

possess or are included in the kingdom of heaven. But the rewards for the six beatitudes in between are all in the future tense! Furthermore, in the expansive ninth beatitude (11–12), the cause for rejoicing lies in the great reward in heaven where persecution and even death cannot remove it. So, the disciples of Jesus flourish because they know that they already are included as citizens of the coming kingdom of heaven. But the panoply of blessings flowing from that kingdom, as sketched out in verses 4–9, are largely beyond their grasp. Their present flourishing depends on their trust in a future full realization of those promised blessings. So, they pray, “may your kingdom come, may your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (6:10). In the meantime, as “the light of the world,” they are entrusted with a mission actuated through deeds of assertive love, even towards their persecutors (5:39–48). If there is any value in persecution and suffering, it lies in the assertive love expressed by the persecuted.

Pennington notes the view that the Beatitudes are a summary of the SM and the SM is a summary of Matthew (150). In support of that position, consider the alliteration that permeates the Greek text of the first eight Beatitudes (5:3–10), even beyond the nine-fold repetition of the initial word, *μακάριος*. Most English translations of the Beatitudes have retained the feature with the consonants, π and μ, predominating. The intentional use of alliteration invites memorization and improved retention. It seems that the Beatitudes were intended to function as a portable poetic précis of the SM, a mental “3 by 5” card with the essential information for hearers unable to retain the whole SM in their memory.

Like Pennington, the SM has been the ground on which I have worked out my own understanding of the Christian life. I applaud his efforts to burnish its luster, even where I find some disagreement. Any pursuit towards a fresh and comprehensive grasp of the Sermon ought to consider his significant contributions.

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Radner, Ephraim. *A Profound Ignorance: Modern Pneumatology and Its Anti-modern Redemption*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2019. 463 pp. Hardcover. USD 49.95.

Ephraim Radner (Ph.D., Yale University) teaches Historical Theology at Wycliffe College, an evangelical seminary of Anglican tradition at the University of Toronto. He has worked as an Anglican priest and served congregations in Burundi and the United States, including inner-city Cleveland. Radner has authored and edited books on ecclesiology, ecumenism, natural theology, pneumatology, and human nature. His purpose in the current volume is to expand his prior work on the time-circumscribed creaturely life, which he

tackled in *A Time to Keep: Theology, Mortality, and the Shape of a Human Life* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017). In *A Profound Ignorance*, Radner delves into the human plight of bodily suffering and the modern pneumatological efforts to eclipse it.

The book is composed of an introduction, seven chapters, and a conclusion. The two major divisions are “I. Corruption” (chapters 1–5) and “II. Redemption” (chapters 6–7). The first two chapters establish the argument, chapters three and four present several intellectual vignettes contributing to the rise of pneumatology as a formal theological discipline, and chapters five through seven show the way to redemption in Christ. Radner’s introduction orients the burden of corporality from a biographical perspective as he relates his mother’s suicide while he was still a teenager—an event which triggered his own suicide attempt. God’s providence in his rescue prompted a three-decade study of the Holy Spirit’s involvement in creaturely suffering, through which he concluded, first, that the gift or “givenness” of life in this world is bound with the Spirit and, second, the fact that pneumatology has been denying this for centuries (7). Radner’s main thesis is that bodily suffering, when understood through the body of Christ, serves an eternal purpose and that any attempt to overcome it through modern pneumatology is greatly misguided. On a terminological note, it should be observed that Radner uses *pneumatology* to refer to early modern and modern developments in the theology of the Holy Spirit; its alternative he terms *theology of the Holy Spirit*. The work takes its title from the “profound ignorance” which Hume hoped would be banished by the new anthropomorphized “spirit of the age,” a spirit which Radner believes entered all the sciences, including systematic theology, during the modern period. Radner’s aim is to spotlight the anti-modern biblical redemption, namely, the body of Jesus, which reveals the value of a self-surrendered life lived in obedience to God through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter one contrasts the utopian mindset of the *descubridores* (maritime “discoverers” of non-European lands) with the reality of the bloodshed, vice, and cruelty the effort entailed. With world expansion came an expansion of unprecedented human suffering. Prior to this time, classical theodicies centered on human sin, divine punishment, demonic activity, and perverted wills. But early modernity ushered in a new type of theodicy, “one where we simply depict and chronicle” and the focus shifted from Christ and the cross to the Spirit and a modern pneumatology that seeks to escape the world and time (44–45). Chapter two discusses the invention of pneumatology as a convergence of metaphysics, moral psychology, and physics. *Spirit* now enters the created sphere, so that human actions “are not only divinely sanctioned, but end up constituting God’s own now happily coherent being” (52). The Spirit is no longer a Person of the Trinity, but a force of nature that can be experienced in “sensible” pneumatic effects. He cites Jürgen Moltmann (b.

1926)—“the most prominent modern pneumatologist”—whose *The Spirit of Life* argues against the biblical personhood of the Spirit, offering in its place a pantheistic solution with God immanent in humanity and humanity transcendent in God (79).

