

Book Reviews

Hans Boersma, *Pierced by Love: Divine Reading with the Christian Tradition*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2023. ISBN 978-1-68359-677-6, xviii+255 pp., hbk \$23; also Kindle, Logos.

As a scholar of medieval monasticism, I have been hoping that others would see the treasury of divine wisdom contained in the writings of medieval theologians and make it accessible to the larger Christian Church. Hans Boersma has done exactly this with *Pierced by Love*. Often considered obscure and overly obscurantist, medieval theology is thought to be inapplicable to today's Church, so it is left to wallow among specialists in their ivory towers. This book shows that such a perspective and practice is wildly misguided.

Capitalizing on contemporary interest in *lectio divina* (divine reading), the book lays out in nine chapters how early and medieval Christian writers understood the practices of reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation as a wholistic approach to the study of the Scriptures. Boersma attends to each of these rungs on the ladder (an image borrowed from Guigo II the Carthusian) of *lectio divina* by explaining, in clear and accessible language, what is meant by these concepts and how they work together to form a coherent theology of divine reading. Boersma is judicious in his use of primary materials and includes several very useful charts and illustrations, which, to the credit of the publishers, are reproduced in color.

Boersma is clear from the start that *Pierced by Love* is *not* a how-to manual for practicing *lectio divina*; that is, he does not offer recommendations for how one should focus his mind during meditation or how one can prepare herself for contemplation. And it is this very fact that makes the book particularly worthwhile. Many books on divine reading oversimplify the medieval approach to Scripture study, which is, in fact, a rather sophisticated way of viewing the topic. Other books on *lectio divina* are attempts to package spiritual practices in such a way that they can be picked up and employed with relatively little ease by spiritual consumers. Books on "Centering Prayer," for example, come readily to mind.

Boersma, on the other hand, is honest about the depth and challenges of medieval divine reading. This is not a practice that one simply adopts on top of a host of other spiritual practices. Boersma demonstrates that medieval theologians thought of it as a detailed set of practices, each undergirded by

robust theological rationales. A popular image for the practice, which Boersma highlights, is that Scripture must be chewed on, regurgitated repeatedly, so that such mastication brings forth the flavors and nutrients of God's holy word. Though it takes work, it is clear from Boersma that this way of doing Scriptural study is an ancient and venerable one, something that the modern Church needs to take seriously. Rightly understanding divine reading leads to its practice without providing a step-by-step how-to guide.

Though written for the non-specialist, this book will challenge many of its readers, for the medieval world and medieval thought patterns can appear quite outdated to the twenty-first century reader. Or, to say it more accurately, most contemporary Christian readers are poorly educated when it comes to Christian history; therefore, this text will contain elements that are new and, thereby, not easily understood. But they *can* be understood though it will take effort on the part of the reader. Boersma has done an incredible job of bringing medieval theology to the parish, and we should all heed his advice to read—especially the Scriptures but *Pierced by Love* too.

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Philip Hobday, *Richard Hooker: Theological Method and Anglican Identity*.

London: T&T Clark, 2023. ISBN 978-0-56770803-8, xiv+220 pp., hbk \$93; also EPUB, Kindle, PDF.

It is a commonplace of Christian orthodoxy that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, not merely one or the other or some third, in-between thing. He is both-and, however much this may confound our limited human understanding. I begin with this observation because, although the book currently under review is not about christology, the duality that we find in Christ serves as a helpful point of departure for understanding Philip Hobday's argument in *Richard Hooker: Theological Method and Anglican Identity*.

Hobday begins by observing that there are, broadly speaking, three common accounts of the nature of Anglicanism:

For some, Anglicanism is fundamentally *reformed*, emphasizing the Bible as source of theological truth and rejecting elements of Roman Catholicism's doctrine and structure. For others, Anglicanism is rather a local variation of *catholic* faith, looking less towards to [sic]