonement grounded in retributive theories of punishment are, however, morally suspect. "[J]ustification and sanctification—the two elements in atonement—are best understood in terms of God's free forgiveness and effective transformation of sinners, the moral seriousness of the former being shown in the whole story of the Incarnation, including the passion and way of the cross, and moral seriousness of the latter consisting in the fact that conformation to Christ is no easy, automatic transformation but a winning of our penitence and commitment by that incarnate love and an inspiration from within by the Spirit" (83). He concludes by engaging with a number of contemporary writers on atonement, offering a useful critique, in particular, of Richard Swinburne's notion of vicarious penitence. He has certainly not said the last word here on a complicated topic, but those uncomfortable with views of atonement as satisfaction or penal substitution will find support in his arguments, and those who find these views religiously powerful will be challenged to refine their position.

On the whole, the second half of the book retains the primarily moral focus of the first. Here, however, a specific set of moral problems is much more in view: those created by Christianity's encounter with other religious traditions. A thoughtful student of non-Christian faiths who is sensitive to the abuses to which Christian triumphalism has given rise and committed on Christian grounds to loving engagement with those from varying backgrounds, Hebblethwaite remains serious about affirming the particularity, adequacy, and distinctive value of Christianity.

The result is a delicate balancing act, generally performed with grace. Chapter 7, "The Jewishness of Jesus," is a gem. It is at the same time a thoroughly orthodox exploration of what it means to identify Jesus as Immanuel, God-with-us, and a thoroughly generous appreciation of the faith of Israel as the matrix providentially prepared for the formation of Jesus' humanity. Thus, Hebblethwaite is confident that the "Light of the world is forever a first-century Galilean carpenter, turned free-lance rabbi, whose teaching and example, in life and death, . . . [were] Jewish through and through. . . . It had to be as a Jew that the Word was made flesh" (102). The chapter provides Hebblethwaite with worthwhile opportunities to defend a non-miraculous conception of special providence and a (thoroughly Chalcedonian) kenotic Christology.

In chapters 8 and 9, Hebblethwaite assesses and finds wanting Don Cupitt's attempted synthesis of non-theistic Buddhism and non-theistic Christianity and highlights a tension between John Hick's espousal of an almost unqualified religious pluralism and his ongoing seriousness about *truth* in religion. *Ethics and*

Religion in a Pluralistic Age concludes with three chapters, originally delivered as lectures in India in the winter of 1983-1984, examining the problem of evil as a practical challenge for Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism.

These chapters are valuable for several reasons. They appropriately highlight the "street level" *pastoral* task of theology. They emphasize the interweaving of the personal and social dimensions of sin and salvation: Hebblethwaite's qualified appreciation of social movements as diverse as those of Gandhi and the liberation theologians reflects his sense that a faithful response to God must have a social dimension; at the same time, he is perpetually aware of the temptation to convert faith into ideology. They offer an introduction to the complexities of Buddhist and Hindu ethics and metaphysics, the work of a sympathetic and informed observer who can discern the work of God's Spirit outside the borders of the church while remaining confidently Christian. And they highlight the important differences among the three traditions under review—an important prerequisite to both mission and dialogue, and a useful antidote to a facile pluralism that ignores the differences or regards them as unimportant.

These essays are clearly written and simply organized, and each is short enough to be readily digestible. Hebblethwaite's reflections on divine action in the world, divine goodness, the nature of Christian ethics, and Christianity's place among the world religions will provoke and stimulate many readers. Readers may wish to disagree on more than one point. But they will finish the book having engaged with an attractive vision of Christian faith as grounded in a patient divine love, a vision that suggests a number of useful directions for further investigation.

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Hick, John, Clark H. Pinnock, Alister E. McGrath, R. Douglas Geivett, and W. Gary Phillips. *More than One Way? Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World.*, Dennis L. Okholm and Timothy R. Phillips, eds. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995. 283 pp. \$16.99.

While questions about the fate of the unevangelized have always existed in the evangelical community, the last ten years have seen an unprecedented eruption of interest and discussion on this topic and related issues. This book is not an attempt to answer the questions, but to make clear the issues. Is Jesus the sole source of salvation? Must there be conscious faith in him to reap the benefits of his death? How are other religions to be understood? Is God fair and/or loving in his actions? Not one but four responses to these and related questions are presented in this volume. Following a brief, introductory chapter tracing the issues in the debate by Wheaton College editors, Dennis Okholm and Timothy Phillips, the book follows a standard format. Each of the four authors (or in the case of Douglas Geivett and Gary Phillips, a pair of authors) presents their basic case in about thirty pages. That is followed by a response by each of the other three presenters. Each section then concludes with a final reply from the original writer.

The first two authors present no surprises. The well-known pluralist John Hick summarizes his position that all major ethical religions lead to God and