

decisive. Christians must always strive to discuss the tenets of faith with fresh relevance (242).

K.'s volume endorses several wise approaches to twentieth-century secularism. He insists that ecclesiology must be built upon Pneumatology; the church then remains chiefly an event and something happening (110). As usual, K. readily demonstrates his attention to the philosophical underpinnings of the modern era. He skillfully presents how the New Testament and church answer the struggle for human freedom (100–102). A worthwhile addition to the book would include an assessment of witnessing faith to the growing nonreligious or technological utopianism.

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The Crucifixion: Understanding the Death of Jesus Christ. By Fleming Rutledge. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015. Pp. xxv + 669. \$45.

For Christians in the United States, impatience with the crucifixion is a perpetual temptation. We much prefer the hopeful message of Easter Sunday to the unsettling and even haunting message of Good Friday. According to Rutledge, an Episcopal priest and accomplished preacher, we are predisposed to forget that the most important thing Jesus did was die a godless death among criminals (71). In this, her most recent work, R. attempts to resolve this shortcoming by reclaiming the cross as “the touchstone of Christian authenticity, the unique feature by which everything else, including the Resurrection, is given its true significance” (44).

To make her case, R. proposes to return the crucifixion to the center of Christian proclamation with a novel combination of biblical, patristic, and pastoral insights. She devotes part I of the book to exploring the scandalous nature of crucifixion and how it illuminates other themes at the heart of the Christian story. She then examines, in part II, how New Testament authors and prominent theologians supported these connections, not with systematic theories, but with a variety of overlapping motifs. To interpret the crucifixion rightly, she argues, we must first take seriously its centrality in the Gospels, the godless character of its execution, the longing for justice it expresses, and the dominion of sin that it overthrows. Similarly, we can only grasp how the crucifixion determines the meaning of other themes by seeing how each motif contributes some insight to the whole, without exhausting its range of meanings. In this respect, R.'s approach proves to be both comprehensive and well-suited to the proposed aim of the book.

Especially instructive is R.'s argument (in part I) that the manner of Jesus's death, and not merely the fact of his death, contributes to what is so theologically valuable about the cross. What Christians proclaim as God's way of setting the world aright is an accursed death, designed to shame and dehumanize as well as inflict pain. Indeed, as R. notes, “No other mode of execution would have been commensurate with the extremity of humanity's condition under sin” (102). Jesus died the way he did, in other

words, because only by doing so does he fully enter into the depths of our godlessness. Yet according to R., the manner of Jesus's death has as much to do with God's justice as it does with our sin. Crucifixion makes plain that rectifying the world is not a matter of forgiveness pure and simple, but one of judgment as well. On this point, in what is arguably the most intriguing contribution of the book, R. offers a convincing rereading of Anselm's model of atonement. What Anselm sees that so many modern readers cannot is the fact that forgiveness on God's part is never sufficient to deal with the gravity of sin. R. gives us, in short, a more apocalyptic Anselm: the crucifixion of Jesus is God's way of actively undoing the injustices wrought by sin, in a manner beyond what our own efforts could ever achieve.

Of greatest interest for theologians is R.'s harmonizing of soteriological motifs in part II. These chapters serve as a commendable introduction to biblical and patristic interpretations of the efficacy of the Cross. But R. goes further by proposing the motif of "apocalyptic battle" (or *Christus Victor*) as the motif that frames and informs all the others. Here the crucifixion becomes the apocalyptic event par excellence, and its particular force lies in its ability to take evil seriously. R. writes with passion on the problem of suffering and carefully marshals some sobering examples of demonic evil from the pages of history. Keeping the apocalyptic motif in mind when discussing sacrifice, substitution, redemption, recapitulation, and so on ensures that we see ourselves as "condemned to redemption" (571): the cross breaks into our condition and judges these forces of evil enslaving us. That God dies for us when we are godless is, for R., the final meaning of the crucifixion.

In this book, R. writes compellingly for both scholarly and educated lay audiences. Her writing exhibits a combination of skillful exegesis, engagement with scholarly sources, and the rhetorical clarity of a good sermon. All of this reinforces the impression that her words ring true for Christians of all kinds struggling to find meaning in a broken world. Her appeal to multiple audiences is not without its risks: the concern to speak to theologians and preachers alike often comes at the cost of sacrificing concision, and R.'s tendency to judge theological validity by the standards of the pulpit is not always convincing. Nevertheless, her ambition proves to be more than worth the risks. R. has produced a book that is both informative and spiritually nourishing. This volume will undoubtedly become a standard work guiding discussion on the cross and soteriology for years to come.

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Rethinking Christian Forgiveness: Theological, Philosophical, and Psychological Explorations.
By James K. Voiss, SJ. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2015. Pp. xx + 428. \$34.95.

The English poet Alexander Pope is credited with the oft-cited proverb, "To err is Human; To Forgive, Divine." Pope was right—making mistakes, large and small, comes all too easily to everyone. The sticking point is the capacity to forgive both the