

## Editorial

Welcome to the Spring, 2011, *Midwestern Journal of Theology*. The core theme for this issue is Biblical Theology. Our annual Sizemore Lecturer this year was the New Testament scholar G. K. Beale, well known author of numerous books, commentaries, and scholarly articles. Beale delivered two lectures on the subject of the implication of Inaugurated Eschatology for Christian life and ministry. Both these lectures are included here, and are, in a slightly different form, to be included in Dr. Beale's forthcoming *New Testament Biblical Theology*, published by Baker. We are also pleased to be able to include as well a response, appreciation, and critique of Beale's presentation by Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's James M. Hamilton. As a happy coincidence, William R. Osborne, a Midwestern Old Testament doctoral candidate provided for this issue a review of James M. Hamilton's *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology*. Rounding out our theme section we include a translation of Johann Philipp Gabler's "On the Proper Distinction Between Biblical and Dogmatic Theology" (1787). This historic discourse is often credited with being the first step toward establishing Biblical and Systematic Theology as separate and distinct disciplines. We present it here without any intention of endorsement, but merely for its historic interest in relation to the development of the concept and practice of Biblical Theology. The English translation first appeared in 1980 in the *Scottish Journal of Theology*, and is reprinted here by the kind permission of the original translators.

In addition to our four major theme articles a number of other items of interest are included as well. Midwestern Professor J. Alan Branch discusses a controversial rendering of Malachi 2:16 in the *Holman Christian Standard Study Bible*, and Dr. Daniel Watson, also of Midwestern, follows up by providing an extensive text-critical evaluation of this passage.

In the interest of timeliness in relation to the recent appearance of Rob Bell's controversial new book *Love Wins*, Midwestern professor Rustin Umstatt and the editor have scrambled to put together two articles of critique and response to what represents a very troubling book.

Another article included also relates to Rob Bell, but less directly. For many years a myth has been circulated that in the early Christian

period several gods besides Jesus were said to be virgin born “Crucified Saviors.” For the last couple of centuries this myth has been promoted primarily by Christianity’s most vocal opponents. Regrettably, Bell himself recently embraced and positively taught a version of this myth in the 15<sup>th</sup> installment of his Nooma film series. In this issue we challenge that myth in its historic origins, focusing on one ancient figure in particular who is often erroneously put forth as a “crucified savior,” namely the Greek god Prometheus.

One of *Midwestern’s* New Testament doctoral candidates, Todd R. Chipman, also contributes a piece on the epistle to the Hebrews as Exhortation. This paper was accepted and presented in a well-attended session at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Atlanta this past November. (Readers will also find a number of interesting book reviews by a number of authors, including three of our own doctoral students, Russell Meeks, C. Eric Turner, and William R. Osborne).

Following up on the theme of Justification in our Spring 2010 issue, we include now a very intriguing article by Joel R. Beeke, President of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, on *Pilgrim’s Progress* author John Bunyan’s defense of the doctrine of Justification in his historical context and its bearing on current debates relating to that variegated collection of opinions now traveling under the general heading “New Perspective on Paul.”

The final article of this issue explores the significance of a remarkable story from the life of early Bible translator, Jerome, to Christian life and iconography.

Finally many thanks are due to Assistant Journal Editor Joshua L. Mann for his careful editorial work, insightful suggestions, and the contribution of an introduction to the Johann Philipp Gabler piece, and to our new Journal secretary Jessica Vanderford for her crucial help with logistics and proofreading.

Blessings and Good Reading!