

Johnson's *The Glory of Preaching* is a standout volume in the field of homiletics for a number of reasons. First, the emphasis on the absolute performative nature of the proclamation of the Word of God is something that is encouraging to the preacher. Every time the Word of God is preached faithfully, something happens. This helps us when it seems like nothing is happening by our preaching. Second, Johnson's defense of the priority of preaching is helpful in a time when preaching is seen as something secondary if not something to be abandoned altogether. Third, his analysis and usage of the vast body of homiletical literature is helpful for those who want to delve deeper into homiletical methodology including those with whom we might not always agree theologically. And finally, the greatest strength finds itself in the focus on orality. Many a preacher can benefit from addressing their sermon construction with a focus on the ear rather than the eye. To quote Martin Luther, "Stick your eyes in your ears" (p. 131). Our audience will benefit greatly from focusing on the ear rather than the eye. And Johnson will help in developing that habit.

While weaknesses are few, the major one would be the nature of the book and the in-depth style. This volume would be difficult to use as an introductory homiletical methodology book as it does not delve into all aspects of sermon construction and delivery. For that, it becomes a volume relegated to serious, well-trained preachers and instructors of preaching. But that does not discredit the value of the book. Johnson provides a volume that should be read by all preachers and all instructors of preachers. It is thorough, challenging, and encouraging at the same time. While this reviewer might quibble with a few things that Johnson says, the overall thrust of the book is something quite needed today.

"When the living God speaks something happens...always. When the preacher speaks God's speech, God speaks...always. When the preacher speaks God's speech, something happens...always. For when the preacher speaks, the preacher is participating in the speaking of the great Preacher. That is the glory of preaching" (p. 244). To that this reviewer adds a hearty amen.

Allen R. Mickle, Jr.

Revelation and Reason: New Essays in Reformed Apologetics, edited by K. Scott Oliphint and Lane G. Tipton. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2007. 336 pp. \$24.99.

Revelation and Reason, as its subtitle indicates, is a collection of fourteen essays on apologetics. Some may quibble with these essays being called *new*, as four of them have already been published. Nearly every contributor to this volume has academic ties to Westminster

Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. Not surprisingly, then, the essays here explore and expand the apologetic insights pioneered by Cornelius Van Til, the founding professor of apologetics at WTS.

The articles are grouped under three headings: "Exegetical Considerations," "Theological Foundations," and "Methodological Implications." One additional essay by Oliphint is included as an appendix. Oliphint and Tipton offer a clear purpose statement for the collection in their introduction: "to set in the foreground the necessity of exegetical and theological foundations for any Reformed, Christian apologetic." What becomes quite evident, particularly in the early essays, is that these "exegetical and theological foundations" are heavily indebted to the biblical theology of Geerhardus Vos (whom Van Til held in very high esteem) and Herman Ridderbos. For those who approach the Scripture from a dispensational perspective, this thoroughgoing commitment to Vos and Ridderbos results in articles of mixed value.

The best of the Vossian exegetical essays are Richard Gaffin's and Lane Tipton's (two) contributions to the volume. Both are careful readings of their texts (1 Cor 2 for Gaffin, Acts 17 and Col 1–2 for Tipton). In brief, these articles establish an exegetical foundation for the conclusion that nothing at all is intelligible apart from Jesus Christ. Tipton's article on the Areopagus address is particularly helpful; he argues that Paul's use of the resurrection as proof is not rightly understood apart from biblical-theological categories and that Paul's appeal to the resurrection of Christ is therefore irreducibly presuppositional. While the Vossian eschatology permeates Tipton and Gaffin's articles, they remain immensely profitably even for those who do not share that commitment.

In contrast with these, William Dennison's "The Eschatological Implications of Genesis 2:15 for Apologetics" will be of little value to those who insist that authorial intent determines meaning. Dennison, pressing Vos's hermeneutic to an untenable extreme, finds sufficient parallels between the Garden, the New Jerusalem, and the Church to see in Adam's responsibility "to serve and to guard" the Garden a command to do apologetics: Adam's failure to repel the serpent is an apologetic failure. Not without good reason did the editors choose to place this essay in "Theological Foundations" rather than "Exegetical Considerations."

Most of the remaining essays are helpful contributions to Van Tilian thought. Oliphint's appendix functions as a primer to Van Til's apologetic and is an immensely helpful starting point for those who open this collection without a background in Van Til. Oliphint's other contribution, on the irrationality of unbelief, unpacks the epistemological implications of Romans 1. John Frame works out the ways in which the doctrine of divine aseity shapes apologetics; this emphasis is central to Van Til's whole project, as Van Til insists that the "self-contained Trinity" is foundational to all genuinely Christian thought. The contributions of Thom Nataro and Jeffrey Jue will be best appreciated by those with allegiances to the Reformed tradition. Nataro traces out how

the Westminster Standards ought to influence apologetics, and Jue shows that Van Til's low view of natural theology has antecedents in Protestant scholasticism.

The most intriguing contribution to the book is Don Collett's "Van Til and Transcendental Argument." Collett draws upon the philosophy of Peter Strawson and Bas van Fraassen to argue that Van Til's transcendental argument is meaningfully distinct from the traditional arguments for God's existence: "According to Strawson, a statement *A* may be said to *presuppose* a statement *B* if *B* is a necessary precondition of the truth-or-falsity of *A*" (p. 269). For apologetic purposes, this allows the construction of arguments like this:

Design presupposes God.
 (Design is true) or (Design is false).
 Therefore, God exists.

In other words, given this understanding of *presupposition*, neither the affirmative nor the negative formulation of the minor premise is intelligible apart from the existence of God. John Frame, who has repeatedly denied the uniqueness of transcendental argumentation, has recently conceded that this is a genuine difference between the traditional theistic proofs and the transcendental argument. In the traditional arguments, only the version of the minor premise that affirms design results in a valid argument; the presuppositional version of the syllogism presents a stronger claim. Collett's article alone makes the acquisition of this volume worthwhile for students of Van Til's apologetic (although his is one of the previous published articles, in the Fall 2003 *Westminster Theological Journal*).

Michael Riley

Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries, by Everett Ferguson. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009. xxii + 953 pp. \$60.00.

The veritable dean of American Patristics studies, Everett Ferguson has once again contributed a major work to the field of church history. Most know him for his surveys on early church history, his numerous journal articles, or his *Early Christians Speak* anthologies. His latest contribution, *Baptism in the Early Church*, is sure to incite conversation as only a few people—mostly Disciples of Christ, Church of Christ—agree with him concerning key issues within the material. For one particular doctrinal and liturgical topic, the book's size is massive and its material encyclopedic (approx. 860 pp. of body text). In addition Ferguson saw fit to include six different indexes for quick reference,