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## Book Reviews

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### ***Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement***

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Gustaf Aulen (Translated by A.G. Hebert)

MacMillan: New York (1931).

163 pages, paperback, \$10.95.

Aulen's book was first published in Swedish in 1930 while he was professor of systematic theology in the University of Lund. It was soon hailed as a "modern classic," and was translated into several languages, including the English edition we presently have in paperback. The English translator, A. G. Hebert, regarded Aulen as "perhaps the foremost theologian of the Swedish Church."

*Christus Victor* is without doubt one of the most important books on the atonement in our century. Beginning with a discussion of the "problem" of the atonement Aulen traces the historical development of theories of the meaning of the cross, beginning with the church fathers and continuing until the present era. In the last chapter Aulen gives three atonement models which he characterizes as the Classic view, the Anselmic or Latin view, and the Subjective view. The Classic view is that the cross of Christ is the climax of a grand struggle between the forces of good and evil. Christ bought, or "ransomed," the church from Satan by "paying him off," as it were. The Latin view is that God is the primary object of the atonement, and Christ satisfied His justice by receiving in Himself the penalty of the law. The Subjective view sees man as the primary object of the atonement. It affirms that the sufferings of Christ change men by a passionate and powerful example of sacrifice.

It is well known that many of the early church fathers believed that Jesus paid a price to Satan to rescue the elect from his dominion. The theological world was shocked that a respected modern teacher would revive this concept as

the one which most closely suits the New Testament model. Anselm's view had for many centuries held the field in all branches of the Christian church. The curious thing about this is that one can hold that the cross of Christ has both *primary* and *secondary* goals in God's sovereign plan. There is no doubt that through His death and resurrection Jesus Christ did indeed achieve a great triumph over the devil. Also, the cross is a powerful motivating factor in eliciting from men both love and praise. But the Epistle to the Romans, and the Epistle to the Hebrews as well, not to mention the teachings of Jesus and other New Testament writers, plainly reveal that the death of Christ was a "propitiation" which turned aside the righteous judgment of God against the sinner who believes. Even Jaroslav Pelikan, who writes the foreword to this volume, acknowledges that Aulen does not do real justice to Anselm.

Aulen's work, like that of Karl Barth and Emil Brunner, formed a major part of the revolt in the first half of our century against nineteenth-century liberal theology. There is in this important work a very high Christology. Though Aulen's case for the Ransom Theory of the atonement is not convincing to this reviewer, *Christus Victor* is a welcome study of the redeeming work of our Savior in both its historical and theological context.

**John F. Thornbury**  
Winfield, PA

### **A Passion for Christ: An Evangelical Christology**

Douglas D. Webster  
Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI (1987).  
221 pages, hardback, n. p.

**D**ouglas D. Webster, who served as a teaching pastor and

seminary professor simultaneously when he wrote this magnificent book, has placed me in his debt. Rarely have I read such a helpful and provocative treatment of the person of Jesus Christ. My own copy of the book, read in 1988, is marked extensively, and the fly leaves are filled with annotations and quotes from the text.

He begins his treatment with "a critical analysis of social trends and religious pressures that scale down our expectation of what it means to follow Christ." Then he turns in the second and third chapters "to clear away the confusion and disorientation of current attempts to recast the gospel in the mold of modernity" (p. 7).

Here is theology written with one eye cast over the congregation of the church and the other cast over the text of Scripture and church history. This is good stuff!

Webster writes in chapter one:

This book is about knowing Christ in the power of the resurrection and in the fellowship of His sufferings. Its thrust is positive and critical and aims to provide a passion for the knowledge of Christ instead of merely a formal knowledge about Christ. The pervasiveness of nominal Christianity in many parts of the Western world keeps multitudes from knowing Christ and renders much of the church powerless (p.10).

