

movement into the World Baptist Fellowship and the Baptist Bible Fellowship. At the end of this chapter, Bauder and Delnay offer the reader a brief and helpful synopsis of the differences between Baptist fundamentalists in the North and South.

The ninth chapter tells the story of the “Sword crowd,” and especially its leader, evangelist John R. Rice. It describes his initial friendship, and then falling-out, with J. Frank Norris, as well as his ongoing grievances against Lewis Sperry Chafer and Moody Press.

The tenth and final chapter returns to the Fundamentalist Fellowship, the group of fundamentalists who chose to remain within the NBC after the departure of those who formed the GARBC. It follows their ongoing (and unsuccessful) attempts to steer the NBC in a conservative direction. After renaming itself the Conservative Baptist Fellowship, and then in 1947 the Conservative Baptist Association of America, this group finally made a partial break with the NBC and entered into merger talks with the GARBC. The talks broke down, however, over the issue of so-called “secondary separation.” The CBA insisted that its member churches be allowed the option of also maintaining membership in the NBC, while the GARBC demanded a complete break with the modernist denomination. This difference of opinion guaranteed that Baptist fundamentalism in the North would remain fragmented.

As the book comes to a close, many questions about Baptist fundamentalism are left unanswered. For example, how could this movement, which had protested so loudly against the domineering methods of the established denominations, produce so many authoritarian leaders of its own? When did adherence to such things as pretribulationism and the King James Version become prerequisites to fellowship for vast swaths of Baptist fundamentalism, and why? We trust that these issues and more will be addressed in the forthcoming second volume. As this first book comes to a close, however, one thing is certain: while Baptist fundamentalists may have been “one in hope and doctrine” at the start, these Christian soldiers were also quickly fractured by personal rivalries and philosophical disputes.

Brandon James Crawford

Is God Anti-Gay? And Other Questions about Homosexuality, the Bible and Same-Sex Attraction by Sam Allberry. Coydon, UK: The Good Book Company, 2013. 99 pp. \$7.99.

It is no secret that one of the hottest cultural topics in our society today is the matter of homosexuality. In recent years, homosexual marriage has been legalized in much of the United States and in many countries around the world. Secular culture is increasingly tolerant of the homosexual lifestyle; and as a result, Christians are increasingly finding themselves on the wrong side of mainstream thinking. Advocates of

traditional, biblical marriage have been put on the defensive, and presenting the biblical view of marriage is becoming more complicated. Proponents of the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgender (LGBT) movement often present Christians as bigoted, narrow-minded Neanderthals who have failed to recognize that tolerance is the hallmark of the modern world. From the perspective of the pro-LGBT community, Christians are anti-gay; and by implication, the Christian God himself is anti-gay.

The modern cultural context certainly does raise an important question that must be answered by Christians and non-Christians alike: “Is God anti-gay?” Perhaps the question might come from the non-Christian in this way: “Isn’t God anti-gay?” These are important questions in our contemporary context, and the Christian church had best determine how it will answer these questions if it is going to minister the gospel of Jesus Christ effectively. Thankfully, Sam Allberry, who is an associate pastor at St. Mary’s Church in Maidenhead, England, has come to our aid with a wonderful little book that speaks directly to these issues. In *Is God Anti-Gay?* Allberry not only discusses the biblical material on the issue of marriage, he also provides helpful tips on how to answer some of the tough questions believers will no doubt encounter from a skeptical world.

One thing that makes Allberry’s book stand out from other Christian books on homosexuality is the fact that Allberry himself struggles with what he calls “same-sex attraction.” This book does not come from someone who has no idea what it is like to have homosexual feelings or from someone who has no sympathy or compassion for members of the gay community. Rather, this issue is very real for Allberry; he deals with it personally—every day. Therefore, the book has a gracious, merciful, benevolent, and pastoral tone throughout, a tone all Christians should have when ministering to LGBT people. There is so much good material in this book that it is difficult to choose what to include and what to omit from this discussion. For the sake of brevity, I will try to restrict myself to four key ideas the reader will find in the book.

First, homosexuality is never the essence of a person’s identity. A key point Allberry makes at the beginning of the book is that he is not gay. He prefers not to think of himself as someone who is gay but as someone who struggles with “same-sex attraction” (8–9). By trying to shift the common homosexual nomenclature, Allberry is attempting to push back against the notion that homosexuality defines a person’s identity.

Second, the Bible plainly teaches that marriage and sex is restricted to heterosexual couples that are committed to one another for life. Chapter one of this book surveys the Bible’s teaching on marriage and sex. Allberry walks through the key passages on marriage in Genesis 1–2, the Gospels, and Ephesians. He argues from Genesis 2:4 that Adam and Eve’s marriage in the Garden of Eden was more than a historical fact; it is the pattern on which all marriages are modeled (15). Allberry then joins the teaching of Jesus with the teaching of Genesis in his examination of Matthew 19:3–6 to show that gender distinction was a key

element to the marriage definition. Allberry also argues against the so-called “gay Christian” position, which maintains that the biblical authors were not addressing modern homosexual marriage in places like Romans 1. The problem with that position, as Allberry argues, is that gender distinctions themselves are inherent to the *definition* of marriage itself. Therefore, the biblical authors are always assuming a heterosexual relationship when they are talking about marriage, and this fact categorically rules out interpretations that appeal to ignorance on the part of the biblical writers about modern, homosexual marriage unions.

A third major point Allberry makes in his book is that homosexuals need the gospel, just like everyone else. Perhaps the most helpful theme in this book is Allberry’s emphasis on the fact that homosexuals are really no different than anybody else when it comes to their need for the gospel. He reminds us “that the gospel demands *everything of all of us*. If someone thinks the gospel has somehow slotted into their life quite easily, without causing any major adjustments to their lifestyle or aspirations, it is likely that they have not really started following Jesus at all” (11). Christ calls everyone, whether they are lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, or heterosexual, to give their entire lives to him. The message is the same for homosexuals and heterosexuals alike.

The last major idea the reader will find in Allberry’s book is his firm conviction that Christians need to provide useful support to homosexual Christians and non-Christians. Both the church and the world have people who are struggling with homosexuality. In chapters four and five, Allberry gives several useful tips for helping these people in their struggle.

From a pastoral counseling standpoint, I doubt that there is a better book on homosexuality on the market today. The book does an excellent job of presenting the biblical position on marriage, homosexuality, and singleness with clarity, boldness, and frankness. Furthermore, Allberry accomplishes all of this without being condescending, a feat that I fear is not always accomplished by conservative Christian writers when addressing this topic. As such I would have no problem giving this book to anyone who is struggling with homosexuality, whether inside or outside the church. Pastors can expect that this book, coming as it does from someone who understands the struggles homosexuality personally, will be received better by the homosexual community than other popular Christian books on the subject. The clear distinctions Allberry maintains between human nature as God created it and human nature as affected by sin is fundamental to the homosexual discussion and should be followed by Christian counselors and theologians. The book also has the advantage of being brief, which makes it accessible to most, even to casual readers. However, the book’s brevity could also be taken as a bit of a weakness. If one is looking for in-depth, exegetical treatments on the key biblical passages involved in the homosexual debate, one will have to look elsewhere. However, the lack of detail in this book should in no way nullify the book’s quality and usefulness. Any pastor who may deal with the issue of homosexuality should read this book. Christian

laypeople that are out in the workplace encountering homosexuals and a pro-homosexual culture should read this book. In other words, every Christian should read this book.

Timothy Warren Scott