

before of creation, in that he does not argue for either a pure duration or timelessness in God before creation. In his response to Padgett, Wolterstorff contends that their positions are quite similar, with some clarifications concerning the idea of God's pure duration and creation's time (233-236). In the end, Wolterstorff's position is quite minimalist: God has a history of acting, responding and also acquiring knowledge.

For those wishing to get a quick taste of some of the basic positions concerning God and time this is a fine place to start. The level of argument is accessible yet remains sophisticated. Since readers will no doubt desire more detailed expositions of the respected authors, the selected bibliography is satisfactory, notably for analytical philosophy of religion, though it misses some of the fine historical discussions available. This dialogue is quality reading for undergraduate courses in philosophy of religion or the doctrine of God.

To examine the issue of God and time from a more authentically Christian perspective, however, the discussion would have to include the central doctrines of the trinity and incarnation. The doctrine of the incarnation is mentioned anecdotally a few times, and the trinity sparingly. It would seem to me that the doctrine of the trinity would be an excellent starting point, or *the* starting point, to speak of the fullness of God's being – which itself is not given the place it deserves, despite being one of the five important issues mentioned by Ganssle in the introduction. These two central doctrines would give the discussion not only more problems but more resources for thinking through this important issue in Christian theology and philosophy.

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***Matthew, Poet of the Beatitudes.* By H. Benedict Green, CR. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001. ISBN 1-84127-165-9. Pp. 350.**

Matthew, Poet of the Beatitudes explores, in significant detail, numerous texts within the Matthean gospel, examining their poetic style as well as the background sources for each example. The focus texts are, as the title indicates, the Beatitudes, though the work extends well beyond. It challenges the reader to see the gospel's redaction of text as based, in many instances, on poetics, and not simply on ideological tendencies or, better perhaps, as based on ideological tendencies shaped in a poetic fashion.

The work examines Matthew's use of the Old Testament and generally

concludes that, where changes have been made to the LXX, the words are adapted and modified to flow poetically. The author advances categories such as texts based on the LXX, texts with wording influenced by the LXX, and texts drawn from the LXX. Poetic features include quantitative scansion, rhyme, assonance, alliteration, word play, and many others (72, 163). The author comes to conclusions regarding the strata of a given text based on its poetic homogeneity, both internal to itself and with respect to the entire Matthean corpus. From this examination, it is concluded that certain Matthean texts display dissonance with their contexts and, therefore, antedate the composition of the Gospel, while others relate more fluidly with their contexts and were constructed by the Matthean redactor (163).

The largest section of the book is dedicated to the structure and meaning of the Beatitudes themselves. Each of the Beatitudes is first broken into pairs and then the pairs are examined in tandem with each other. Thus, the poor and the meek are examined together, the merciful and the peacemakers are examined as a pair, those who mourn and those who hunger and search for righteousness are seen as matching, and last, the pure in heart are examined in relation to those who are persecuted for righteousness. The Beatitudes are continually discussed as interpreting each other, and the levels of the overall structure become very complex (254).

The difficulties of this work are found in the interpretations of the redactions mentioned above. Green discusses four passages in Matthew and concludes,

There is then a fundamental unity of theme running through the last four examples of Matthew's poetic composition that we have been examining: the supersession of the Mosaic law in its original form by Jesus' messianic interpretations of it, that of the old Israel centred on the temple by the Church, and that of the occupation of the promised land by the mission to the new land of promise, the world of the Gentiles. (161)

From this example, it can be seen that Green adequately examines the poetic texts and their sources, but the conclusions that can be drawn from the redactions are not new. Green also makes the bold assertion that Matthew 28:18-20 should be read according to the Eusebian version of the text, eliminating the reference to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (152) and should read "in my name", which conforms to a more slandered Matthean poetic. Thus, here, one has to assess whether or not redactional trends dictate textual readings or manuscript evidence. Finally, the reader will continually question some of the influences that are posited to lie behind the examined poetic texts. In many of the listings, influence is granted to the LXX where the verse only contains one similar word or, in other instances, only a few words in a given chapter. Does this indicate influence at all? The method used to determine influence is not straightforward and Green thus runs the risk of establishing false parallels.

Despite raising some methodological questions, this work is very strong in its examination of the poetics of the gospel's Greek. Ultimately, the audience will be reminded of and introduced to a beauty of the Greek often missed in common meticulous exegesis that is concerned primarily with meaning devoid of aesthetic nature. Any reader of Greek will be encouraged to examine the gospel anew to seek the beauty most present in the blessed Beatitudes.

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Act & Being: Toward a Theology of the Divine Attributes. By Colin E. Gunton. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002. ISBN: 0-8028-2658-X. Pp. ix + 162.

Colin Gunton, who was professor of Christian doctrine at King's College, London, confesses that this little book was originally intended to be a draft theology of the divine attributes. It became apparent, however, that much critical analysis needed to be done before construction could be attempted. Indeed, a full three-quarters of the book, six chapters, is a critical discussion of the classical approach to the attributes and the search for trinitarian moorings; not until the final two chapters does he present any constructive proposals.

In the first two chapters, Gunton briefly outlines the problem of the theological tradition as one of eschewing the biblical foundations of the Old Testament in favour of Greek philosophy and religion. Following Schleiermacher's suggestion that the discussion of divine attributes has focused on cosmological causality, he pinpoints Pseudo-Dionysius as the theologian who introduced problematic Platonic and Neo-Platonic dualisms into the Christian tradition. Next he briefly discusses nine methodological problems related to the construction of the attributes; they revolve around the tensions between metaphysical and personal attributes and the role of the doctrine of the trinity in shaping the discussion. The later issue is poignantly illustrated when he discusses the idea of the divine will. Instead of attributing two wills to Jesus, as much of the tradition affirms, he argues instead for *three wills* of the persons of the trinity working *ad extra* in unison and a *general will* of God for the perfection of creation. This makes the scene in Gethsemane an interaction between the wills of the incarnate Son and God the Father.

The following two chapters deal with two major approaches to the question of knowledge of God and the view of attributes which flow from these.