

continuous with the heritage of Baptist thought and at the same time sharpens and extends some of the important categories. Key among these is the crucial significance of the presence of Christ. This is particularly well thought through in the chapter (6) on the Lord's Supper in which it is argued that Christ's real presence is located in the gathered community. 'Our practice asserts that our conviction is that when we meet in the name of Christ then we can depend on the promise of God that Christ will be present among us' (p 135). Communion together in Christ has both past, present and future aspects and direct implications for discipline, unity, ministry and mission. 'At the table we are united with Christ, given his identity, and sent into the world as his community' (p 151).

This is a fine volume of Baptist thought from the English tradition. It represents well an authentic style and trajectory in ecclesiology and adds significant *mana* to Paternoster's already excellent series.

Martin Sutherland

Timothy Keller. *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Scepticism*. New York: Dutton, 2008 (278 pp.) [978-0-525-95049-3]

Tim Keller's first full length book came off the press in February 2008 and directly onto best seller lists around the Western World. Keller has been the pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan, New York City, for 20 years. For more than half of these he has hosted an evening Question and Answer session with any who wanted to stay to ask him any question regarding the God of the Bible, the Scriptures, etc. (You can hear many of these Q&A sessions here: http://www.monergism.com/directory/link_category/Redeemer-Q--A-Sessions/.) This book contains the fruit of these sessions.

The Reason for God has been called the *Mere Christianity* for the 21st century. It is no surprise to see Keller quoting Lewis more than any other author in this book. It is also quite evident that Keller has lived up to this assessment. Keller effectively serves this generation in the same way C.S. Lewis served his and for this we ought to be very thankful. *Publishers Weekly* has called *The Reason for God* '[A book] written for sceptics and for the believers who love them...' Keller wrote this book for the sceptics of the 21st century from a heart that truly desires to see their questions answered from Scripture. He deliberately approached a

non-Christian publisher in the hope that this would place the book in bookstores and venues where non-Christians would see it. Although this book has been read by a significant number of Christians to be sure, it is being read by many non-Christians as well, a result of Keller's efforts.

In *The Reason for God*, Keller starts from the presupposition that all people are people of faith. There are no non-believers. There are certainly sceptics when related to the Christian faith, but those sceptics still believe something. In his book Keller attempts to answer some of the most common questions asked today by these sceptics and to show the inadequacies in their own faith commitments. He then continues to give a clear and compelling argument in defence of the Christian faith.

The book divides nicely into two main sections with an introduction, and Intermission (between the two sections) and an Epilogue. Section one is titled 'The Leap of Doubt' and answers seven common critiques: 1) 'There can't be just one true religion, 2) A good God could not allow suffering, 2) Christianity is a straitjacket, 4) The church is responsible for so much injustice, 5) A loving God would not send people to hell, 6) Science has disproved Christianity, and 7) You can't take the Bible literally. In the second half of the book, titled 'The Reasons for Faith,' he turns to an examination of seven reasons to believe in the claims of the Christian faith: 1) The clues of God, 2) The knowledge of God, 3) The problem of sin, 4) Religion and the gospel, 5) The (true) story of the cross, 6) The reality of the resurrection, and 7) The Dance of God.

For some Christian readers of *The Reason for God* there will be frustration that Keller does not deal with Creation/Evolution very decisively, has a non-traditional description of Hell, and can be quite ecumenical at times. Although this reviewer sees the first two of these as weakness, this certainly does not outweigh the tremendous value of the book for Christians and non-Christian alike.

By reading and thinking deeply through Keller's arguments found in *The Reason for God* the non-Christian will see their worldview challenged at every turn and the Christian will be strengthened in their faith along with wonderfully equipped to more graciously engage their sceptic friends, etc. with the powerful, saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. A free PDF study guide and related audio/video resources for the book are available at <http://www.thereasonforgod.com/book.php>.

Joe Fleener