The first chapter of the book reads like a pastor's call for reformation and revival. Listen to Webster once again as he opines:

In spite of the rise of conservative religion it is fair to say that North American culture is rapidly dismantling anything that reflects a supernatural orientation. Morality follows social convention and sociological trends rather than precepts. Psychology rejects a biblical anthropology. Education divorces knowledge from wisdom. Commerce and industry

function without a theology of stewardship. And family life has lost commitment and fidelity. Individualism reigns as the supreme norm intellectually and politically. Guilt is simply the emotional hangover of negative experiences. Death ends all (p. 11).

The culture has responded to its spiritual crisis, suggests Webster, by creating an "advice industry." The sacred has exchanged its theological meaning for sociological significance. It does not refer to God but to the "expressive" side of human life. Self-fulfillment turns theological categories into means of religious expression. But what does this have to do with evangelicals?

Webster argues that all of this has everything to do with where we are today. He hits very close to home, without creating some kind of "false guilt" through manipulation, when he writes:

Commitments are being made to today's success ethic by many well-educated and highly motivated Christians who seem unaware of the difference between the world's strategy for self-fulfillment and Jesus' strategy for self-fulfillment. Decisions are often made in a person's late twenties or early thirties that take the rest of their professional lives to work out. We know what it is like to be in debt for cars and homes and education, but we must realize that it is possible to pay the interest for these loans not only in dollars and cents but in the loss of spiritual vitality. Patterns of life are set up and goals established which may be detrimental to our own spiritual growth, and to the wholeness of the church. Like the world around them, many Christians fight to infuse meaning into their lives through giving themselves to business, recreation, acquisitions, and family. Along with the culture, Christians have tended to scale down their life expectations by accommodating easily to a new quest which steals their passions and absorbs their energy (p. 12).

As a pastor in such a setting for 21 years I can testify that Webster hits very close to the heart. I think of the multitude

of young couples who have mortgaged their future, literally, without understanding the spiritual implications for the kingdom of God. I recall people who felt they might be called to pursue ministry, in their own culture or abroad, and yet could not get out from under the massive debt load they carried. I think of seminary graduates who could not follow their own hearts' desire for service because of huge loan repayments on seminary education! (The implications of this problem are immense.)

Webster, as one can readily see, is above all else a pastoral theologian, a rare teacher in our day. He seeks to restate truth with an aim of bringing his readers (hearers) into conformity with God's will. He states his thesis when he says he writes this book "... to provoke a passion for the knowledge of Christ which illuminates our understanding of Christ and guides us in genuine Christian action" (p. 15). How I wish more theologians would write with this type of purpose in mind.

Human reason has a divinely intended purpose of recognizing truth with the heart engaged in proper response. To know about Christ, to develop an academic Christology, if you please, is not only inadequate, it is ultimately harmful. Knowing Christ "involves a personal encounter with the Christ who is an exclusive relationship, a permanent union, and a transformed life" (p. 21).

Webster then proceeds to show the reader that "The Scripture Principle" must guide all genuine discovery of who Jesus is and what His life means for us today. *Sola Scriptura* must be more than a reformational slogan! From the truths discovered in Scripture we must construct a theology that can be presented with relevance (that is *not* always a bad word) to our own generation. He criticizes modern scholarship for creating "its own professional ethos" that is out of touch with the church, its members and society in the larger sense.

He goes on to state how he will use the doctrine of Christ in his treatment when he says:

Orthodox Christians have always believed that Jesus in His very being was God incarnate. This conviction has necessitated reflection on a paradox that ultimately remains a mystery to us. I intend to use mystery *not as a way to conceal the absurd but rather as an occasion to acknowledge that the truth of God exceeds our human ability to fully understand and explain* (italics mine, p. 40).

Webster fulfills his goal marvelously. I have marked so much that if I began to give quotations that have fired my own devotion it would literally fill page after page of text. Let me give a few to whet your appetite and encourage you to find this book, as it may be out of print, and read it.

“Getting the confession right is only half the battle. Like Peter, we may hear the Spirit but still end up in Satan’s camp. For this reason, I have emphasized the truth, that knowing Christ means becoming like Jesus. Christlikeness is the key for Christology” (p. 47).

