

mend our lives”; (5) “let the suffering God draw us into profound relationship”; (6) and “embrace music that recognizes the suffering of God.”

Second, chapter 6 deals with “suffering and redemptive anger” (p. 131–46). While few consider “anger” to be suffering, Peterman does a commendable job in presenting this concept. He defines anger as “a secondary emotion with a strong feeling of displeasure aroused by something one perceives to be morally wrong, personally painful, or threatening to the self or to something the individual considers valuable” (pp. 132–33). Recognizing a destructive nature to anger, he goes on to lay out an argument for redemptive anger that is “motivated by love and [whose] goal . . . [is] to rescue, to vindicate, to protect, or to restore” (p. 134). Passages presented as support for this view are Genesis 42–50; Nehemiah 5:1–10; John 11:33–38; 2 Corinthians 11:29; and Ephesians 4:26–27. He concludes with a warning and a discussion on the value of anger.

Third, Schmutzer deals with sexual abuse. “Behind every occasion of sexual abuse is a destructive set of betrayals” (p. 209). He then gives examples and discusses some “key realities” that indicate sexual abuse. “Common trauma signs of victims of sexual abuse” are “hyper-vigilance, avoidance effort, post-traumatic stress disorder, distorted thinking and isolation, and compulsivity in sexual behavior” (p. 213). This chapter is especially helpful in identifying pornography and sexual risk taken as “gateway experiences” (p. 214). Sexually abused people are more likely to engage in these. Schmutzer offers sage advice to survivors and also offers recommendations to the church family and Christian organizations.

Between Pain and Grace is a useful offering in the discussion of suffering and adds biblical studies that would be helpful in churches and Christian institutions. Each chapter has several discussion questions that make the book useful for small study groups, adult Bible fellowships, and more. The book is well documented and offers a Scripture index. While it does offer a biblical theology of suffering, it also has a great deal of helpful psychological and counseling information. It might better be subtitled *A Biblical Theology and Psychological Study of Suffering*.

Larry J. Waters

Jonathan Edwards and the Life of God: Toward an Evangelical Theology of Participation. By W. Ross Hastings. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2015. xvi + 524 pp. \$69.00.

W. Ross Hastings is associate professor of pastoral theology at Regent College, Vancouver, Canada. In this book, he argues that North American evangelicalism’s quest for assurance of divine mercies has refocused Christianity away from a Christ-centered preoccupation to a subjective, introspective fixation that has contributed to what he sees as the current evangelical malady. Hastings traces the source of this deterioration to the innovative Trinitarian theology of Jonathan Edwards that emphasized the Spirit rather than Christ, resulting in a psychologized reorientation of the Christian faith. Further, he prescribes Karl Barth’s Christocentric, transcendental theology as the remedy that has the potential to reverse the impact of Edwards’s anthropocentric tendencies and the resulting damage done to American populist evangelicalism.

Hastings begins by demonstrating how Edwards’s thought caused the current evangelical malaise. He argues that Edwards’s understanding be-

gan with a faulty theological assumption concerning the role of relational reflection, deduction, and analogical thinking in truth formulation; this became the grounds that allowed him to expand the role of natural revelation, which factored centrally in his theological understanding (pp. 81–82). The root of the problem was Edwards's epistemological assumptions about source material in the pursuit of the knowledge of God and its pastoral articulation.

Hastings argues that this led Edwards to conceive the Trinity without distinguishing between the Trinity *ad intra* (God with reference to who he is) and the Trinity *ad extra* (God with reference to what he does). Instead of beginning with the Nicene Creed's affirmation of God as all-powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth, Edwards framed the Trinity within a psychological, human-mind model (p. 29).

On this basis, Hastings contends that Edwards understood the Father as Mind, the Son as the revelation of Mind, and the Spirit as his outflowing manifestation (pp. 146–48). He postulated that the sum of the Triune God's character is love, shared first mutually within the Godhead and then extended by emanation outward in creation. The Spirit, as love revealed, is the bond not only of the Godhead, but also of the theanthropic Christ and the believer's participation in God, hence a moral anthropocentric perichoresis (absorption) orientation (pp. 53, 133, 154). Hastings cogently argues that Edwards structured his soteriology on the basis of these epistemological and Trinitarian understandings, resulting in a heightened role of the Spirit in the redemption of man, which took precedence over Jesus's role (pp. 189, 197).

