

*Reconsidering the Relationship between Biblical and Systematic Theology in the New Testament.* Edited by Benjamin E. Reynolds, Brian Lugioyo, and Kevin J. Vanhoozer. *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2/369.* Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014. Pp. xiv + 308. €84.

Rare is the Festschrift dedicated by mature scholars to their undergraduate teacher, such as this second one for Robert H. Gundry, by his former students at Westmont College. The volume is comprised of three parts: two essays introducing the volume's theme; five from the perspective of biblical theology; and five from the perspective of systematic theology; plus a bibliography of G.'s works and 3 indexes.

In the essays from the biblical-theological perspective, of particular note are Judith Gundry's exegesis of 1 Corinthians 7:32–34, which neatly removes "anxiety" from its interpretation and correctly replaces it with "concern"; and Roy Kotansky's careful search for, and reconstruction of, the core of the earliest resurrection account at the tomb.

Of most interest to readers of *TS* will perhaps be Kevin Vanhoozer's introductory essay, "Is the Theology of the New Testament One or Many? Between (the Rock of) Systematic Theology and (the Hard Place of) Historical Occasionalism," which focuses on the relationship between exegesis, biblical theology, and systematic theology. V. denies that systematic theology is "a little further removed from the biblical text" (D. A. Carson) than is biblical theology. Using David Yeago's distinction between concept and judgment, he affirms that Athanasius's *homoousios* makes the same judgment about the reality of Jesus as does Paul's *isos theou* in Philippians 2:6, although they have different conceptual language. In this way, V. neatly connects exegesis and dogmatic formulations. In his concluding three theses, V. insists that systematic theology's "ontological attunement" is vital to understand the biblical reality and must be a partner in the exegetical process itself.

The title of this volume is misleading. Of the twelve articles, four never mention the term "systematic theology"; another four seem to equate it with biblical or doctrinal theology; and two think of it as something beyond biblical theology but never define it. When the authors speak of systematic theology, they usually mean doctrinal theology (e.g., *homoousios* at Nicaea). But the authors are pushing beyond a distrust of systematic theology for failing to attend to the particular occasions of each biblical work, for imposing logical patterns on them, and for interpreting them in bloodless abstractions. In short, they are trying to reach beyond the prejudices of a large plurality of bishops at Nicaea and of those in their own evangelical background.

Even V.'s fine essay is not without this ambiguity. On the one hand, he calls Gabler's dogmatic theology systematic theology, and his use of the concept/judgment terminology ends not in systematic theology but in the dogmatic formulations of Nicaea. In his first thesis V. rightly asserts that "descriptions of redemptive history . . . are theologically incomplete until one spells out their ontological implications" (35), but, as John Courtney Murray pointed out 50 years ago, Nicaea and Chalcedon had already arrived at ontological formulations. On the other hand, V. understands systematic theology as something more than dogmatic theology. He rejects the distrust of system as abstraction: "What drives the search for systematic unity is the impulse towards not

abstraction, but understanding” (26), an understanding that analyzes and extends “the ontological presuppositions of redemptive-historical development” (36). For V. systematic theology employs conceptual schemes like existentialism and process philosophy (27), which render biblical truths intelligible for the present context (19).

What these scholars (and we all) need is clarification of the distinction between the doctrinal and systematic modes of inquiry. Karl Rahner’s 1954 essay “Chalcedon: End or Beginning?” takes the doctrinal formulation of the two natures of Christ as a true and permanent foundation, a benchmark that then provokes questions about the meaning of a fully human nature. Rahner—a contemporary systematic theologian who takes into account evolutionary anthropology, cultural and linguistic studies, dynamic psychology, social and economic theories, and philosophical theory founded on Kant’s turn to the subject—throws new light on human nature and therefore on the human nature of Christ. And while systematic theology’s conceptual schemes might well be further removed from those of doctrinal theology, they can also be a faithful development of the ontological judgment of the doctrinal formulation. I know of no better elucidation of these differences than Bernard Lonergan’s distinction (in his *Method in Theology* [1972]) between descriptive and explanatory discourse, and his separation of dogma as embodying *judgment* and systematics as seeking contemporary *understanding* of that judgment.

One must admire these authors for breaking new ground in their own evangelical tradition. But they are not as advanced as are the authors who commit to hermeneutics in Stanley Porter’s *The Future of Biblical Interpretation* (2013). For future growth the authors in the volume under review may need to consult older struggles among Catholic and Lutheran scholars, as in Francis Fiorenza’s opening essay in *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives* (1991).

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*Christianity in Roman Africa: The Development of Its Practices and Beliefs.* By J. Patout Burns Jr. and Robin M. Jensen, in collaboration with Graeme W. Clarke, Susan T. Stevens, William Tabbernee, and Maureen A. Tilley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014. Pp. liii + 670. \$55.

This volume represents a splendid collaborative effort by six well-known scholars of late-antique archeology, art history, theology, and church history; it took shape from the team’s initial 1996 visit to Christian sites in Tunisia and at subsequent conferences. The several authors’ integrative approach is plain throughout, as they combine literary evidence with theology and material culture. The time is ripe for this book. In the past 30 years, the study of early Christianity has burgeoned into a multidisciplinary field, yet no one has attempted to produce an entire volume correlating theology and archeology with devotional practices. Throughout late antiquity, sporadic crises forced the African church to grapple with pressing theological problems that demanded pastoral