“We cannot *know* Christ apart from *understanding* Jesus” (italics mine, p. 48).

“We hold together the absolute uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the absolute relevance of everything about Jesus for our lives” (p. 55).

“Most Christians have only a Christmas-and-Easter Christology” (p. 55).

“For many the name of Jesus stirs deep emotions. It is a precious name, cherished above all other names. Yet for those same people it can be a name almost void of content and meaning” (p. 67).

“Jesus was not an actor moving through a well-rehearsed script with prearranged cues. His history reflects God’s unique affirmation of His person and work. . . .” (p. 124).

“Jesus remains one of the most unlikely candidates for

the Moral Majority we can imagine” (p. 137).

“I doubt if Jesus would have been invited to speak at a presidential prayer breakfast. He was definitely not a ‘safe’ speaker. Even with due consideration for the context, Jesus said many outlandish things” (p. 137).

“Early Christians knew that their lives were marked by the Cross, but many contemporary, conservative Christians give the impression that a decision for Jesus simply involves submitting mentally to the idea that Jesus died for their sins” (p. 161).

“The apostles were not only convinced of the doctrine of the crucifixion: they were committed to the way of the Cross. They were more concerned to work out the reality of the Cross practically than they were to repeat a theological formula. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, saying, ‘I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified’ (1 Cor. 2:2), he had no intention of reducing the gospel to an abbreviated form of the ‘plan of salvation’” (p. 172).

Webster concludes with a summary. In this he takes three pages to succinctly state what he has told the reader in the previous 190 pages. It is some of the best clear writing I have seen on the person and work of Christ for the contemporary Christian and church in the West. A pastor could build a series of doctrinal sermons on Christ by using this helpful summary with the content of the book stimulating his further thought.

Rarely have I read a contemporary theology that holds to orthodox views so well, yet reaches out into the age in which we live. I commend it with great excitement and concur with my esteemed friend, Dr. J.I. Packer, who writes of Webster’s book:

This eager-hearted, sharp-sighted, well-informed attempt to focus in biblical and contemporary terms what real personal

knowledge of the real Jesus Christ amounts to seems to me to be a major success.

*Editor*

### ***The Word Became Flesh: A Contemporary Incarnational Christology***

Millard J. Erickson

Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, MI (1991).

663 pages, hardbound, \$29.95.

**W**ho is Jesus Christ for the twenty-first century?

In answering this central question, Millard J. Erickson, professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, gives us this massive and important work.

This book begins with Erickson reflecting upon a student's response to an exam question he gave some years ago. The question Erickson gave was, "What is the orthodox doctrine of the two natures and one person of Christ?" The student wrote: "There is no orthodox doctrine. Every attempt to give some content to the statement was declared heretical by the church." Erickson believes there is an element of truth in the student's answer, even though he obviously disagrees with it at the end of the day. He says,

If Chalcedon was not fully adequate even for its era, the problem has been aggravated with the passing of time. For in the more than 1500 years since the Council adjourned, many developments have taken place which were not and could not have been addressed by that group of theologians. . . . Much of this challenge to orthodox Christology stems from the Enlightenment and ensuing developments. It may not be an exaggeration to say that there have been more of these epochal developments in the past one hundred years than in all the preceding centuries since Chalcedon (p. 11).

Erickson is erudite without being obtuse. He is full without being prolix. His historical and theological content is solid, his treatments manageable for serious readers, and his way of handling his subject is ground-breaking for conservatives. He does not deal with topics such as the virgin birth and the resultant humanity of Jesus. This means, in his own words, that "this is not a fully articulated Christology" (p. 14). Nor does he deal with every Scripture bearing upon his subject; thus the book is not exhaustive. At the same time it is not exhausting either, like so many older Christologies that are sound and safe, but deadly dull!

What he does do is pursue three specific things in pursuing his goal of constructing an orthodox incarnational Christology for our generation. He states his three steps toward reaching his goal.

