discussion. Of the four gospels, only the gospel of John is referenced, primarily to emphasize the divinity of Jesus and the importance of the incarnation. I most noticed this lack of attention in the final chapter, where the author draws on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Ethics* to promote a posture of "realistic responsibility" that navigates between the radical's naïve question of "what would Jesus do?" and the compromiser's tendency to "collapse the distinctions between Christ and the world" (272). However, while in his *Ethics* Bonhoeffer himself ranges freely across the gospels and insists there that "it is quite wrong to establish a separate theology of the incarnation," Zimmerman's own presentation appears to lack any interest in what Jesus *did*, confirming the suspicion that classical theology tends to abstract Jesus from his life and message.

Still, these concerns should not overshadow Zimmerman's achievement in painting a sympathetic portrait of early Christian theologians like Athanasius, Irenaeus, and Gregory of Nyssa, and in carefully arguing that retrieving classical theology can help us recover a coherent Christian humanism. Despite wading through deep waters of theology and philosophy, the author's nimble prose makes this book readable and suitable for both advanced undergraduates and graduate students in theology. I would suggest it for inclusion in an introductory course on historical theology, and classes on Christianity and culture or philosophy and theology.

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David J. Neville. *A Peaceable Hope: Contesting Violent Eschatology in New Testament Narratives.* Studies in Peace and Scripture Series. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013.

David J. Neville is associate professor of theology and lecturer in New Testament studies at Charles Sturt University in Canberra, Australia. He is known for his writings on the Synoptic Problem, and on the relationship between eschatology and ethics in the NT. What do the NT eschatological visions reveal about the character of God and the ethics that cohere with that

theology? Are eschatological visions of retributive violence consistent with the teachings of Jesus on the one hand and with a theology of peace on the other? *A Peaceable Hope* is Neville's most substantial contribution so far to these questions.

Is God violent, and if so, is this problematic for conceptions of nonviolent human ethics? The traditional view is that the eschatological violence of God in judgment is theologically and ethically independent from Christian moral teaching for humans. Neville questions that. The present volume investigates the NT narratives (i.e., the four Gospels, Acts, and Revelation) for their individual understandings of the *eschaton* with regard to violence and nonviolence, whether divine or human.

The book proceeds in a roughly canonical fashion, beginning with Matthew and ending with Revelation. The chapters on Matthew, Mark, and Revelation are revisions of previously published essays, while those on Luke, Acts, and John are new. The book's thesis is that "while the standard apocalyptic scenario [including a vengeful and violent eschaton] is undoubtedly represented" in the NT, particularly in Matthew and Revelation, "deviations from this standard scenario" appear "most notably in Mark, the Fourth Gospel, and Acts" (6). More specifically, although "the notion of a '*single* plot' in Scripture is unsustainable, . . . the trajectory staked out by the creation story, . . . the Jesus story, . . . and the vision of the new Jerusalem in Revelation 20-21 . . . [suggests that] intimations of eschatological vengeance in Revelation (and elsewhere) should be read in accordance with a hermeneutic of *shalom*" (244; emphases original).

The primary problems for a NT theology of peace are Matthew and Revelation. Although Matthew clearly portrays Jesus as teaching an ethic of love and nonviolence, he also portrays the judgment of God as both violent and vengeful. The tension is "deep-seated" (38). Matthew delights in eschatological visions of hell where there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; cf. Luke 13:28, the only other NT text where this phrase occurs). How can a Christian ethic of love and nonviolence be accompanied with visions of divinely authorized sanctions that are retributive and violent? Neville is not the first to notice this problem in Matthew. He considers various attempts to address it, ultimately concluding that in Matthew "the *story of Jesus* itself" ultimately "undoes the logic of

eschatological violence" (31), whether or not Matthew himself recognizes this.

It turns out that Revelation is not really a problem. Disagreeing with such interpreters as Greg Carey, Adela Yarbro Collins, John J. Collins, John Dominic Crossan, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Miroslav Volf, Neville instead builds on the work of Richard Bauckham, M. Eugene Boring, G.B. Caird, Wilfrid Harrington, Richard Hays, William Klassen, Willard Swartley, John Sweet, and the present reviewer to argue that although John retains and adopts traditional apocalyptic motifs (including scenes of violent eschatological vengeance), he adapts and reworks them in keeping with his nonviolent Lamb Christology.

Neville has no qualms with divine judgment as such in the *eschaton*, calling it "biblically and theologically meaningful" (9), but in the end "divine judgment is more likely to be restorative than strictly retributive" (240). "Despite John's use of violent imagery," the Lamb Christology of Revelation is fully in step with the peaceable mission of Jesus and "the means by which the crucified Jesus 'conquered' are the means by which God 'conquers,' *without remainder*" (241, emphasis original).

This is a delightful, intriguing, and well-argued book. Its greatest weakness is perhaps in the construction of a canonical "trajectory" that qualifies, negates, or trumps competing perspectives within the canon. This volume is a fine contribution to the Studies in Peace and Scripture Series, and needs to be taken seriously in any investigation of NT eschatology with regard to peace, nonviolence, and the character of God.

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