

Fourth, we may choose (as I do) “preventative bivalence” where “statements concerning future free contingents are either true or false but also that their truth value can change” (99). Holtzen states that this option has a “real force ... over other approaches” (100); but he rejects it based on the question, “Does God ever believe, and therefore know” which “preventable truths will not be prevented?” (101; cf. 93). Nevertheless, the Bible indicates that God foreknew the preventable future that David would be king (1 Sam 16:1), and revealed to David a preventable future attack by Saul, which David prevented (23:11–13) so that he became king (2 Sam 2:11; 5:3). Therefore, God’s foreknowledge of future free choices may be exhaustive, definite, and dynamic—in harmony with Holtzen’s view of God’s trust in his “dynamic relationship with humanity” (95). For a proposal concerning dynamic foreknowledge, see Martin Hanna, “Foreknowledge and the Freedom of Salvation” in *Salvation: Contours of Adventist Soteriology* (Theological Studies 11, Martin F. Hanna, Darius W. Jankiewicz, and John W. Reeve, eds., [Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2018]).

Holtzen’s book is an excellent resource for those who are interested in the biblical and philosophical issues raised by open and relational theism. While I hold a different view of God’s foreknowledge in relation to the bivalence (or non-bivalence) of statements about future free choices, this does not detract from the value of this book. The survey of options related to bivalence is very helpful for evaluating the issues of divine trust and foreknowledge. Also, as indicated in the earlier parts of my review, Holtzen has cogently accomplished his main goal of presenting a support for his central thesis, which may be summarized as follows: “Love” (1 Cor 13:4) “believes” and “hopes” (13:7), and “God is love” (1 John 4:8, 16; see pp. 60, 228); therefore, as announced in the title of the book, he is *The God Who Trusts*.

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MARTIN F. HANNA

Korpman, Matthew J. *Saying No to God: A Radical Approach to Reading the Bible Faithfully*. Orange, CA: Quoir, 2019. 358 pp. Softcover. USD 16.46.

In *Saying No to God*, Matthew J. Korpman has written a treatise on theological disagreement. A graduate from La Sierra University and Yale Divinity School currently pursuing doctoral degrees (Hebrew Bible and New Testament), Korpman calls himself a “theological arsonist” looking for ways to set traditional ways of reading the Bible on fire. In this spinoff of millennial theological reflection, Korpman builds a case for a working postmodern biblical hermeneutic and in the process, sacrifices many a sacred cow on the altar of his “pyrotheology.”

The book boasts the endorsement of Brian McLaren and Peter Rollins among others and builds on the “hermeneutics of suspicion” famously championed by Peter Enns (*Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the*

*Problem of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015]; and *The Sin of Certainty: Why God Desires Our Trust More Than Our "Correct" Beliefs* [San Francisco: HarperOne, 2017]). The provocative title builds on the ancient motif of *theomachy* (fighting the gods), feared by the ancient Greeks but common in Jewish thought, and recently revived as "faithful resistance" to God. As an evangelist for this school of thought, Korpman calls for saying "No!" to God not in order to be disagreeable, but as a means to engage the divine. By saying "No!" to Yahweh's most problematic portrayals as found in the Old Testament—such as the one who orders genocide—readers are invited to become like his "better" version as revealed in Jesus. Like Jacob and Moses, we are invited to fight with God and win.

Korpman makes a case against *Divine Command Theory*—the notion that human beings should acquiesce to whatever God says (provided he did say it)—in favor of *deductivism*: human beings are capable of deducing superior moral judgments when confronted with controversial divine commands based on their own innate divine instincts. God's most jarring commands in Scripture are tests of human understanding of God and present opportunities to reject controversial decisions in favor of one that God Himself would prefer—as in the story of Abraham and Isaac (58). In the process, Korpman rejects "bibliolatry" and traditional theism in favor of a God open to suggestions, criticism, and even well-informed rejection.

Korpman hopes his book will break "the odd dichotomy" (32) of bumper-sticker theologies that see Scripture as either "settling it" or as the product of religion-induced psychosis. Korpman sets out to tackle problems in biblical theology that appear to be closer to such psychosis than sanity: human sacrifice, genocide, the divine response to human suffering, and judgment by eternal fire. The certainty of facile answers to these questions is not the solution to the problems plaguing Christianity, he writes: certainty is the problem (38), and doubt can be an ally (42).

The book is divided into three main sections, which the author calls parts of a "journey": Confrontation, Intermission (Realization), and Incarnation. The first section deals with the theological problems posed by select passages of the Old Testament, laying out Korpman's case for a hermeneutic of suspicion (cf. chapters "Did God Say That?" and "Did God Say It or Moses?"). Korpman minces biblical criticism and sprinkles it onto the Bible in order to draw from it a coherent "taste" of the influences at work on these ancient texts, even as he attempts to validate their underlying spiritual principles.

The Intermission (Realization), also titled "Pyrotheology," stands as a brief respite from the previous section. Here the author explains why the reader should continue reading at all: misplaced certainty in an inerrant Scripture leads to the idolatry of falsehoods. Section three, Incarnation, has nine chapters, seven of which start with "Saying No" to something, from orthodoxy, to patriarchy, homophobia, and biblical violence.

