

tion as a continual struggle with broken sinfulness.

Part three follows up the individual and internal emphasis of part two with a turn to the intersubjective, communal and institutional dimension of faith. Here Immink emphasizes the interrelation of speech and conversation with social structures. His Reformed account of this connection is laid out via a sustained and informative engagement with the practical theologies of Schleiermacher and Van der Ven.

A final section compares the "revelation model" of practical theology of Barth and Thurneysen, in which priority is assigned to preaching and witness, with the "anthropocentric model" of Tillich, Kaufman, and Buttrick, with its emphasis on pastoral care and therapeutic psychology. He concludes that the two approaches must be wed in a manner that illumines the daily life of every believer. "Both our involvement in everyday life and our relationship with God and his salvation present themselves in the human mind. I believe that it is theologically incorrect to deny the presence of God in our consciousness; but it is of crucial importance to underscore the intersubjective character of that presence" (285). This conclusion comes after a plea for the discussion of foundations in practical theology that draws on the work of Alvin Plantinga to defend the claim that our concepts of language, reality and our theological beliefs cannot be pulled apart and will deeply influence any analysis of praxis in practical theology.

While appreciative that Immink has pulled the main strands of thinking in practical theology into contact with important Christian doctrines, his remains yet another book on method in practical theology. It occasionally has the feel of a scholastic analysis of theological concepts (exacerbated by recourse to the philosophical distinctions of Plantinga and Wolterstorff), rather than drawing attention to how these concepts might illumine the variegated life of faith. The closing application of his concept of faith to the practices of preaching and pastoral care covers a mere nine pages, and his most interesting practical suggestion, that Christians are formed not in liturgy but in diaconal care, is confined to passing comments on a single page. Nevertheless, his is a salutary reminder that practical theology, with all its interest in the dynamics of human life, can only be about following an active God.

Brian Brock, Aberdeen, Scotland

The Person of Christ

Stephen R. Holmes and Murray A. Rae
[Editors]

London/New York: T & T Clark, 2005, 205pp,
£57.00, hb, ISBN 0567030245

SUMMARY

The Person of Christ is a collection of conference essays originally presented at the Research Institute in Systematic

Theology at King's College, London. The ten contributors (Murray Rae, John Webster, Richard Burridge, Robert Jenson, Stephen Holmes, Douglas Farrow, Brian Horne, Douglas Knight, Sandra Fach, and Christoph Schwöbel) all share a commitment to the orthodox theological tradition in Christology as expressed in the creedal heritage of the Christian church and together attempt to explore the ongoing coherence and importance of that theological tradition. Topics discussed include New Testament Christology, Christ in the Trinity, the baptism of Christ, the person and nature of Christ, the ascended Christ, and the reconciling work of Christ. In contrast to the impenetrable prose that unfortunately characterizes far too much theological writing, those who appreciate the clarity and succinctness often found in the best conference papers will not be disappointed here.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

The Person of Christ ist eine Sammlung von Essays einer Konferenz, die ursprünglich am Research Institute in Systematic Theology am King's College, London, präsentiert wurden. Alle zehn Referenten (Murray Rae, John Webster, Richard Burridge, Robert Jenson, Stephen Holmes, Douglas Farrow, Brian Horne, Douglas Knight, Sandra Fach und Christoph Schwöbel) sind der orthodoxen christlichen Tradition der Christologie verbunden, wie sie im Erbe der Bekenntnisse der Kirche ausgedrückt ist. Gemeinsam versuchen sie, die bleibende Kohärenz und Wichtigkeit dieser theologischen Tradition zu untersuchen. Die diskutierten Themen beinhalten: Neutestamentliche Christologie, Christus in der Trinität, die Taufe Christi, die Person und das Wesen Christi, der aufgefahrene Christus und das Versöhnungswerk Christi. Im Gegensatz zu der unzugänglichen Prosa, die leider zu viele theologische Erzeugnisse charakterisiert, werden hier diejenigen Leser nicht enttäuscht, die die Klarheit und Knappheit schätzen, die oft in hervorragenden Konferenzbeiträgen zu finden ist.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage consacré à la christologie reprend les exposés donnés à la conférence de l'Institut pour la Recherche en Théologie Systématique, au King's College de Londres. Les dix auteurs (Murray Rae, John Webster, Richard Burridge, Robert Jenson, Stephen Holmes, Douglas Farrow, Brian Horne, Douglas Knight, Sandra Fach et Christoph Schwöbel) souscrivent tous à la tradition christologique orthodoxe telle qu'elle a été exprimée dans les confessions de foi de l'Église chrétienne et s'efforcent de mettre en lumière la cohérence et l'importance actuelle de cette tradition. La christologie du Nouveau Testament, Christ dans la Trinité, le baptême de Christ, la personne de Christ, Christ siégeant à la droite du Père, et l'œuvre de réconciliation de Christ figurent parmi les sujets abordés. Alors que beaucoup d'écrits théologiques se caractérisent par une prose impénétrable, ces textes manifestent une clarté et une concision appréciables.

