

Lutherans, just as heated iron unites both fire and iron without commingling the two substances, so the divine and the human are fully united in Jesus Christ (87). In response, Ursinus taught that “the Logos indwells the temple of his body in the sense of uniting human nature to himself, and yet the Logos does so without being enclosed within the bounds of his human nature” (102). McGinnis offers this analogy to explain Ursinus’ view:

If the finite nature is like a box, the incarnation must not be viewed like the placing of an object inside the box. Neither must it be viewed like breaking part of an object off from the whole and placing that part inside the box. Instead, the incarnation is more like the box being brought entirely inside of an immense object. The finite is grasped by the infinite. (116)

Among more recent theologians, Lutheran Helmut Thielicke agreed with the *extra* doctrine and reappropriated it in an apologetic way in response to the “death of God” theologians. “. . . Thielicke says that the proper expression of the God-world relation is to affirm God’s immanence but to also maintain the distinction between God and the world” (157).

This is an outstanding study that while written from a Reformed perspective is clearly balanced and nuanced. Whether right or wrong, Lutheran defenders of the *capax* doctrine have always believed that the discussion is not arcane because the gospel was at stake—Christ’s promise to be present in the sacrament indicates that his word is an embodied word.

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*Theologians in Their Own Words*. Edited by Derek R. Nelson, Joshua M. Moritz, and Ted Peters. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013. 288 pp.

In the closing chapters of Acts a subtle change in voice occurs. While the opening lines of Acts are framed as the continuation of an “orderly account of events” (Luke 1:1), by chapter 20 the narration breaks into the first person. The story of how Jesus was born in Bethlehem becomes a prelude to the highly personal account as the

one writing to Theophilus speaks of how “we” traveled with Paul from Troas to Jerusalem and then to Rome. *Theologians in Their Own Words* is a collection of essays by theologians making that same shift of voice. In very different ways they speak of how Christian witness became their personal narrative.

The eighteen men and five women offering their theological autobiographies are a somewhat mixed lot. As undergraduates some studied literature and others physics or chemistry. A few were born in Germany with the rest from the United States or the United Kingdom. Some, such as Gerhard Forde and John Polkinghorne, were ever more confirmed in the faith of their childhood. Others, like Marilyn McCord Adams, were powerfully called to new understandings. A few were drafted into military service. Others were leaders in resistance. Together they offer a thoughtful cross section of those who have labored in theological classrooms and graduate seminars over the last fifty years.

Many of the contributors will be familiar to those who have attended Lutheran colleges and seminaries. These are the ones who wrote our text books, offered us lectures, and graded our papers. Part of the charm of this anthology is to read testaments of faith from beloved teachers.

Derek R. Nelson introduces the volume noting both the possibilities for and objections to theological autobiography. Writing about one’s self can become shallow and tedious. Contributors can get a bit bogged down listing publications or offering overly clichéd descriptions of the pit from which they were dug. But there is also a depth and power in theological autobiography. Nelson rightly notes the place of Augustine’s *Confessions* in the history of Christian thought. The bishop’s faithful reflections on self drive theology forward and becomes the means to recognize the very hand of God, moving from yesterday, through today and in to the future. The introduction could have been strengthened with a brief examination of first-person narrative in the Bible. Many of the psalms, the prophets, as well as the epistles make broad use of self-reflection as a way to speak of an encounter with and proclamation of the Divine.

Essays are arranged alphabetically by the writers’ last names (Marilyn McCord Adams to Ronald Thiemann). Many were printed

over the last ten years in *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*. Others were prepared for this collection or lifted from elsewhere. These are self-reflections bound to particular times, places and hearers, and as such are historical documents. It would have helped if the dates, places, and translators of first publication had been included.

This book is best opened with pen and paper at hand. Autobiography invites the reader to reflect both on how they grew in the faith and also the challenges before them. This could be a thoughtful starting point for study groups reflecting on theological formation. Here is also insight for those nearing the end of formal careers in theology and ministry.

Many writers are deeply conscious of their journey's end. What they say varies and is worth hearing. Ernst Kasemann offers an exhortation:

As a last word and as my bequest, let me call to you in Huguenot style: "*Resistez!*" For the discipleship of the Crucified leads necessarily to resistance to idolatry on every front. This resistance is and must be the most important mark of Christian Freedom. (111)

Gerhard Forde closes his essay with gentle reflection:

When St. Augustine wrote his "theological autobiography," he came to realize that he finally was not the actor but rather the one acted upon. I expect that this is our only hope in the end, and that God will not have too big a laugh at our expense. (53)

GOODRIDGE LUTHERAN PARISH  
GOODRIDGE, MINNESOTA

Robert W. Dahlen

*The Niebuhr Brothers for Armchair Theologians*. By Scott R. Paeth. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014. 200 pp.

This is a brief comprehensive summary of the life and major works of two important American Protestant thinkers: the brothers Reinhold and H. Richard Niebuhr. Like the other books in the *Armchair Theologians* series, its purpose is to introduce new readers to the key arguments and immediate context of these influential