

put it in *Act and Being*, God in Christ binds himself to humanity, thereby demonstrating his freedom *for* rather than *from* humanity.

In a final consequence of these confessional dynamics, DeJonge points to contrasting 'thought-forms' at the heart of Bonhoeffer and Barth's theologies. Barth adheres to a strictly dialectical thought-form to maintain the distinction between God and humanity by both affirming and denying their coming together in revelation. Instead, Bonhoeffer employs a hermeneutical thought-form that reflects that 'God's being is pulled into history' in the person of Jesus Christ by stressing the reconciliation and unity of oppositional pairs such as act and being, faith and works, etc. DeJonge sees Bonhoeffer's person-concept of revelation, along with these accompanying elements, as demonstrating the continuity of his *oeuvre* including the later works *Discipleship*, *Ethics* and *Letters and Papers from Prison*.

The book offers a very helpful explanation and analysis of an otherwise notoriously impenetrable text in Bonhoeffer's *corpus*. It is recommended for all who have an interest in Bonhoeffer studies or more generally in twentieth-century German theology. Its technicality demands much of readers, but its clarity promises equal reward. The only problem this author foresees with DeJonge's depiction of the issues is the clear-cut manner he presents his argument. Although beneficial for pedagogical reasons, it may gloss too easily over the ambiguity and complexity of Bonhoeffer's thought. Most notably, DeJonge's opposition of Barth's Reformed act-theology to Bonhoeffer's Lutheran person-theology, though convenient, does not tell the full tale of Bonhoeffer's positive relationship to Reformed theology and overall confessional generosity. Since his early days as a youth delegate in the ecumenical movement and his involvement in drafting the joint confessional effort in the Barmen Declaration, Bonhoeffer seemed more interested in finding theological cooperation between the classic Reformation traditions than in stressing their difference. In this spirit, he wrote in his final days of 'Outdated controversies, especially the interconfessional ones', stating, 'the differences between Lutheran and Reformed (and to some extent Roman Catholic) are no longer real...' DeJonge opens the way to dig deeper into the confessional quandary at the heart of Bonhoeffer's theology. The full story has yet to be told.

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Hating God: The Untold Story of Misotheism

Bernard Schweizer

Oxford University Press, 2011, 246 pp., hb., £19.99,
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SUMMARY

This fascinating book attempts to distinguish *atheism*, as the belief that God does not exist, from *misotheism*, as a range of postures (of hatred) towards God. It does so by sketching a range of misotheisms drawn from literary history: these are categorised as varying degrees of absolute and agnostic misotheism. Although this is not strictly a theological work, it nonetheless lends contemporary theologians a useful and subtle set of tools with which to understand what is often inaccurately labelled *New Atheism* in much post-Christian Western culture.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses fesselnde Buch ist bemüht zwischen den Begriffen *Atheismus* und *Misotheismus* zu unterscheiden; ersterer bezieht sich auf den Glauben, dass Gott nicht existiert, und letzterer auf vielfältige (Hass)Bezeugungen Gott gegenüber. Der Autor skizziert dabei eine Vielfalt von Misotheismus anhand von Beispielen aus der Literaturgeschichte: sie variieren zwischen absolutem und agnostischem Misotheismus. Obgleich es sich hier streng genommen nicht um ein theologisches Werk handelt, gibt es nichtsdestoweniger den Theologen von heute ein hilfreiches und kluges Instrumentarium an die Hand; dieses Werkzeug mag ihnen helfen dieses Phänomen zu verstehen, was oft fälschlicherweise in der post-christlichen westlichen Kultur als *Neuer Atheismus* bezeichnet wird.

RÉSUMÉ

Voilà une étude fascinante qui distingue l'*athéisme* – la croyance que Dieu n'existe pas – du *misothéisme*, c'est-à-dire un ensemble d'attitudes (de haine) à l'égard de Dieu. L'auteur procède en présentant diverses formes de misothéisme telles qu'elles se manifestent dans l'histoire de la littérature : il les classe en diverses catégories selon des degrés variables allant du misothéisme absolu au misothéisme agnostique. Bien que cet ouvrage n'ait pas un caractère strictement théologique, il peut être utile aux théologiens contemporains en leur apportant des outils pour comprendre avec finesse ce qui est souvent nommé, improprement, le *Nouvel Athéisme* dans notre culture occidentale post-chrétienne.

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This fascinating book is grounded on a worthwhile observation: the term 'atheism' is unsuited to many of the instances in which it is invoked. In short, Schweizer perceives the denial of God's existence as substantially different in character from the passionate hatred of God as found in many 'atheist' works.

I repeatedly bumped up against a similar religious stance in their [Philip Pullman and Rebecca West] work: an aversion to divinity verging on God-hatred.