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The Person of Christ is a collection of essays originally presented at the Research Institute in Systematic Theol-

ogy at King's College, London. Topics discussed include New Testament Christology, Christ in the Trinity, the baptism of Christ, the person and nature of Christ, the ascended Christ, and the reconciling work of Christ.

The book opens with an introduction by Murray Rae who observes that theology finds its starting point not with a set of supposedly self-evident philosophical assumptions – both an ancient and modern tendency – but with “attentiveness” before the Word (p. 2). This sets the tone for the essays to follow. Each contributor attends to the words of God, Scripture and tradition in the hope of re-shaping a testimony, a retelling, of the story of Christ's person and nature for our time. Toward this goal, the book succeeds. All contributors pick up central themes of Christological doctrine and explicate them in ways that are faithful, *attentive*, to the orthodox theological tradition in Christology. Robert Jenson and Stephen Holmes' essays on the *Communicatio Idiomatum* are excellent as are those by Murray Rae and Douglas Knight on the Baptism and Confession of Christ respectively. As in any edited volume, certain essays stand out as particularly representative examples of the overall intent and this is no exception: those of John Webster and Sandra Fach.

Webster's essay, “Prolegomena to Christology: Four Theses” deals not specifically with the person or nature of Christ as the object of Christological inquiry, but with the one who is the self-giving *subject* of Christology, Jesus Christ. Webster contends for the primacy of the one who reveals himself – the self giving Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is known, and the parameters of that knowing are determined not by the knower, but by virtue of Christ's own self-giving. Thus, Christology's knowing is a humble and reverent knowing, a knowing not determined by the craftiness or creativity of its practitioners but by “virtue of the movement of his being”, by his free self-bestowal. Christology, then, does not “labour towards” Christ but “moves easily and freely” in the light of the reality that Christ has already given himself to be known and created the sphere in which he can be known (p. 28).

The “given-ness” that characterizes the knowledge of Christ leads Webster to several distinctive conclusions. Christ's free self-bestowal means that Christology is both a joyful and reverent science: joyful because it is undertaken in the “sphere of Christ's presence and promise” and reverent for it is the “astonished gratitude” of those who stand amazed at the goodness of the one in whose presence they stand (p. 27). Christology's given-ness leads as well to an affirmation of the Spirit's work of edifying the church through its “orderly explication of the knowledge of Christ” (p. 33), a refreshing emphasis too rarely heard in discussions of Christological method. Finally, Christology's given-ness determines the theological space occupied by the Scriptures as the collection of texts which serves the presence of Jesus Christ by “indicating or bearing testimony” to his address of the church (p. 34). By understanding prolegomena to be determined solely by Christ's own self-giving, Webster

develops an atmosphere in which not *demonstration* but *testimony* finds priority.

Sandra Fach, “The Ascended Christ: Mediation of our Worship”, explores the liturgical development of the early centuries contending that the change from giving “Glory to God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit” to ascribing “Glory to God *with* the Son, together with the Holy Spirit” led to a loss in recognized mediation and with it an atmosphere of distance between worshippers and God. While maintaining emphasis on the unity of God, the loss of mediation led to God becoming distant and potentially abstract. Hoping to recapture lost intimacy in worship, Fach argues for a renewed theological emphasis on Christ's present and ongoing mediatorial role in heaven as “the one who is God *as a human*” (p. 155). In a way that dovetails well with the overall flavor of “attentiveness” in these essays, Fach's concern here is not only to regain a renewed emphasis on the mediation of Christ, but to guard against abstraction in theology. Fach would have theology attend first to the economic Trinity, for here is found the work of the Lamb who continues to mediate the worship of the saints before the Father.

Despite its steep price tag this is a book worthy of recommendation both for its commitment to attentiveness to the Scriptures and the historical creedal traditions of Christology and for its eagerness to develop what is heard into a coherent retelling for the twenty-first century church. One would hope that T & T Clark will begin making valuable books such as this more accessible.

Kent D. Eilers, Aberdeen, Scotland

***Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission:
Did the Apostle Paul Expect the Early Christian
Communities to Evangelize?
(Paternoster Biblical Monographs)***

Robert L. Plummer

Bletchley, Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2006, xviii + 190 pp., £24.99, pb, ISBN 978-1-84227-333-3

SUMMARY

Robert Plummer takes up the question of whether or not the apostle Paul encouraged his converts to share the gospel. This topic has previously suffered from superficial answers and specious arguments that have failed to look at all of the evidence in the pauline corpus. For Plummer, Paul's letters demonstrate that he expected both overt gospel proclamation and a more ‘passive’ witness of morality and Christ-likeness. Though this study does not lack depth or occasional insight, the contingent nature of Paul's letters prevent a fully convincing argument to be made for active ‘evangelism’. Nevertheless, Plummer does advance the scholarship on this matter in many areas and engages on a matter of importance for the church.