particular human nature that can be salvific only through the further acts of sacrificial love on the cross. Unless Tanner is reduced to a "representationalist view of the Incarnation" (128), there must be a further specific act on the part of God the Son to effect atonement.

Finally, the third issue has to do with divine justice. Tanner's idea of divine justice is not retributive (satisfaction or penal substitution) but restorative. Because of the strong emphasis on the seriousness of sin in the Reformed tradition (with appeals to Augustine and Anselm), C. insists that "human sin requires punishment" (129), an assertion based on Scripture and tradition, but he also recognizes that there is an appeal here to "intuitions" (or, perhaps better, to a credible and acceptable image of God). God must act "in a way consistent with his own nature" (130), but is that nature one of "wrath" or of love (1 Jn 4:8, 16)? There is a distinction that the Bible does not make, but theology does, between what God wills and what God permits. God's positive will is always loving, life giving, and good, but God permits sin. An alternative view would be that God does not punish but does allow the consequences of our actions to have their effect, and this is interpreted biblically as "wrath."

I highly recommend C.'s work for its incisive analysis of important thinkers in the Reformed tradition and attendant theological subtleties.

Gonzaga University, Spokane MICHAEL L. COOK, S.J.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND THE POWER OF GOD. By Atle Ottesen Søvik. Studies in Systematic Theology. Boston: Brill, 2011. Pp. vii + 272. $151.

Why did God part the Red Sea but not stop the recent tsunamis? The dilemma behind this question is the subject of Søvik's revised dissertation: how to reconcile the presence of evil with the existence of an all-good and omnipotent God (119–21). S. explores this vexing topic through a charitable yet searching examination of two contemporary philosophical theologians (Richard Swinburne and Keith Ward), a process theologian (David Griffin), and a Lutheran theologian (Johan Hygen). Although primarily a work of philosophical theology, it draws significantly on the ideas of Wolfhart Pannenberg and creatively discusses issues in systematic theology.

S. excludes those approaches that avoid the problem by, for example, simply asserting the inscrutability of Providence or positing an impersonal God. Although S. values practical responses to the problem of evil, he nonetheless insists that one must still tackle the theoretical question of why a good God would create a world with the possibility of suffering and then permit so much of it to take place. No evasion of the demands of plausibility and coherence here.

The key difference among the four authors treated is the degree to which they limit divine power in order to establish their theodicy. The most serious limitations are set by Hygen. Marshaling considerable biblical evidence, he sees God as struggling with powerful evil opponents who frequently thwart providence. The more philosophically inclined Griffin, in line with his commitments to process thought, rejects any notion of God's power as coercive and so sees evil as those bad events immune to God's persuasive powers. Both these authors limit divine power on the basis of a dualistic metaphysics, i.e., one that claims that God is not the source of all existence because God *either* struggles with evil opponents not created by God (Hygen's "fighting-power-theodicy") *or* must operate on preexisting and often recalcitrant matter in ever-creative motion (Griffin's "process theodicy"). S.'s critique of these positions is devastating in the case of Griffin (221–26), but in the case of Hygen, he charitably retrieves the biblical insight while correcting the questionable philosophical assumptions.

The other two authors treated by S. forward a monistic metaphysics, i.e., one in which God is the source of everything. For Swinburne, this entails very few limits on divine power (only logically impossible acts, such as creating a square circle), and so he must argue that there are no genuine evils, but rather that all evil is allowed by God for a greater good. Thus, natural evil is permitted because it allows humans to grow and to develop virtues otherwise unobtainable, such as endurance and compassion. S. persuasively critiques Swinburne's position, not only in light of millions of years of evolution, but also in the case of horrific moral evil. S. is perhaps less convincing when he bases his criticism of Swinburne on the claim that God could have made our choices be between good and neutral instead of good and bad (195), since willed indifference to the good is surely bad.

For Ward, divine power is metaphysically (not just logically) constrained. If God wishes to create independent, free creatures, then God must make a law-like and interconnected, yet open and indeterminate, universe in which freedom can emerge and God can intervene, but not so constantly and intrusively as to undermine its essential regularities (40–41). S. summarizes an intriguing aspect of Ward's position as follows: "God had to allow indeterminism in order to give us free will, and this indeterminism then gave us natural evils" (202). God is therefore "as powerful as it is possible to be" (37) and his defense is not simply that "the good makes it all worthwhile" but also and crucially that "the only alternative to this creation with free agents such as ourselves is no creation of free creatures at all." God is therefore not using evil as a means to a greater good; rather, evil (both moral and natural) is an unavoidable but unintended consequence of the antecedent will to create free creatures who may love and be loved by God (216–17).

S. nonetheless faults Ward for failing to answer the remaining stubborn question of why God did not in the first place create a better world with less independent beings, such as heaven (218–19). S. suggests his own answer: we may claim that God has already created that better world, and that therefore God cannot be faulted for failing to create a better world than this one. Surely, S. continues, it is better to create *both* that better world *and* this one with all its unique value that comes from its independence, rather than *only* that better world (256–59). Of course, if one thinks that heaven is not another world but the fulfillment of this one, then S.'s suggestion will not persuade. But then it is a sign of S.'s impressive creativity and clarity that he can persuasively advance new theories in this thought-provoking and insightful book.

Boston College School of Theology and Ministry DOMINIC DOYLE

WE HAVE BEEN BELIEVERS: AN AFRICAN AMERICAN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY. By James H. Evans Jr. Edited and introduced by Stephen G. Ray Jr. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012. Pp. xxii + 233. $27.

Evans's book deserves to be widely read. Like Margaret Walker Alexander's poem, E. expresses the depth and breadth of the African diasporic experience in America, and the overflowing creativity and painful struggle of diverse African people for life and freedom in the midst of bondage and ongoing oppression.

E.'s African American systematic theology endures for its critique of Eurocentric white theologies, its method of interrelating the contexts and content of theology, and for articulating a liberation theology that integrates biblical scholarship, slave narratives and experience, and diverse historical and contemporary theological perspectives. Indebted yet not beholden to James Cone's black liberation theology, E. develops a broader systematic theology that interrelates themes of revelation, creation, redemption, Christology, liberation, and community in critical dialogue with a wide variety of perspectives, including Marxist, Pan-African, and Womanist perspectives.

The relationship between faith and freedom is E.'s opening question, one that is crucial for the whole of Christianity. The enslavement of Africans, the extermination of Jews, and the oppression of women and Native Americans blinded theologians of so-called European societies to the import of this question because they assumed that "they alone were the recipients of God's revelation" (17). E. incisively critiques an American cultural conflict that is about not only the failure of white Americans to contend with the legacy of slavery but also the ways American culture has devalued community, idolized the individual, and given priority to the