

opposed interpretations, docetic and anti-docetic. In response Loader analyses different approaches to 'John and history', as well as appeals to the nature of (Johannine) 'remembering' and of the guidance of the spirit; here, too, analysis of literary effect is combined with reconstruction of the underlying theological traditions on which the author drew, and which to some extent constrained him, and with the now conventional model of the stages and disputes in the history of the community. It may not be surprising that he concludes by describing the christological result as 'hardly a thorough synthesis, but it illustrates a compromise' (p. 460), for at this point some readers will feel the same about the explanatory method deployed.

A brief final section of this chapter offers some reflections on the relevance of John's undertaking for present-day faith; this includes a comment on 'antisemitism' which is surprisingly brief and neutral, a sense reinforced when the conclusion to the volume as a whole summarises the argument and affirms John's potential 'as a major source for ecumenical exchange among diverse peoples and cultures' (p. 484). The hesitancy here to grasp a painful nettle, if disappointing, may seem out of character in a volume which displays a consistent depth of scholarship and careful attention to the text, and to the unresolved dilemmas which it generates. In all, this remains within the tradition of classic historical-critical approaches to Johannine christology, with, for example, little awareness of insights from gender and masculinity studies, or from more recent analysis of symbolism and metaphor. Yet as such it offers an important contribution to study of the Fourth Gospel, and will demand attention in future scholarship.

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Oliver D. Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards among the Theologians* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2015), pp. 218, \$25.00.

What do you get when you take a cavernous and constructive theologian – Jonathan Edwards – and cross him with the analysis of a shrewd and out-of-the-box theologian? You get Oliver Crisp's recent book, *Jonathan Edwards among the Theologians*. Crisp's short but argument-rich text rewards careful reading and does not fail to stir, stimulate and provoke.

For years now, Crisp has been mulling over some of Edwards' most fascinating contributions. In his latest work, Crisp is keen not merely to engage Edwards, but to show that he may be more complex – perhaps even bordering in places on heterodox – than the millennial masses, clad

in 'Jonathan Edwards Is My Homeboy' t-shirts, might realise. Out of the gate, Crisp challenges the somewhat-common perspective that Edwards is a traditional Reformed thinker. 'Edwards', Crisp asserts, 'was not really a confessional theologian.' Rather, he was at his core a gap-filler: 'he holds in tension a pronounced biblicism on the one hand and a penchant for metaphysical speculation on the other' (p. 82). There is truth here. More than many thinkers of the Christian tradition – say John Calvin – Edwards felt blissful freedom to probe the intellectual grey areas of the faith. In my view, he took pains to work within biblical guardrails, but he also felt free to say many things the Bible did not explicitly say. Of course, as Douglas Sweeney has rightly shown in his excellent – and course-correcting – *Edwards the Exegete* (Oxford, 2016), the Bible was above all else the thing for Edwards – more than speculation, more than philosophical analysis, more than tradition.

This biblical homing instinct led Edwards, in Crisp's view, to some surprising stances. In Crisp's most provocative chapter he suggests straightforwardly that 'Edwards also embraces a doctrine of pantheism' (p. 75). This is a strong statement; the chapter in which it falls, 'Arminius and Edwards on Creation', came into the world as a conference paper that, while catalysing to read, leaves us eager for more substantiation. Crisp's argument depends in considerable part on the 'Miscellanies', which were not published and polished works of theology, but Edwards' intellectual sketchbook.

Crisp is right to explore such matters, as he does elsewhere on the question of whether Edwards held to theosis (he argues that the Northamptonite did – see p. 161). Gifted with an expansive pen, Edwards had the rare capacity to frame doctrine in bigger, wider terms. When Edwards wrote that the Christian will experience an 'infinite increase of nearness and union to God', he *could* have meant what some mean by theosis, but he might also have been articulating the depths of the fathoms-deep doctrine of union with Christ.

Crisp also pushes us to think more about Edwards' trinitarianism. As Crisp rightly points out, Edwards leans heavily on perichoresis to ground the unity of divine being, a leaning that leaves us puzzling through how one divine person can 'constitute one necessary aspect of another divine person if that person has many distinct attributes not shared between the two' (p. 59). Whatever one's stance on perichoresis, we can concur with Edwards that affirming the unity of the Godhead does not compromise the threeness of the divine persons, or at least, it should not. As Edwards understood, we must have oneness to arraign the sole Lord of the cosmos aright, but we must have threeness to be genuinely Christian, and not glancingly so.

Because Edwards worked on his system at different levels, with different document types, tracing out exactly what he believed, what connections he made and what strings he left unstrung is no easy task. Crisp may come to some provocative conclusions – and he does, leaving us asking for more proof in a few places – but Edwards, as I have been at pains to say, is the kind of high-flown thinker that prompts such speculation. *Jonathan Edwards among the Theologians* is a worthy, weighty and mind-taxing work of scholarly inquiry. It leaves us pondering what it means to be biblical; what it means to be confessional; what it means to base one's intellectual life in scripture; and where we are called to embrace mystery, instead of thinking twenty thoughts not expressly laid down in holy writ.

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Olli-Pekka Vainio, *Disagreeing Virtuously: Religious Conflict in Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2017), pp. xxi + 207, \$30.00.

Olli-Pekka Vainio sets out to address one of the key questions facing a world of increased fragmentation and religious conflict: how do we handle disagreement virtuously, and deal with its challenges in ways that lead to human flourishing rather than further disintegration? The need for deeper reflection on this is becoming increasingly apparent. Following Peter Berger's thesis that late modernity tends to generate difference (creating a plurality of worldviews, values and viewpoints) Vainio argues that we live in a world where our religious choices make us 'heretics' to increasing numbers of people. We therefore need more than ever to understand the nature of our disagreements, and learn to disagree well without losing our conversation partners.

Vainio's project is vital in its contemporary relevance, but the question of how to reconnoitre such complex terrain in a book of 200 pages is clearly a considerable challenge! Given the limited available space, as well as the technical and analytical nature of much of the philosophical discussion, Vainio is to be congratulated on contributing such a clear and generative book for contemporary reflection. Central to its success lies in its identification of disagreement as a discrete subject for interdisciplinary exploration in its own right, and for offering such reflection in a concise and well-ordered way, even if the discussion is in places highly condensed.

The interdisciplinary approach is structured around insights from three broad sources: the history of ideas, contemporary cognitive science and the