> And so the church reaches out and tries to be part of the solution to the problems of the world. In doing this, it could proclaim a theologically sophisticated doctrine of the omni-whatever Deity. Or it could, honestly and humbly, offer what it has and what it is, while proclaiming, watching, and listening for the voice and action of God. This sounds like a fairly easy choice on the surface but has proved difficult in practice. Hopefully we will keep practicing. (119)

What a humble and honest proposal and what a challenge! But surely the church will have all the more to offer if it believes passionately in the God of the Exodus (the God who breaks the chains of oppression and sets captives free), if it follows faithfully the God of Revelation (ruling with the slain Lamb, not compromising or giving up on creation until heaven fills it), and if it models itself after Christ, as portrayed not only in John and Mark, but also in Matthew and Luke.

Timothy J. Geddert, Professor of New Testament, Fresno Pacific University Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California

Jennifer Graber. *The Furnace of Affliction: Prisons & Religion in Antebellum America*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

From the inception of the American republic, the scope and influence of religion in the life of public institutions have been the cause of red-hot debate. A primary locus of this debate has centered on religion's salvific aims and civic functions within the modern prison. Jennifer Graber's *The Furnace of Affliction: Prisons & Religion in Antebellum America* offers a well-researched, clearly articulated historical account of the struggle over Protestant Christianity's religio-social role in the antebellum prison, predominately as the prison developed in New York State at Newgate, Auburn, and Sing Sing.

By way of a multilayered textual approach weaving together personal narratives, news accounts, court cases, Christian theology, and political philosophy, Graber offers a nuanced historical account of the largely

Protestant vision to extend the reformative and redemptive ethos of Christianity to prisons against the disestablishment impulses and rulings of the civil state. Protestant reformers of many theological stripes agreed that inmate reformation was the main aim of prisons. Yet in six chapters and an epilogue, Graber demonstrates that this fundamental agreement never alleviated the many interlocking disagreements about the best theological path to reformation in the context of governmental aims to secure prison order and profit, as well as lawful living and obedience to secular authorities.

Chapter 1 offers the Quaker vision of the prison as a "Garden" of redemption. This garden not only aimed to redeem the souls of inmates through a theology of the "Inner Light," it also served the state's vision of preventing crime and securing disciplinary order among the citizenry. Garden theology sought to secure nonviolent Christian reformation through "inmate separation and silence, Bible reading, and simple labor." In addition, administering the prison as a garden forecasted a religious vision and model of a wider society built on "peace, security and happiness." Ultimately this garden of reformation and order failed to realize its mission to crucify the sins of "creaturely activity" in the service of creating law-abiding citizens, who were self-supporting and honest (37-38).

Chapters 2 and 3 find the Protestant administration of prisons transforming from a garden to a scripturally justified "Furnace of Affliction." As both inmates and state officials increasingly resisted the spiritual underpinnings of Quaker reform (42), reformative incarceration became a site of chastisement, humiliation, suffering, and pain in the service of Calvinistic theological notions of sin and of the necessity and promise of God's grace. The prison as furnace required giving inmates stark choices between grace and damnation, and eventually led to the reauthorizing of stricter sanctions like corporal punishment.

Indeed, as Graber correctly notes, "Religion bolstered prison discipline" and "prison discipline bolstered religion." Although "the furnace of affliction garnered wide acceptance and praise" (74), it too ultimately failed to lead inmates through the doors of suffering to redemption. So yet again, as the author nicely documents, prison religion would need to change if it was going to assist the Protestant goal of "increas[ing] the Christian populace and ensur[ing] the government's moral standing" (100).

Chapters 4 and 5 survey various Protestant reformers locked in heated public debate against legislative and wider social violence. While not always seeking to undo the basic theological underpinnings of the furnace of affliction, many reformers objected to the severity of the prison's "hell on earth." The text maps the terrible reality that a "program of suffering aimed at redemption" (111) and at "conversion and reformation" (112) did not cease to create a place of bodily violence and death. Beyond Protestant and secular debates over penal discipline were wider concerns about the wisdom, appropriateness, and desire that prison be a place of "spiritual transformation for the primary purpose of securing civil society" (136). The ebb and flow of such debates notwithstanding, the sobering reality, as one approaches the book's final chapter, is that throughout the antebellum period "New York prisons continued to be brutal places" (152).

Chapter 6 details the redemptive public pleas of Protestant reformers in the decade or so leading up to the Civil War. Peaceable Christians called for outreach and care for the bodily and spiritual suffering of inmates. This chapter also summarizes the often conflicting and diverging aims (documented throughout the text) of legal and religious reformers seeking "upright citizens" as distinct from "Christian converts" (158).

The epilogue focuses on the persistence of the American prison problem post-Civil War up to the present age. In the end, Graber's constructive view is that "the reformers' theology of redemptive suffering not only allowed but actually demanded . . . degrading practices" (182-83). Indeed, Graber is profoundly correct, whether speaking of the antebellum past or the contemporary present.

James S. Logan, Associate Professor of Religion and Associate Professor and Director of African and African American Studies, Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana

Ted Grimsrud. *Instead of Atonement: The Bible's Salvation Story and Our Hope for Wholeness*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013.

The title of this new book prompts two questions: What is this "atonement" for which Ted Grimsrud believes we need a substitute? And what does he