Chapter three presents thinkers from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries who combined theories of “spiritual matter” with those of “material infinity,” resulting in what Radner terms the Pneumatic Human Being. He discusses Paracelsus (1493–1541) who believed the evils in nature could be overcome by understanding the occult spiritual character embedded in matter. While Paracelsus spoke merely of a material spirit, Francis Bacon (1561–1626) bound these theories within a redemptive framework that confused the natural sphere with the realm of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, the Cambridge Platonists, particularly Henry Moore (1614–1687), developed a pneumatic functionalism where the Holy Spirit was seen as the “doer” of all deeds. Jacob Boheme (1575–1624), whose ideas were epitomized in Hegel, viewed the Trinity as an originating antitype for all things: the Father as origin, the Son as “separator,” and the Spirit as “life-in-all.” And because all is “Spirit,” *all is ultimately good*. Evil in history is viewed as an illusion and part of a deeper divine reality that justifies and overcomes it. Building on this theme, Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) celebrated the *Volkegeist* (national spirit) that drives history and makes each moment a necessity and right.

Chapter four treats George Fox (1624–1691) and the Quakers, whose apocalyptic hopes in the new age of the Spirit centered on oneness with God via sensory confirmation (shakings, trances, and prophetic utterances). Likewise, the French prophets prized God’s interiority, as evidenced by pneumatic charismata (tears, agitation, energizing sensations). Radner devotes several pages to John Wesley. While Wesley initially rejected the inner “mystic” turn, Radner believes he “ends up saying the same things,” promoting Protestant mystics in his *Christian Library* (132). He states that Wesley accepted pneumatic manifestations (like fainting) and almost demanded moral perfectionism. He then profiles Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882), a spiritual pantheist who viewed biological evolution as a religious phenomenon of the Spirit, so that “matter grows out of God and expresses God” (141). Poet Walt Whitman (1819–1892), whom Radner terms “the storehouse of all modern pneumatology, both in gathering and in distributing” (77), held that all things possess an eternal soul so that all religions are bound by the Spirit, a spirit who manifests as a “square deific,” comprised of Jehovah, Christ, Satan, and the self.

In chapter five, Radner looks at the academic establishment of pneumatology in the twentieth century, profiling Geoffrey Anketell Studdert-Kennedy (1883–1929), who advances a “process” understanding of God, and Charles Raven (1885–1964), who grounds himself on Teilhard de Chardin’s evolutionary “Spirit-Matter” as the metaphysical basis for the world and its pantheistic

development in God. Radner then offers three causes for the introduction of pneumatology into formal theology: one, the Protestant reaction to a perceived integration of Christianity and civil life; two, the Catholic reaction—formed at and after Vatican II—to institutional moral failure; and three, the common Catholic and Protestant embrace of Charismatic devotion:

[T]he Charismatic movement's rise in the wake of Vatican II—something whose timing was hardly coincidental—meant that Catholic and Protestant pneumatic sensibilities merged in a common channel already well dredged by the pneumatological movements of the previous three centuries.... The Protestant search for historical assurance and the Catholic press for institutional renewal together, in some ways, made the institutional embrace of pneumatic devotion inevitable. The academy followed. By the late 1970s, pneumatology was established as theological discipline (189).

Chapter six begins the second portion of the book under the title of *Redemption*. Radner rightly notes that redemption is inextricably bound to the body, it never seeks to overcome the body or cast it aside (212). He then looks at John's gospel, where Jesus connects loving him with keeping his commandments, something the promised "Spirit of Truth" would enable. Radner concludes that keeping Jesus' commandments "is to enter into the place where the Spirit of God comes down upon his followers" (231). He notes that Jesus himself "learned obedience through suffering" (Heb 5:8), and he calls us to imitate him. Ultimately, Radner believes we cannot truly reconcile the coexistence of a good God and suffering, the only way through this conundrum or "profound ignorance" is through a theodicy of intimacy, where our suffering brings us closer to the redemptive suffering of Christ. Chapter seven profiles the teachings of Kalonymus Kalman Shapira, a Hasidic teacher whose sermons, while in the Warsaw Ghetto and published in 1960 under the title *Esh Kodesh* ("Holy Fire"), outline how studying the Torah brings one into the presence of God, where his weeping is revealed and will eventually disappear (257). Radner then outlines five modes of normal creaturely life: one, Normal Life, Creation, and Death—the human *ruach* is both separate and dependent on God's *Ruach*; two, Normal Time and History—Bible history, as with all history, is anacoluthic (without sequence) and epiphanic; three, Normal Ignorance of Self—the focus must not be on self but on knowing the "mind of Christ"; four, The Normal Body—the human body, like Christ's, is corporeal and non-pneumatic; and, five, The Normal Life—even with all its failings, life is ultimately a gift from God and therefore worth living. Radner's concluding chapter develops the biblical teaching of *timor Dei* (based on Psalm 2:11; Isa 6:5; Jer 32:40; 2 Cor 7:1; Phil 2:12) as the proper creaturely response of awe and gratitude before the Creator's transcendent glory and immanent mercy in Christ.