1. We will seek to understand the basic orthodox interpretation of the person and work of Christ as it was developed from the biblical materials, synthesized by the ecumenical councils, fulfilled in the Chalcedonian Creed, and refined thereafter.
2. We will examine and evaluate several contemporary christological views, noting the particular problem for orthodox Christology which each presents.
3. We will seek to develop a Christology for today which maintains the orthodox understanding of Jesus as both fully human and fully the Son of God, and yet takes into account and responds to the problems posed by contemporary views (p. 13).

The book proceeds to unfold in three parts. First, we consider, in 69 pages, "The Formulation of Incarnational Christology." Erickson begins where all reformation must begin, with the text of Scripture. Then he turns to the Spirit's work in human history and studies the development of incarnational Christology up to Chalcedon (A.D. 451), and

then developments beyond that historic date.

In Part 2 he deals with "Problems of Incarnational Christology." Here he states the historical problem, and then proceeds to tackle contemporary issues such as liberation Christology, black Christology, feminist Christology, functional Christology (e.g., Oscar Cullman, James Barr, etc.), process Christology (e.g., Norman Pittenger, John Cobb, etc.), universalist Christology (cf. article by Editor in this issue), postmodern Christology, mythological Christology, and narrative Christology. Some of this material the lay reader might find a bit difficult, but if he would devote his mind to an understanding of what is going on in this century in regard to a theology of Christ's person he would do well to plow through it carefully.

Erickson concludes the volume with 244 pages dealing with "The Construction of a Contemporary Incarnational Christology." Here he argues that there must be a new Chalcedon. We must confess not only what Jesus is *not*, but also affirm all that He *is*. I believe this section offers some of the best incarnational thinking the church has in our time. Classic Chalcedonian formulations are not only sound, but workable, if we stay anchored to the Scripture as we speak to our times. Erickson, a theologian we are profoundly indebted to in many ways, helps us do exactly that.

*Editor*

### ***Historical Theology***

William Cunningham

Still Waters Revival Books.

1253 pages, two volumes, hardbound, \$59.95.

**T**he great theological controversies and debates of the church's history did not, of course, occur in a vacuum.

Always they were surrounded by a particular set of cultural assumptions, and were preceded and followed by other related events. If we do not know the context of a theological controversy, we do not yet understand it.

This is very clear to us when we consider the great battle Athanasius fought over the question of the Trinity. To this day, we are enjoying the fruit of that particular victory. But what is not as clear to many Christians is that this particular victory set the stage for the next great battle—the doctrinal questions surrounding the person of the divine Christ in relation to His humanity.

In seeking to understand the nature of these debates (as well as many others), these two volumes of *Historical Theology* by William Cunningham fit the need precisely. The subtitle describes the nature of the work very precisely. It is "A review of the principal discussions in the Christian Church since the Apostolic Age." It hardly bears mentioning that such a review would necessarily involve a thorough discussion of the debate surrounding Nicea and Chalcedon.

When Arius taught that Christ was, in some sense, created, he did not do so in a flippant or disparaging way. Athanasius, however, saw what was genuinely at stake and was willing to stand for the sake of the truth, if necessary, *contra mundum*. It is common for modern men to assume that this fourth-century uproar, this theological fracas, if you please, was really a battle over a bunch of nothing. A mere *iota* separated the verbal ensigns of each party. Why should they have had such a big fight over the use of *homoousios* versus *homoiousios*?

Although Arius was not seeking to mock Christ, he was seeking to accommodate the church's teaching about Christ with the sophisticated, pagan, philosophical understanding of the world. He was trying to make Christ acceptable to man. (In this endeavor, incidentally, his spirit is imitated by countless modern evangelicals.) A Christ who was not *fully*

deity is comprehensible and acceptable to natural man. Athanasius, however, was not interested in accommodating the bankrupt pagan philosophers. He wanted to remain faithful to Christ as He is, and not the Christ the pagans would have agreed to worship. By the grace of God, that battle was won.