The book opens and closes with parables and is punctuated by personal experiences. Readers who have struggled with some of these thorny issues in biblical theology are likely to resonate with Korpman's fresh and at times irreverent style. For example, the chapter "Saying No to Hell," which deals with divine judgment, articulates his thesis of a postmodern hermeneutic of divine love by engaging and refuting pagan influences that crept into the doctrine and offering a fresh exegetical analysis. Even though the author could have dug deeper into the New Testament passages dealing with eternal punishment—a discussion on the very important term *γέεννα* is missing—he comes to a compelling conclusion as to the fate of hell, one that is increasingly shared by a number of evangelical scholars: perpetual torment in hell is not only exegetically indefensible, but is ultimately inconsistent with God's character as revealed in Jesus. Due to the significance of this doctrine in American evangelicalism, this chapter is worth its weight in gold. In Korpman's pyrotheology, not even hell stands a chance.

Methodologically, Korpman's *theomachy* draws largely on reader response criticism while attempting to respect authorial intention. By conflating these seemingly contradictory concepts, he attempts to engage the biblical text respectfully, while also allowing the reader to fight it in order to create personal meaning. The result is less dogmatism about what the text *must* mean and an interest in what it *could* mean if certain presuppositions are removed. One such presupposition is the notion that because God said something, as recorded in Scripture, it must be moral, or that divine epiphanies can lead to inerrancy. The ultimate model by which to measure whether divine statements are moral is the revelation as found in Jesus and "[w]hen we see portraits of God that contradict or are at odds with the portrait of Christ, we must come to evaluate those former images in the light of Christ" (248).

Although Korpman attempts to remain within the four corners of the biblical text, he often overruns them, for example, when he writes: "Sometimes, things that Jesus said *then*, may not be perfectly suited for *now*" (142). This exposes the weakness of a biblical hermeneutic threatened by subjectivity, often favoring literary deconstruction at the expense of stable meaning. Korpman clearly has an issue with the biblical authors' views of divine reality and is not afraid to say that, at times, they were simply wrong about who God is (e.g., love vs. hate). In this, Korpman favors post-Enlightenment, theohumanistic views of the anthropological milieu from which Scriptures are derived, stripping their inerrant aura, and replacing it with an incarnational model that highlights the foibles of the human condition.

And yet, even as Korpman challenges his readers to say "*No!*" to God, some may find themselves saying "*No!*" to Korpman. He argues that Christians may adapt Scripture to new contexts, just as Paul "altered" Jesus's teachings on divorce in 1 Cor 7 (144). He suggests that the fictional story of Jonah shows animals repenting (311); sin is sin only if consciously committed (303);

Yahweh may in some cases accept idol worship as to himself (299) and that Jesus called the Syrophenician woman not a “dog” but the pejorative female version in order to denounce societal norms. Admittedly, for an iconoclastic treatise such as this, incendiary ideas are to be expected, but some of these can become a distraction. Certainly, the participation of animals in the purification rituals of the Assyrians—whether fictional or real—need not mean that animals themselves repented (cf. Jonah 3:8). Considering the heavy emphasis on cultic purity and the condemnation of idol worship in Scripture, it is a stretch to conclude that it would ever be acceptable to God. Most would cringe at the idea of Jesus using derogatory language towards a woman.

However, given the contribution this book makes to discussions on the intersection of biblical hermeneutics and traditional theism, these objections are not necessarily fatal. What you take away from the book is a call to say “No!” to everything that may have appeared to be *textually* certain about God, but that, ultimately, may be *theologically* inconsistent with his character as revealed in Jesus—even if you disagree with the circuitous way Korpman often arrives at his conclusions. But neither does Korpman expect full agreement, and saying “No!” to some of his unconvincing solutions is part of the very process he hopes to unleash. As he puts it: “I’m less interested in whether you agree with *how* I approach a topic, than whether you have begun to recognize the legitimacy of why we need to engage these issues” (308). More conservative readers would do well to consider whether it is preferable to have millennial Christians tackling these issues in ways that may be perceived as irreverent, or risk losing them because difficult but legitimate questions are off limits.

In sum, *Saying No to God* articulates a cogent postmodern biblical metanarrative that challenges hyper-orthodox approaches to Scripture and traditional theism. Because the author is at ease in the realms of biblical criticism as well as orthodoxy, his book could serve as a bridge over the hermeneutical chasm separating post-biblicism on one side, and fundamentalism on the other. As such, it could be a helpful resource for undergraduate religion courses.

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Lapidge, Michael. *The Roman Martyrs: Introduction, Translations, and Commentary*. OPCS. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. xvi + 733 pp. Hardcover. USD 170.00.

This tome brings a collection of forty Latin narratives of martyrdom (*passio*) from the region of Rome, presumably composed between AD 400–700. Lapidge did a great favor to the field in bringing these narratives together with comments alongside. These are hardly accessible texts, mostly available in the