I couldn't place that affect on the spectrum of religious dissent ranging from atheism to Satanism: it was not atheism, since hostility to God obviously presumes the existence of God; and it wasn't Satanism either, since opposition to God doesn't automatically lead to reverence for God's adversary. (1)

Accordingly, Schweizer attempts to characterise this particular form of God-hatred, noting various pre-existing terms (*theostuges*, *passionate atheist*, *metaphysical rebel*) but expressing preference for his own neologism: *misotheist*.

Central to his dissatisfaction with the misuse of 'atheism' for postures of hatred towards God is that, 'To the atheist, both the loving and the cruel god are irrelevant since to her neither exists.' (10) As such, his book develops *misotheism* as a more accurate term to describe instances of God-hatred.

Schweizer first provides a helpful 'Brief History of Misotheism', beginning with Job's wife (Job 2:9), whom he describes as 'the original misotheist' (29). Following this, he moves to discuss Epicurus, Thomas Paine, James Mill, Ludwig Feuerbach, Karl Marx, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Mikhail Bakunin, Peter Kropotkin, Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, Albert Camus, William Empson and Gore Vidal.

The remainder of the book provides six case studies in literary misotheism: four in what Schweizer labels 'agnostic misotheism', and two in 'absolute misotheism'. The decision to focus his study on God-hatred in literary works is grounded in the conviction that literature is perhaps the most natural context in which misotheism will be made manifest. According to Schweizer, the common feature found in misotheists is that, 'misotheism is a response to suffering, injustice, and disorder in a troubled world. Misotheists feel that humanity is the subject of divine carelessness or sadism, and they question God's love for humanity'. (8) To find exploration of those themes, he argues, one must turn to literary works. On that basis, Schweizer offers careful analyses of misotheistic themes in the writings of Zora Neale Hurston, Rebecca West, Elie Wiesel, Peter Shaffer and Philip Pullman.

Although this is not strictly a theological work, it is nonetheless very useful to theologians – particularly those in secular post-Christian contexts. It offers a subtle, nuanced set of tools with which one can be better equipped to interact with Pullman, Dawkins *et al.* Its central observation – that many of those assumed not to believe in God ('atheists') may be better understood as those who hate God ('misotheists', and that for a range of reasons) – also offers much stimulation for theological thought, particularly as one considers theological practice in secular contexts.

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Women and Ordination in the Christian Churches. International Perspectives

Ian Jones, Kirsty Thorpe and Janet Wootton
(eds)

London & New York: T & T Clark, 2008, xii + 242 pp., £70, hb, ISBN 0-567-03154-3

SUMMARY

This interesting and useful volume reflects on the current situation of women's ordination worldwide. Its stated aim is to fill a gap in the subject, that of 'extended comparative research'. Different chapters analyse the experience of ordained women in a wide selection of countries and denominations, including the continued existence of a 'stained glass ceiling' in denominations that have ordained women for many years. The beliefs of some churches that do not yet ordain women are also discussed. Whatever the readers' theological position on the topic, they will find this a thought-provoking publication.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser interessante und hilfreiche Band weist auf die gegenwärtige Situation zur Frauenordination weltweit hin. Sein erklärtes Ziel besteht darin eine Themenlücke zu schließen, nämlich jene einer „erweiterten vergleichenden Forschung“. Verschiedene Kapitel analysieren die Erfahrungen ordinierten Frauen aus einem breiten Spektrum von Nationen und Denominationen; sie untersuchen auch die fortwährende Existenz einer [durch männliche Hierarchie bedingten] „undurchlässigen Kirchendecke“ in Denominationen, die bereits seit vielen Jahren Frauenordination praktizieren. Ebenfalls diskutiert werden die Positionen einiger Kirchen, die noch keine Frauen ordinieren. Wie auch immer die theologische Meinung der Leserschaft aussehen mag, sie wird hier eine Ausgabe vorfinden, die weitere Denkanstöße gibt.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage intéressant et utile considère quel est l'état de choses dans les Églises chrétiennes dans le monde pour ce qui concerne l'ordination des femmes. Les auteurs visent à combler un manque en la matière par l'apport d'une recherche comparative très vaste. Divers chapitres analysent l'expérience des femmes ayant reçu l'ordination dans une large sélection de pays et de dénominations en notant aussi l'existence d'un plafond de verre dans certaines dénominations qui pratiquent l'ordination des femmes depuis de nombreuses années. Les points de vue d'Églises qui n'accordent pas l'ordination aux femmes sont aussi présentés. Quelle que soit la position théologique du lecteur sur le sujet, il trouvera ici matière à stimuler sa réflexion.

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This book consists of fifteen articles, the majority of which were first given as papers at a conference in 2006 on Women and Ordination. They are divided into three main subject areas of theological, historical and socio-