But while the deity of Christ was settled at Nicea, the pressure to water down biblical Christianity remained. There was now an agreed-upon answer to the question, "Who is Christ?" The orthodox and biblical answer was that He is both God and man. But the human and divine natures are two completely different natures. How can they be found in *one* person?

This is how Cunningham introduces this obvious question:

But when the mind dwells upon this great truth, with the view of more fully comprehending and realizing it, the questions almost immediately arise, whether, after this assumption of human nature, by one who had been from eternity possessed of the divine nature, the two natures still continued to retain each its own entirety of completeness; and whether, if so, each of the two natures did not form or constitute a distinct person, so that in Christ there should be two persons as well as two natures. And these are just the topics involved in the Nestorian and Eutychian controversies.

The Eutychian heresy involved confusion about what happened to the human nature of Christ in the incarnation. The response to this by Chalcedon was that the two natures were united together without "conversion, composition, or confusion." In other words, the fact that Christ is God does not alter the fact that He is *truly* a man. The divinity of Christ did not absorb the humanity of Christ.

The Nestorians, on the other hand, wanted to say that within the Christ there were *two* persons—one human and one divine. The problem here was that it left the gulf

between God and man unbridged; the gulf remained infinite. In short, it would leave us without a mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. It leaves us without a true Savior. Again, Cunningham writes:

There is no appearance in Scripture of anything like a distinction of persons in Christ, of a divine person saying or doing some things ascribed to Him, and of a human person saying or doing other things ascribed to Him.

Another valuable feature of Cunningham's writing is that he places such controversies in both their immediate and *remote* contexts. For example, in this instance he shows how these specific battles are acknowledged and referred to in later church history, particularly in the work of the Westminster theologians.

All this is not to say that these two volumes are limited to a discussion of the person of Christ. Cunningham thoroughly covers other important subjects as well—the era of the postapostolic fathers, the Pelagian controversy, the iconoclastic controversy, the various debates about the relationship of the church to the state, as well as giving a wonderful treatment of the Reformation. In short, these volumes not only review and explain the assorted controversies, they also place each of them in their historical *context*.

These two large volumes are highly recommended for all who wish to understand the development of doctrinal understanding historically.

**Douglas Wilson**  
Moscow, ID

*The Person and Work of Christ*

Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield (ed. Samuel Craig)  
 Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company (1970).  
 575 pages, hardbound, \$19.95.

Ask those pastors that are students of Reformed theology about B. B. Warfield, and most will tell you that no personal library is complete without the inclusion of several of his works, if not the complete set of ten volumes in the reprinted Oxford edition available from Baker Book House. Unfortunately, Warfield is often revered and treated as the author of classics: highly praised but seldom read! Yet, for the honest student of tough-minded theology, Warfield provides a unique combination of academic criticism and pastoral exposition. To neglect the latter due to the complexity of the former is to miss an opportunity to follow one of the great Christian minds of our century down the path of truth!

*The Person and Work of Christ* is a compilation of several articles originally written for publication in the theological journals of Warfield's own time, along with some helpful sermonic material. As a result of this manner of composition a comprehensive study of the person and work of Christ is not to be found in Warfield's treatment. Subjects such as impeccability, the offices of Christ, and the resurrection receive almost no treatment here. The subjects which are dealt with are covered quite thoroughly, with useful expositions of key texts often given.

The book is divided into two parts: Part 1 discusses issues relating specifically to the person of Christ and includes eight chapters. In chapters 1-3 Warfield surveys the material available for the study of Christ, reacting sharply against the "desupernaturalism" of Jesus which was prevalent among those liberal scholars so intent on

revealing the "historical Jesus." Warfield's historical Jesus is the Christ of Scripture, and in these chapters he skillfully deals with all who would diminish the historicity of Scripture. He surveys the Pauline material, the Christological sections of Hebrews, the Johanne material and the sayings of Jesus Himself. Especially useful is his full and insightful exposition of Philippians 2:5-11, found in the first section of chapter 2. He concludes, succinctly, that "the constitution of our Lord's person is a matter of revelation, not of human thought; and it is pre-eminently a revelation of the New Testament. . . ." (p. 37).

