

and dynamic relationship between the *eikon* and the devil in Gregory's thought Thomas has produced some genuinely fresh, engaging insights. It is a shame that the title buries the lede, with a hint of what is to come only in the quotation that she chooses to preface the work, from Nazianzus' *On baptism*: 'I too am also an *eikon* of God ... you should worship me' (p. v).

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OLIVER LANGWORTHY

*The letters of Bishop Basil of Caesarea. Instruments of communion.* By Silouan Fotineas. (Early Christian Studies, 19.) Pp. xii + 382. Sydney, NSW: SCD Press, 2018. £32 (paper). 978 1 925730 06 7  
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The publication of this former doctoral thesis brings readers a welcome focus on Basil of Caesarea's letter collection. Silouan Fotineas treats philological issues and questions of attribution and chronology in his introduction; however, his main aim is to investigate how Basil used his correspondence to 'foster communion'. He argues that the letters not only provide evidence of Basil's conception of 'communion' (*koinōnia*), but also that, for Basil, 'the act of letter-writing was itself an instrument of communion' (p. 8). After an introduction which helpfully sets Basil's letter-collection in the context of late antique letter-writing (including some fascinating comments on the function of the letter-carrier), the first part of the book sets out Basil's context, education and vocation, his theology and his ministry as bishop. The chapters in the second part focus more closely on the book's main argument and add more substantially to our understanding of Basil. In chapter iv, Silouan begins from a *topos* of the ancient letter-writing genre: that letters bring together those unable to meet face-to-face. His discussion of Basil's use of letters to bring about communion seems to assume that this is a theological and ecclesiastical extension of that purpose; however, this potentially very fruitful argument is not driven home very explicitly. Instead, the author turns to examples of how Basil used letters in doctrinal and ecclesiastical disputes and to a helpful analysis of Basil's use of the term *koinōnia*, including its metaphorical expression (as body, ship and garment). Theologically, the author relates *koinonia* firmly to Basil's Trinitarian theology, especially as it has been interpreted by theologians such as John Zizioulas. Practically speaking, communion is manifested in participation in the sacraments – especially the eucharist, but also baptism and repentance, as the author shows in chapter v. Crucially, the 'head of each eucharistic community was Christ, who in each ecclesiastical diocese was made manifest through its presiding bishop' (p. 245) and Silouan spells out the theological and practical implications of this very richly in chapter v/2. He also draws from Basil's letter-collection some fascinating observations about suffragan/assistant bishops (pp. 283–90). As a metropolitan, Basil acted in his correspondence to establish communion within his region of oversight, but also (as the author boldly puts it) aimed 'to restore into the communion of the Nicene church all dioceses within the Eastern Roman Empire that were forced to conform to the Empire's non-Nicene legislation' (p. 245). This broader function is examined in chapter vi, which stresses that, for Basil, 'for every local diocese there was only one bishop' (p. 297). The communion of the wider Church rested on the communion of each of these bishops with each other – and with the Nicene faith. For this reader, the strongest parts of this book

are its contributions to our understanding of fourth-century conceptions of the vocation of a priest and bishop, both theologically and politically. The drawing out of a strongly theological dimension to Basil's understanding is an especially helpful complement to recent studies of Gregory of Nazianzus.

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*Augustine's early thought on the redemptive function of divine judgement.* By Bart van Egmond. (Early Christian Studies.) Pp. viii + 293. Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. £75. 978 0 19 883492 2

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The extent to which there is continuity or discontinuity in Augustine's theology of grace has been a subject of debate since the Pelagian controversy itself. Already in his *Retractationes* Augustine felt the need to chart some of the developments in his theology of grace, albeit as part of a narrative of broad continuity. In his debut monograph Bart van Egmond analyses in Augustine's writings, from the Cassiciacum dialogues to the *Confessions*, the function of God's judgement over sin in the process of salvation as a way to approach the broader question of development in Augustine's theology of grace.

Van Egmond locates his chronological study within three different contexts that he takes to inform Augustine's early understanding of the relationship between divine judgement and grace. First, the anti-Gnostic tradition represented by the likes of Clement, Irenaeus and Origen shaped 'the framework' of his thinking on divine justice and mercy, for he was aware from an early age of the strategy of this tradition to describe the pedagogical purpose of the divine punishment of sin. While drawing upon this tradition, Augustine describes God's justice as educational and restorative in order to maintain human freedom and God's goodness *vis-à-vis* the Manichees. Second, Augustine found in the classical pedagogical tradition of psychagogy the resources to describe how providence exercises the soul in virtue and how the soul is cured by the training of the mind in rational thought. Van Egmond rightly perceives Augustine's use of this tradition as being influenced by his gradually increasing assimilation of Scripture and the earlier Christian tradition. Third, Augustine's understanding of the function of temporal punishment as itself the product of divine providence and ecclesiastical discipline should inform how we interpret his account of the relationship between divine justice and grace. Van Egmond's primary contention, largely in continuity with the work of Joanne McWilliam, is that Augustine moves from positing a largely philosophical and pedagogical account of human salvation to a soteriology animated by faith in the crucified Christ.

The book contains six chapters, beginning in the first with an introduction to the three contexts of the work and ending with a sixth chapter containing summative conclusions. Chapters ii through v consider the redemptive function of divine judgement across four distinct stages within Augustine's early literary *corpus*. The second chapter analyses Augustine's understanding of the importance of God's discipline of human sin for his saving work in the Cassiciacum dialogues. Van Egmond outlines Augustine's account of divine providence as a Christianised version of the philosophical notion of *fortuna* by which God elicits sinful human