
Spring 2021

Book Review: Theoretical-Practical Theology

Jeffery S. Gates

Cedarville University, jeffgates@cedarville.edu

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Recommended Citation

Jeffery S. Gates. "Book Review: Theoretical-Practical Theology Volume 2" *Midwestern Journal of Theology* Vol. 20 Iss. 1 (2021) pp. 142-144 ISSN: 1543-6977 Available at: https://www.mbts.edu/downloads/journal/sp21_mjt_final_web.pdf

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(201), and discipleship as motivation due to the principles of the gospel (212). Wax concludes a greater emphasis on eschatology would strengthen discipleship in the church and prove effective in areas unknown until further research is completed.

Overall, *Eschatological Discipleship* provides a persuasive emphasis on what the author views as lacking in contemporary discipleship ministries, a view of one's present efforts in light of God's *telos*. Although one strength of the book is the thorough depth of research, the scope and structure of discussion, at times, yields a cumbersome read. Wax includes all referenced voices in the narrative body slowing and stretching the flow of thought to where it is difficult to follow. Better use of substantial footnotes to incorporate tertiary voices, would make this beneficial volume more readable and accessible.

Matthew Fraser
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Theoretical-Practical Theology. Vol. 2. Faith in the Triune God.* By P. van Mastricht. Edited by Joel R. Beeke. Translated by Todd M. Rester. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage, 2019. 660 pp. \$50.00. Hardcover. ISBN 978-1601786746.**

The reader might ask why anyone would read a theology book that was originally published in Latin at the end of the 17th century. Being a theologian who pastored churches in the Netherlands and taught in universities at Germany, van Mastricht gave us an easy-to-read book (thanks also to the English translator) that combined biblical exegesis with application. This thorough treatment of Theology Proper is from the pen of a Reformed theologian who earned his Doctor of Theology degree and knew the biblical languages. Richard Muller of Calvin Theological Seminary called him a prominent theologian, and *Post-Reformation Digital Library* lists several of his other Latin treatises as well his magnum opus, *Theoretical-Practical Theology*.

At the time of its writing, there were two other popular works of theology that focused on both theology and piety: Turretin's 3 volume *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* (1679–1685) and Watson's *A Body of*

Divinity (1692). However, Jonathan Edwards wrote that this 7-volume set by van Mastricht was “much better than Turretin or any other book in the world, excepting the Bible” (letter to the Joseph Bellamy on January 15, 1746/7, *Archives at Yale*, Series II: Jonathan Edwards Correspondence, c. 1735-1757). Watson’s book likewise had a catechism format with questions and answer, but much of the book was made up of his sermons. Brakel’s *The Christian’s Reasonable Service* (1700), which was published just after *Theoretical-Practical Theology*, had a similar format and emphasis. However, in his review of van Mastricht’s work for *Credo Magazine*, Ryan McGraw, who teaches at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, pointed out that van Mastricht offered both precision like Turretin and devotion like Brakel in one book set. He also pointed out that Brakel offered much less biblical exposition than van Mastricht.

The author gave no explicit purpose in writing this volume and did not specifically tell for whom he wrote it. However, judging from van Mastricht’s interaction with and criticism of Descartes, Socinianism, and other non-Christian teachings, he likely wrote *Theoretical-Practical Theology* to help ground his readers in the Reformed faith so they would not be taken in by non-Christian ideas.

This volume is second in a proposed seven-part series of which the publisher has yet to publish the other five volumes. True to his subtitle, *Faith in the Triune God*, van Mastricht began this volume with a chapter on Saving Faith. Then in chapters 2-4, he dealt with the existence and knowledge of God, the essence and independence of God, and the name of God. In the bulk of the book, the author addressed the attributes of God (chapters 5-23) and the Trinity (chapters 24-27). Every chapter has a brief introduction and four parts, and each of the last three parts logically follows the part before it. The exception is chapter 3 and chapter 4, in which “The Exegetical Part” is followed by two theorems that each contain the other three parts. (Perhaps the author mistakenly used the label, “The Didactic Part” in chapter 3 under the second theorem instead of “The Dogmatic Part” since it is the only place where he used that label.) The author gave word-by-word exegesis of the Hebrew and Greek (primarily *textus receptus*) of selected Scripture in “The Exegetical Part.” Relying on this exegesis, logic, and quotations from Scripture and other sources, he made several assertions in “The Elenctic Part.” Van Mastricht used the previous parts to form questions followed by unorthodox

answers in “The Dogmatic Part,” which also contain objections to the unorthodox answers and the Reformed position on the question. The author elaborated on several applications in “The Practical Part,” which flow out of the previous parts. Nearly every paragraph has an introductory statement with an outline number and page number at the Table of Contents for easy access. The back of the book also includes extensive scripture and subject indexes. The latter reflects the depth of the author’s knowledge of relevant topics, movements, and people.

The reader of this review is correct to assume that I have a favorable impression of this book. Having investigated the author and similar works and having read several sections from this book, I heartily recommend it for theological libraries, pastors, teachers, and other serious students of theology. Such a work could easily be dated, but van Mastricht’s use primarily of Scripture in each part makes it relevant to current readers. More theologically educated readers will appreciate the author’s interaction with both orthodox theologians and heretics. Those who do not espouse Reformed theology may not appreciate the Calvinistic perspective, but even they would receive much profit by reading and studying this book.

Jeff Gates
Cedarville University

Homiletics and Hermeneutics: Four Views on Preaching Today.
Edited by Scott M. Gibson and Matthew D. Kim. Grand Rapids:
Baker Academic, 2018. 192 pp., \$21.99, Paperback. ISBN 978-0-
8010-9869-7

Scott Gibson and Matthew Kim, seasoned preachers and teachers, serve as the editors of this magnificent volume that presents four perspectives within contemporary preaching. In this typical point counter-point format, four homiletic heavyweights each present their position while providing a brief response to the other three. The interlocutors are Bryan Chapell (redemptive-historic approach), former president and chancellor of Covenant Theological Seminary, Kenneth Langley (theocentric approach), adjunct professor of preaching at Trinity Evangelical Divinity