

## REVIEWS

James Beilby and Paul R Eddy, editors. *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2006. (208 pp.) [978-0-8308-2570-7]

IVP have a range of ‘four-views’ books on a diverse range of subjects, the work under review being the latest. Beilby and Eddy have brought together four scholars from various disciplines to each present a model or theory of the atonement and then to critically reply to each of the three other views. This format has proven itself to be an efficient and extremely useful tool for those coming into to a new field of study as well as for those more established in the discipline.

Gregory Boyd (senior pastor and author) presents and defends the *Christus Victor* view of the atonement, the view that Christ achieves a decisive victory over Satan in his work on the cross and that this is the paradigm by which Scripture presents the atonement. Due to the fact that this sort of view dominated the early church for the first millennium, this position is also known as the classic view. Contemporary Pentecostals will be particularly familiar with this theme as it is one often preached and taught from that tradition.

Next Thomas Schreiner (Professor of NT at Southern Seminary) presents and defends the Penal Substitutionary view, which toppled the dominance of the *Christus Victor* model in the eleventh century in its embryonic form known as Anselm’s satisfaction model. According to this view Christ acts as the substitute and representative of sinful humanity in his act of atonement and by his sinless life and perfect death he propitiates God and expiates sin. This objective paradigm is most familiar to Reformed/Calvinists and Evangelicals. Its status is such that it has often been raised to the level of implicit orthodoxy within those traditions, meaning that challenges against it are considered challenges against the faith.

Bruce Reichenbach (Professor of philosophy at Augsburg College) presents and defends the Healing view, a subjective paradigm by which Christ's atoning work is seen as healing and restoring a fallen and diseased humanity. Old Testament (Isaiah especially) and New Testament themes are developed in this view and some early church support is also garnered. No one group has ever been directly associated with this atonement model but it is a common theme amongst Pentecostal/charismatic traditions and is popular in Eastern Orthodoxy where legal notions of sin and judgement have never been of central significance.

Finally, the Kaleidoscopic view is offered by Joel Green (Professor of NT Interpretation at Fuller Theological Seminary). According to Green no one view of the atonement is sufficient to represent the range of metaphors and images Scripture uses in regard to the atonement. Therefore we are better not to settle on one root metaphor but to have an atonement quilt whereby all the themes are given equal space – hence a kaleidoscopic view. This position, like that of the Healing view, is not allied to any particular tradition but it is becoming increasingly popular amongst evangelicals.

For many one or more of the four views will be new and may raise some very important questions. The goal of such a project is that everyone's model of the atonement will become more expansive as we each incorporate more of the biblical testimony into our theology, rather than being too reliant on a single metaphor. It may also surprise some readers to learn that models of the atonement are just that – models – and that no model or atonement theory has ever been raised to creedal orthodoxy. Having said this it is important to note a criticism of Green's view made by Boyd:

‘...Green seems to deny there is any intrinsic logic to the variety of New Testament atonement metaphors...Green denies any metaphor or set of metaphors can be taken as intrinsically more fundamental than others. There is then, no normative, transcultural, overall framework within which all the variety of New Testament metaphors are to be arranged and properly understood’ (p. 187).

While the first three views have a clear tradition behind them, this final one does not. While this should not discredit the Kaleidoscopic view outright, it does put the burden of proof upon Green to show this is a coherent and viable model.

Each view is clearly presented and the responses are conducted with grace and charity. Where authors do disagree with each other they

do so in ways which model theological discourse which is expressly Christian. This is a useful contribution to contemporary discussion over the nature of the atonement.

### Myk Habets

**Wayne Grudem and Erik Thomas. *Laminated Study Guide Charts: Systematic Theology*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2008. (6 pp.) [ISBN 978-1-84474-211-0]**

There is a range of laminated study guide charts available from IVP and on the whole they are an excellent resource. The Systematic Theology study guide chart is based on the systematic theology of Grudem (also published by IVP), and thus reflects the theology developed at length there.

The study guide is divided into seven parts: Introduction, the Word of God, the doctrine of God, the doctrine of man, the doctrines of Christ and the Holy Spirit, the doctrine of the application of redemption, the doctrine of the church and the doctrine of the future. Each section has a series of brief definitions, followed by several bullet pointed summary comments, and in some instances an illustration is provided (five in total). Biblical references are provided in parenthesis throughout the chart and the format is an A4 laminated card folded into three.

If Grudem's *Systematic Theology* appeals to people then this chart will be a welcome addition as it provides easy and fast access to clear definitions and biblical references which cover the sweep of the systematic theological *loci*. However, as there are no footnotes, no citations, and very little interaction with opposing views to those of Grudem, the use and appeal of this chart is severally limited.

With only five illustrations there is little here, if anything, which is not provided in Grudem's *Systematic Theology*. I expected a number of illustrations that could have been used as teaching aids, in addition to the bulleted points and definitions which are provided. While I can see the use this chart will be for many as a source of initial consultation, it is not as useful as many of the other charts available on the market.

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