

divine prerogative to judge human words” (88). Theology is also an open-ended enterprise that continually begins again in an effort to render faithfully the irruptive force of God’s word into an ever-changing, ever-evolving human history. H. then shows how the Yale school, represented by Bruce Marshall, exchanges Barth’s dark prophecies for what she calls “the epistemic-advantage model.” Rather than seeing Marshall’s effort as preserving the most essential biblical truths by tethering them to creedal statements, H. laments that Marshall has construed doctrine in such a manner that “there is no place for novelty in theological development.” More starkly, she declares, “At this point, doctrine has come to an end,” for it has become “a self-enclosed system incapable of communicating to others on the outside” (105).

Chapter 4 constructs a theological epistemology by leaning heavily on Schleiermacher. Here H.’s fluency with Schleiermacher comes through, and she reminds readers that Schleiermacher played a key role in 19th-century biblical studies. Above all, H. aims to show how the right theological epistemology permits an openness to a broader range of theological *loci*, which contribute to a broader and richer construction of new doctrine. Chapter 5 continues in this mode, offering an olive branch to religious studies by suggesting that theology use social science, especially ethnology, more liberally. H. also takes theologians and scholars of religion to task for closed-mindedly refusing to grant the other discipline any legitimacy.

Even though this work has Protestant theology as its subject matter, it is still striking how profoundly Protestant the book is. H. describes doctrine early in the book, but sometimes when she talks about doctrine later on, the term becomes interchangeable with theology. Words like *magisterium* do not appear in the book. While it is possible to have a plurality of theologies but a uniformity of doctrine, H. does not seem to find such a compromise satisfactory. Moreover, in a book that spends much time discussing how God is mediated to humans, there is a conspicuous absence of any sacramentology; the focus remains fixed on word and language. This is not so much a complaint as an observation on the supremely Protestant shape of the book.

These points aside, I suspect this book will appear frequently—and deservedly—on graduate syllabi that deal with contemporary systematic theology. It is thoughtful and careful. More importantly, H. challenges a narrative about the last two centuries of Protestant theology that has too often gone unchallenged. H. has proven herself to be an important voice in contemporary theology, and we should be grateful should we continue to hear from her.

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Decreation: The Last Things of All Creatures. By Paul J. Griffiths. Waco, TX: Baylor University, 2014. Pp xi + 408. \$69.95.

Griffiths has written a major work on the traditional theme of the last things, a comprehensive account largely based on tradition, though not without significant

departures. In the most significant of these G. joins his voice with those theologians who opt for an annihilationist position in relation to hell and the nonfixity in evil of both fallen souls and fallen angels. His argument supplements scholars who have explored questions on the place of animate and inanimate forms in heaven (e.g., Elizabeth Johnson).

The work is comprehensive in its treatment of the topics involved. Included are sections on the basic theological grammar of the relevant doctrines, the doctrinal judgments of the tradition, the nature of creation as space-time, angelic and human eschatology, and the fate of nonhuman existence, both animate and inanimate. The final section, "The Last Things in the Devastation," is perhaps less clear in its intent within the whole, perhaps due to the fact that two chapters were previously published as stand-alone pieces.

Among the more unusual and contentious stands in this work is G.'s position on the state of separated souls. While agreeing with Aquinas that "my soul is not me," it is not at all clear that for G. the soul is the carrier of conscious identity (179); it may not be what I am as a fully embodied human, but it is who I am in this current disembodied state. Also, even the blessed in heaven, while enjoying the beatific vision, are in a state of existential anxiety over their final state prior to resurrection (188–90).

Much of the unfolding logic of the work follows from a position asserted in the opening chapter, that creation is "intrinsically spatio-temporal" (4). This position is so often repeated and strongly asserted as to be proclaimed "non-negotiable" (145). Once this nonnegotiable is staked out, several contentious claims follow: the temporality of angels and their subsequent nonfixity in evil; angelic corporality (they have bodies with mass but not matter, bodies of energy); and the corporality of separated souls and the nonfixity in evil of fallen souls. While his position comes close to *apokatastasis*, G. does hold that annihilation is a real possibility for both fallen angels and humans (without committing to whether such a possibility is ever realized).

Certainly G.'s position is a significant divergence from the dominant strand of Thomism, which holds that not all creation is spatiotemporal—a doctrine that is able to positively conceive of purely spiritual existence (angels) without relapsing into categories of space and time. While G. cites various difficulties with the Thomistic position, Thomism is arguably based on a more sound metaphysics than the author acknowledges, from which his own position would be viewed as something of a failed materialist metaphysic.

This almost-Stoic materialism is wedded to a Platonic conception of world order dominated by a powerful sense of fallenness of the cosmos—indeed a double fallenness of angels and humans. G. regularly and consistently refers to the fallen cosmos—fallen from its inception because of the angelic fall—as the "devastation." All pain and suffering found in the cosmos, even "earthquakes, supernovas, cataclysms of various kinds . . . are evidence and result of the fall" (301–2). While the fall of the angels allows for a relatively easy solution to the problem of theodicy (every so-called natural evil results from this), it creates other problems.

Given the nature of his topic, G. touches on a number of scientific issues, but his handling is patchy. He attempts to grasp the consequences of special and general

relativity (81–87), but makes some scientific gaffs. Hadrons and bosons are not particles but classes of particles; and protons, far from having an existence “brief in the extreme” (92), are quite stable hadrons. Neither are they mutually exclusive classes (mesons are both hadrons and bosons). Similarly the claim that “chemical reactions contribute to the explosion of stars” confuses chemical with nuclear processes (309). Also G’s insistence that angels have mass/energy would have them subject to gravity—angels could then be sucked into black holes—and their existence open to scientific verification.

Overall this work adopts a number of difficult and controversial positions, only some of which I mentioned above. Given the standing of the author, the book will likely generate significant discussion. The advantage of G.’s approach is that the clarity of its exposition makes it easy to identify where one disagrees and why. His position is relatively coherent, and he follows through even where his conclusions differ from more commonly received positions.

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Max Weber’s Theory of Personality. By Sara R. Farris. Studies in Critical Social Sciences 56. Leiden: Brill. 2013. Pp. xii + 229. \$40.79.

By setting out Weber’s theory of the Puritan personality with its counterparts, Farris’s promising work mirrors one of Weber’s investigative methods: he demonstrated what a mystic is by contrasting the mystic with the ascetic, and he clarified charisma by contrasting it with traditional and bureaucratic authority. The topic of Weber’s concept of personality has been relatively neglected in secondary literature, but the few scholars who have investigated it have underscored its importance in Weber’s thinking. These scholars focus on Weber’s writings on Protestantism because they recognize that his concept of personality is based on the thought of American Puritans. These scholars also acknowledge that Weber was convinced that the Puritan emphasis on the individual helped break the power of authority. F. agrees but argues that it is insufficient to focus exclusively on the Protestant writings, and that, by examining the other cultures in Weber’s sociology of religion, we can arrive at a much fuller picture of his theory of personality. Unfortunately, the book’s promise is diminished because of significant omissions and flaws.

Chapter 1 provides the philosophical context for Weber’s notion of the “historical individual.” Chapter 2 charts his movement from the philosophical notion of the historical individual to the sociological concept of personality, which F. locates within the German concept of *Bildung*,” noting that *Bildung* is more than an education and aimed at the formation of the entire individual. Chapter 3 focuses on Weber’s notion of personality as found generally in Protestant circles, particularly in its most sharpened formulation in American Puritanism. This focus depicts the active individual who is driven by his or her faith, but whose personality develops partially as a response to community