Moreover, Hastings maintains that Edwards defined the incarnation morally rather than metaphysically. If the Spirit controls Christ incarnate in revealing the love of the Father, the emphasis in Edwards lies not in the actuality of Christ's accomplishments, but merely in their ramifications. As a result, Edwards blurs the justification-sanctification distinction, which results in an introspective theology of conversion (p. 360).

For Edwards, then, the experience of the spiritual life is the experience of the Spirit infused as a new principle into the believer. This infusion results in the moral manifestation of the consequence of his indwelling-principled presence, namely, love (p. 198). Salvation is the life of the Spirit, the love and life of God in the believer. Edwards's definition of God led him to interpret the Christian life in moral, subjective terms. His stress on the immanent quality of love as the overarching characteristic of the Trinity came close to monism (pp. 53, 401). Further, the Christian life becomes something of a journey of *theosis* or deification through participation in divine love by infusion and absorption (p. 363).

Hastings argues that this, in turn, led to Edwards's preoccupation with moral evidences of a metaphysical reality that should be a fruit of faith (p. 401). As a result, popular evangelicalism has turned inward to the subjective self for assurance of the divine presence, moralizing the Christian faith (pp. 366, 435). Assurance becomes an act of faith in one's intimacy with God instead of looking outward to the transcendent deity revealed in Jesus Christ. The evidence suggests that the assurance Edwards sought to give believers actually brought the opposite: the inability to arrive at assurance (pp. 373, 395).

In his alternative, Hastings suggests replacing Edwards's epistemology with Barth's. Edwards's idealism, evidenced in his analogical, deductive understanding of natural revelation, caused him to conceive of the Trinity

as he did. Barth rejects the economy of natural revelation, the quest for infinity in finitude, placing emphasis on the revelation of God in Jesus Christ as the only true reality. With rejection of Edwards's epistemology and acceptance of Barth's, Hastings argues, the Trinity will be restored, leading to the type of theology that culminates in an objective preoccupation with Christ. Assurance of divine mercy will then rest in realizing who Christ is and what he has done. Anxieties should be lifted, uncertainties diminished, and evangelicalism's paralysis cured.

Moreover, in Barth's judgment, allowing the Spirit to overshadow the immanent Trinity distorts the incarnation of Jesus, as well as the hypostatic union of the divine and human Christ, compromising the true humanity of Christ (p. 254). The very act of the incarnation brought life to humanity and ended the tyranny of sin (pp. 256–57). Christ came not to procure redemption, but to announce it as an already, universally completed reality.

Hastings suggests that by moving from Edwards to Barth—from an inspirational Christology to an incarnational Christology—the true gospel is restored (p. 9). Redemption for humanity happens through electing Christ in eternity, the timeless realm of divine reality (p. 353). Jesus came to announce a completed act and call people to accept it as completed and live in conformity with the example he set. Divine, particular election is biblically unwarranted. People are elected communally in the elected one; all of humanity is elected in Christ.

For Barth, then, the gospel is the proclamation of what Christ said he accomplished. It is an encounter with the transcendent God through the immanent condescension of Christ in the incarnation (pp. 358, 301). The message of the gospel is that forgiveness is one's eternal state; it is not merely an available gift. All humanity has already been justified in the justifying Christ (pp. 11, 13, 140). All anyone needs to do is accept the reality of that completion.

Barth's message is that all should accept their true humanity and begin living it and be who they really are (p. 353). With this readily understood, Hastings proposes that evangelicalism will be freed from its subjective malaise.

Regardless of one's evaluation of the validity of the assertions, Hastings's work is a model of serious scholarly research. The depth of his understanding of his two subjects is clear and his conversation with them is exciting. Moreover, Hastings makes the difficult topic of divine participation or union readily accessible.

The assertion that populist American evangelicalism is anthropocentric and overly introspective has the ring of validity. Hastings is suspect, however, in his attribution of the cause to Edwards and the solution to Barth. The former is overstated; the latter is unwarranted.

With regard to the cause, the more than three hundred years of happenings between Edwards and the current state of evangelicalism at the very least make it unlikely that Edwards alone is responsible. This leaves Barth's corrective at worst inappropriate and at best incomplete. It would probably be just as safe, if not safer, to root the cause of subjective, introspective, and anthropocentric evangelicalism in Wesley's teachings of sanctification, Rauschenbusch's social gospel, or the social, cultural, and political advances that in the past two centuries have structured and restructured basic assumptions about the nature of human capacity. Is Hastings correct to assume that an accurate theology readily transfers into

healthy and godly conduct? One might also question Hastings's assumption that the church is worse off now than it was before.