There is much in Radner's book that I greatly appreciate. His candor and vulnerability in orienting the book from his own life's sufferings is compel-

ling. Additionally, the dozens of biographies that punctuate each chapter help flesh out the various arguments. Finally, his style of writing, while at times arcane, offers moments of poetic insight that reward the reader and move him/her along. Regarding content, I find his development of modern pneumatology convincing, and agree with his proposal for restoring an “anti-modern” redemption, particularly vis-à-vis the distinction between Creator and creature and the notion of obedience to the commandments in the fear of God. To be sure, this is a work that I will revisit many times.

A few potential weaknesses are remarked on in what follows. First, Radner repeatedly refers to the “body of Christ”—e.g., “the gift of Jesus’ body” and “the body of Jesus that Christians worship” (252, 254)—by which terminology I assume he means not only the corporality of Christ but his *life*. If Christ’s life is intended or included, then he might mention the life Christ is currently leading through his ongoing work in the heavenly sanctuary—a subject clearly revealed in the book of Hebrews and Revelation and one which sheds light on the general question of theodicy. Secondly, Radner holds that history does not develop towards any apocalyptic end: “History is never developmental in a modern organic sense, something that the scriptural genre of ‘apocalyptic,’ whatever its contested character, most certainly emphasizes.... The nexus of Father-Son-Holy Spirit in temporal experience ... is never time-explicating” (268–269). While Radner correctly notes that history is not developmental in a pantheistic and deterministic sense (where God as Spirit is the doer of all actions), he overlooks the biblical view of history grounded in prophecy, particularly in the books of Daniel and Revelation. Especially in the latter, the triune God is eager to explain sequential historical time in view of preparing the world for the judgment and His physical return (Rev 1:1–5, 7, 10). And while Radner cites Revelation 14:7, he never unpacks what this judgment entails nor how it sheds light on the theodicy question. Third, Radner’s general silence with respect to Satan—the author of sin and suffering in the biblical metanarrative—is surprising. At one point he mentions a quote by Rabbi Shapira about the listening and doing of the Torah, and then states this is “the Jews’ witness before Satan” (258); perhaps Radner agrees this is also the Christians’ witness before Satan, but he does not clarify this nor develop any arguments along this line. In general, his approach to theodicy is to say “I do not understand...[as] an open admission of profound ignorance” (301). I agree that in some things, such as the ontology of the Trinity, the claim to profound ignorance is golden, but Scripture reveals that theodicy is best answered by the evidence of things/events (*pragmaton*) seen only by faith in God’s word (Heb 11:1–2). In other words, the reason the witnesses (*martyrōn*) in Hebrews were able to endure trial, suffering, and martyrdom, was because they embraced God’s first promise in Eden, its fulfillment in the life of Christ, and the concurrent assurance of their physical resurrection and reunion with Christ—all within a sequential development of redemption history. Through

faith in God's promises, they saw these events, embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth (Heb 11:13, 16). Likewise, it was faith in God's word which, in the midst of inscrutable suffering, buoyed Jesus' spirit as the "joy" that enabled Him to endure the cross (Heb 12:2; cf. Ps 22:27–31).

As a whole, *A Profound Ignorance* is a work of compelling depth and discernment that will reward any reader interested in the history of pneumatology. Whether or not the reader agrees with Radner's conclusions, the author must be commended for writing an excellent work of extensive historical breadth and value. Moreover, his keen insight in tracing the historical thread of the gradual yet decisive enthronement of an anthropological Spirit (in academia, popular culture, and the church at large) is bold. In fact, Radner confesses that he wrote much of the book "cautiously and even with reluctance" (11). Yet, even if with some trepidation, Radner courageously ends this work by taking the spotlight off of the third Person of the Trinity and, through him, placing the focus directly on Christ and His commandments. A daring move to be sure, but one that ultimately substantiates Christ's claim: "He [the Holy Spirit] will glorify me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you" (John 16:14).

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Vainio, Olli-Pekka. *Cosmology in Theological Perspective: Understanding Our Place in the Universe*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018. ix + 210 pp. Softcover. USD 17.50.

According to Olli-Pekka Vainio, "cosmology is ... an attempt to make sense of the human place in the universe" (3). In his book, *Cosmology in Theological Perspective: Understanding Our Place in the Universe*, he examines "the interface between philosophical and scientific convictions about our universe" (4), with a specific emphasis on the interaction between our scientific understanding of the universe and our theological or philosophical understandings of how humans fit into it all. As a framework for this endeavor, the author refers to C. S. Lewis's cosmology, using his "distinction between reason and imagination" (9) to analyze cosmology from a theological viewpoint.

Olli-Pekka Vainio is a University Lecturer of Systematic Theology for the Faculty of Theology at the University of Helsinki. He has also been a resident scholar at the Center of Theological Inquiry at Princeton and has taught at the University of Oxford. His book contains 10 chapters, which include discussions on ancient cosmologies, early Christian cosmologies, the relation of science and theology, modern debates on multiple inhabited worlds in the universe, the relation of possible alien life and Christian theism, and the impact of the scale of the universe on cosmology and theology.