

To summarise, Habets' *The Anointed Son* leads the reader through a thorough introduction to scholarship and approaches to Spirit Christology and a Third Article Theology, as well as advocating Habets' own model. The book's great strength is the amount of ground it covers and its extensive references, making it a useful work for reference and starting point for further research. Habets' constructive work, especially in the final three chapters is worthy of engagement and should make an important contribution to the field. The book also provides a number of exciting pointers with regards to the practical application of a Third Article Theology, especially in regard to Scripture reading and evangelism, and this is something that would be good to see expanded upon in a further work.

Jonathan Robinson

James F. McGrath, *The Only True God: Early Christian Monotheism in Its Jewish Context*, University of Illinois Press, 2009.

McGrath's book has an argument that for many would seem counterintuitive, that the early Christians did not diverge from Jewish monotheism, even despite their veneration of Jesus. For McGrath this is simply because the modern conceptions of monotheism are not how first century Jews would have defined their monotheism. The book's thesis is that while Christians, post Nicaea, are used to thinking about monotheism in terms of ontology, first century Jews defined their devotion to the one God in terms of worship. While Christians did worship Christ in some respects, McGrath argues that only sacrificial worship to Christ would have made Christ equal to God in a way that would constitute a breach of first century Jewish monotheism.

The book itself has the rare virtue of being blessedly short, a mere 104 pages of text (not including notes, bibliography and index). That being the case, what McGrath achieves within those pages is all the more impressive. The book is intended to be accessible to those without a detailed knowledge of the field. Thus the first chapter takes pains to explain clearly the important concepts and

relevant methods. This is done in a thorough but economical style. In the second chapter McGrath turns to the question of how Jews in the Greco-Roman era would have understood their own monotheism in the context of a world where the worship of many gods was commonplace. Given the book's intention to be accessible to the non-expert it is a shame that some of the more obscure source passages referenced, e.g. Hecataeus of Abdera, do not appear in translation, instead the reader is reliant on McGrath's précis of the relevant points. Having established a working definition of first century Jewish monotheism McGrath moves on to examine the writings of Paul (chapter 3), the Gospel of John (chapter 4), and Revelation (chapter 5), against this definition. In each chapter McGrath continues to develop his thesis and in each case finds the Christian elevation of Christ to be within the bounds of his definition of first century Jewish monotheism.

The sixth chapter moves on from the Biblical material to discuss the 'two powers heresy' within rabbinic literature. McGrath argues that after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple Jewish monotheism was forced to redefine itself. One result of this process was the rabbinic response to the two powers heresy which, while probably originally targeted at the Gnostics, came to encompass the Christians also. McGrath concludes that certain ideas that were condemned in the late second and early third centuries need not have been controversial in the first century. Thus the schism between Christianity and Judaism over their respective understandings of monotheism is re-dated from the first to the third century and, surprisingly, is a result of a change in the boundaries of Jewish monotheism rather than a developing Trinitarianism. The final chapter briefly summarises the book's findings and then offers some thoughts on their historical and theological implications.

McGrath's book is excellently written, the only hindrance to the reader's enjoyment being the use of endnotes instead of footnotes. It consistently progresses through his argument with nuance but without wasting space on peripheral issues. It engages with other scholarship in a respectful but efficient manner and represents a significant contribution to the field. McGrath's concluding

thoughts are balanced and show a concern for further discussion and for the appropriation of the work by theologians. I would suggest it is essential reading for anyone interested in NT background, Christology, or the historical development of Trinitarian theology.

Jonathan Robinson

Steven B. Sherman. *Revitalizing Theological Epistemology: Holistic Evangelical Approaches to the Knowledge of God*. Princeton Theological Monograph Series 83. Oregon: Pickwick, 2008. (xi + 278 pp.)

In recent years epistemology has become one of the flash points between fundamentalists and evangelicals, and between those influenced more by the Enlightenment than postmodernity. Steven Sherman (Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics, Winebrenner Theological Seminary, USA) presents a study about ‘contemporary evangelical approaches to the knowledge of God, considering – and suggesting – ways Christian philosophers and theologians envision and make use of theological knowledge in the postmodern context’ (xv). Sherman’s work is especially focussed on postconservative evangelical theological epistemology, now prevalent in almost all the major evangelical seminaries. Taking Roger Olsen’s 1995 article in the *Christian Century* as the manifesto of postconservative evangelicalism, Sherman seeks to articulate what the epistemology of this movement is, how it is different – and better – than Enlightenment rationalism, and then present some commendable paradigms for consideration. Finally, Sherman provides his own constructive proposal and offers practical steps for revitalizing evangelical theological epistemology.

According to Sherman, Clark Pinnock is the ‘father of postconservative evangelical theology’ (8) and he is used as *the* paradigm to explain the shift from classical foundationalism to a reformist evangelical approach to theological knowledge (18-69). According to Sherman, Pinnock’s career has developed over three main phases: the early years (1960s – 74), in which his Calvinistic