With regard to the solution, Barth's assertion concerning the nature of the gospel seems contradicted by the witness of Scripture. First, the promise in the gospel is not that people already have life and should embrace the fact with a hearty faith; it is that they can have life through faith. Second, Barth's transcendence-view of God's actions is weakened by the human ability to refuse sovereign intervention—a doctrine Edwards sought to avoid. The hinge of Barth's system of redemption becomes human choice (pp. 336–37). Third, the Bible presents humankind as without the life of God and condemned. Condemnation is not rooted in the refusal to accept the reality of one's "true" humanity; it is found in the recognition that humanity is wrecked and in need of a substitutionary rescue. The gospels and the epistles declare that Christ's space-time Calvary experience was the moment redemption was procured, when the eternal decree was fulfilled (p. 263). How can one say that the incarnation brought about cleansing for all humanity, that Christ came to merely announce his triumph over sin and death (pp. 262–63)? Fourth, Barth keeps justification distinct from sanctification (p. 360), but in so doing he marginalizes the role of sanctification. Barth promotes belief in a reality without evidence. Even if Edwards moralized the gospel, Barth lost it.

If accepted, does Barth's solution to Edwards's misstep come free of negative effects? If Edwards's subjectivism and anthropocentrism caused evangelicalism to gaze within, would not Barth's "objective Christology" lead to faith devoid of works at best and universalism at worst?

Hastings is at times insightful, pointing out ways that Edwards can be taken to an extreme. Clearly, Edwards was concerned about the cheap grace and faith without discipleship that were rampant in some quarters of Christendom (p. 339). However, it seems that Hastings judges Edwards apart from his context, though he does confess that he was sensitive to the creeping shadow of the Age of Reason over the New England ecclesiastical landscape (p. 9). In Hastings's own words, "One's theology is a product of one's biography" (p. 378).

The Northampton and the Connecticut River parishes had an intellectual and cultural veneer of profound religious orthodoxy. Edwards realized that intellectual assent without commitment was not redemptive (Barth would agree at this point). Edwards became interested in probing the experience of divine grace in the soul, not merely the mind. He was concerned to get beyond the rational in an age that exalted it. Edwards sought to defend not only the triunity of God but also the message of God to humanity. He believed that redemption brought the life of God and that the recipient partook of that life by the invisible Spirit materialized only in consequential evidences. Barth had a faith without evidence—faith in faith; Edwards had faith with evidence. Neither is absolutely demonstrable. Edwards's answer was found in the perseverance of Christ by the Spirit for the believer (p. 368). While Barth would agree, his framework is not based on the witness of Scripture.

Further, would Edwards be an advocate or a critic of populist, cultural evangelicalism? Edwards saw dangers as well as virtues in the New Light movement of his day. He desired to curtail the anthropocentrism that prevailed within the movement by appealing to consequential evidences of the invisible workings of God. He reminded his parishioners and any who might listen that the Scriptures define and limit genuine reli-

gious experience. Perhaps he would likewise be critical of modern evangelicalism but recognize its positive aspects, seeking to bring scriptural parameters to define and order a generally good thing.

With regard to his theology, is it valid to argue that Edwards's solution threatens Trinitarianism with a monist's inevitability, or at least tendency? While Edwards emphasized a moral, psychological, unifying characteristic—namely, love—it remained a means to an end in his theological construction and pastoral duties. The goal of his theology was the glorification of the triune God, the transcendent God of the Scriptures. God remained a multifaceted person who is altogether beautiful by being so. As a pastor, Edwards answered the pertinent questions that confronted him from below, but he answered them by appealing to the witness of God revealed in Christ through the witness of the Spirit in the Scriptures.

As to the issue of assurance, it is evident that Scripture sustains the idea that it is the privilege of obedient believers in Christ to know they have eternal life. The discussion, however, pivots on the "how" of knowing. Has God provided a way of secondary assurance through evidence? In Barthian terms, can people accept their eternal election, the eternal state of redemption, and not be changed by that acquiescence? Barth would likely say no, and Edwards would certainly agree. But Barth is concerned with the objectification of God, while Edwards is concerned with the experience of God.

Perhaps neither Barth nor Edwards offers the best paradigm for pastoral theology in the twenty-first century. Both offer warnings and insights from the past that may be helpful in translating the timeless truths of the witness of Christ and the Scriptures to contemporary culture. Edwards, however, seems far less potentially damaging to the beauty of Christ and the growth of the church than Barth. Edwards begins the discussion out of contextual pastoral concerns, but he ends the discussion in the adoration of the transcendent God.

John D. Hannah and Tyler P. Sherron