Chapter 3 deals exclusively with Paul's teaching on Christ. Here we find Christ as the Son of God and therefore the divine Lord on whom we absolutely depend and to whom we owe absolute obedience. Central to Christ's deity is a correct understanding of His two natures:

If we reduce what he (Paul) tells us to its lowest terms it amounts just to this: Paul preached the historical Christ as the promised Messiah and as the very Son of God. But he declares Christ to be the promised Messiah and the very Son of God in language so pregnant, so packed with implications, as to carry us into the heart of the great problem of the two-natured person of Christ (p. 78).

The editor of this volume arranged the book so that the remaining five chapters of this part give a progressive unfolding of Warfield's understanding of the two natures of Christ. Perhaps chapter 4, "The Emotional Life of Our Lord," is the single most intriguing article of the book. Here Warfield begins his argument for the full humanity of Jesus by examining the emotions displayed by our Lord. He shows how the compassion, indignation and joy displayed by Christ not only prove His complete humanity, but also give us a necessary glimpse into the nature of Jesus as a man:

One of the effects of this is to give to His emotions, as noted,

the appearance of peculiar strength, vividness and completeness. This serves to refute the notion which has been sometimes advanced under the influence of the "apathetic" conception of virtue, that emotional movements never ran their full course in Him as we experience them, but stopped short at some point in their action deemed the point of dignity. . . . Perhaps it may be well explicitly to note that our Lord's emotions fulfilled themselves, as ours do, in physical reactions" (pp. 137-38).

Chapters 5-7 are more academic in their orientation, focused primarily against the liberal arguments advanced against the two natures of Christ. Chapter 5 is, of all the articles, the most pastoral, being a well documented exposition of our Lord's interaction with the rich young ruler. Chapters 6 and 7 taken together form a skillful apology for the orthodox position of Christ: full humanity and undiminished deity. Especially useful is Warfield's discussion and exposure of the errors associated with the "kenotic" theory:

Kenoticism differs from Socinianism fundamentally in that Socinianism took away from us only our Divine Christ, while Kenoticism takes away also our very God. For what kind of God is this that is God and not God alternately as He chooses, and lays off and on at will those specific qualities which make God the kind of being we call "God," as a king might put off and on his crown, or as a leopard might wish to change his spots but cannot, or an Ethiopian his skin? Of course, this is all . . . "pure mythology" (p. 194).

Part 1 ends with a treatise on Christless Christianity which, in Warfield's mind, is the disastrous end product of liberal theology.

Part 2 is comprised of six articles on the work of Christ. Actually, this section deals only with the death of Christ, which is seen properly as the heart of Christ's earthly activity. The material here is quite detailed and very useful. Warfield deals fully with Christ the redeemer in chapters 9

and 13. Major views of the atonement are carefully studied in chapters 10 and 11, while chapter 12 deals with Christ's death against the backdrop of the Old Testament sacrificial system. This issue, with all of its theological complexities, makes for extremely helpful and readable material. In all of this I believe we see the essence of Warfield's theology focused on one of the grand truths recovered by the Protestant reformers so powerfully—the centrality of the cross. He writes:

. . . the religion which Jesus founded is a redemptive religion in the narrow sense, that is to say, it has the Cross set in its centre. . . . Its redemptive character has not, then, been imported into Christianity from without, in the course of its development in the world—whether through the instrumentality of Paul or of some other one. It has constituted its essence as a specific religion from the beginning; without which it would cease to be the religion that Jesus founded, and that, retaining the specific character impressed on it by Him, has borne His name through the centuries known from it as Christian. Precisely what Christianity was in the beginning, has ever been through all its history, and must continue to be so long as it keeps its specific character by virtue of which it is what it is, a redemptive religion; or rather that particular redemptive religion which brings to man salvation from his sin, conceived as guilt as well as pollution, through the expiatory death of Jesus Christ (pp. 525-26).

The appendix contains three sermons which add to the pastoral depth of these studies. They allow the reader to see the connection between the study and the pulpit quite well. It is particularly interesting to read Warfield's exposition of Philippians 2:5-11 in chapter 2 and then read his sermon on "Imitating the Incarnation." These sermons alone are worth the price of the volume!

B. B. Warfield lived and wrote during a time of great theological shift in America. His powerful insights and incisive communicative style provided a theological bul-

wark behind which many stood in their defense of the faith. As the church of our day is called upon to guard the truth, and as historic truths are being rediscovered in many quarters, the writings of giants like Warfield play an increasingly large role in modern reformation and may well add to the biblical fire needed to spark earnest prayer for revival.

*David W. Hegg*

*St. Charles, IL*

### *Christ Before the Manger*

Ron Rhodes

Baker Book House (1992).

199 pages, paperback, \$13.95.

This book by Ron Rhodes is an in-depth study of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Rhodes explains that the motive for writing this volume began during his seminary days when he experienced a deep hunger and longing to know more about the eternity of God (p. 12). This personal search led him to a consideration of the doctrine of Christ. The author soon discovered that there was very little that had been written concerning the preincarnate Christ. In view of this, the author set out to analyze and catalog all the material that pertained to the person and work of Jesus Christ as it related to His being, prior to His incarnation.

I found this book not only fascinating but extremely helpful. There is a wealth of material contained here that will enable any pastor, student, or Christian to explain and defend the deity of Christ. For example, the first chapter, titled "Knowing God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit," is a study of the doctrine of the Trinity. The material here would be helpful in defending the faith against cultic attacks and

heretical views of Christ.

The book also contains many tables and diagrams that would be very useful in teaching and defending the deity of Christ. The appendices, for example, contain the following tables:

1. Table A.1: A Comparison of Yahweh and Jesus
2. Table B.1: Messianic Prophecies Fulfilled by Jesus Christ
3. Table C.1: Typical Persons
4. Table C.2: Christ Fulfills the Tabernacle Types
5. Table C.3: Christ Fulfills the Levitical Offerings
6. Table C.4: Christ Fulfills the Levitical Feasts
7. Table C.5: The Priesthood and Christ's Mediation
8. Table G.1: Christological Errors

These are just a few of the many helpful tables and diagrams found throughout this wonderful book.

In his introduction, Rhodes explains his goal and desire for writing this book:

Nevertheless, this book is humbly presented with a hope and a prayer. My hope is that you will come to know more fully the glory and majesty of our eternal God and Savior, Jesus Christ. My prayer is that this knowledge would not become an end in itself, but that it would serve to draw you ever closer to His side (p. 18).

As I read this book, that is exactly what I experienced. On more than one occasion, I stopped and put the book down and just had some moments of quiet worship as I praised God for the work that he accomplished through His Son Jesus Christ.

What makes Rhodes' book so valuable is that it helps the reader to see how Christ-centered the Old Testament really is. Just as the title implies, Rhodes shows us that Jesus Christ is on every page of Scripture, including the Old Testament! I found this very encouraging and helpful because we seem to live in an age where many preachers are quite capable of preaching on theology and doctrine, but

have difficulty keeping their teaching and preaching Christ-centered.

It needs to be noted that Rhodes' eschatological views surface from time to time as he states his premillennial position on the events which follow Christ's second advent. Those who hold other views will need to overlook some of these statements with Christian tolerance and focus rather upon the wealth and riches of all that is contained in this work.

The eleven chapters and the accompanying appendices are a pleasure to read. This book is encouraging, stimulating, and very informative. A rich blessing awaits all who read *Christ Before the Manger*, a new title which can be found easily in local Christian book stores.

**Robert Dickie**

*Flint, MI*