

Both books bear witness to fine editing, and both open up new avenues of conversation. Much more could be said about both books, and hopefully much more will be written by the authors and editors of these two thought-provoking and expansive volumes.

Gregory Platten

London

Christopher M. Hays, in collaboration with Brandon Gallaher, Julia S. Konstantinovskiy, Richard J. Ounsworth OP and C. A. Strine, ***When the Son of Man Didn't Come: A Constructive Proposal on the Delay of the Parousia*** (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016); xx + 317 pp.: 9781451465549, \$79.00 (hbk)

The delay of the Parousia has puzzled and challenged Christians for almost two millennia. Was Jesus wrong when he predicted his own return and the end of the world? How did the Church come to terms with the problem? And how should Christians of the twenty-first century interpret his words? This book is the work of a group of young scholars based in Oxford, representing different Christian traditions and disciplines – Old and New Testaments, patristics, and systematic theology – who have tackled the problem collaboratively. Over the course of four years, each presented contributions to the problem, which were then discussed by the group. The consensus which emerged from this discussion was written up by one or more of the group. Unlike other collections of essays on a common theme, therefore, the authors of this book have discussed their contributions with one another and so present a coherent argument.

A brief introductory chapter surveys and rejects some of the solutions to the problem given in the past: Jesus was a failed apocalyptic prophet, who prophesied the imminent end of the world and was wrong; the eschatological material attributed to Jesus is not genuine; his teaching referred to the Son of Man's vindication, not his coming again, and to earthly disasters that took place in the first century, not to the end of the world. The group accepts the tradition that Jesus announced the eschatological consummation, but since the end of the world and the final judgement did not arrive, they are faced with a theological problem.

They begin by looking at the attempts of Old Testament writers to deal with the problem of the non-fulfilment of prophecy. According to Deuteronomy 18.22, a prophet whose words were not fulfilled was a false prophet; this caused problems when some later prophecies about the exile were not fulfilled. One solution was to reinterpret them in the light of subsequent events. Christian attempts to explain the delay of the Parousia are thus part of a long tradition of wrestling with a disparity between prophecies and subsequent historical events. An alternative explanation (Jer. 18.1–10) held that the prophet's words were intended to make the people repent, in the hope that God would change his mind about his intention to destroy them. According to this interpretation, 'a successful prophet is precisely the one

who does *not* see his prediction come to pass' (p. 43); the story of Jonah springs to mind. The conclusion is that 'prophetic predictions are conditional and . . . their occurrence or non-occurrence is contingent upon human responses to the prophet's words' (p. 57). New Testament writers not only interpreted historical events as 'partial fulfilments' of Jesus' prophecies, but stressed God's mercy in allowing time for repentance.

In the rest of the book, various contributions explore and confirm the '*thesis that the delay of the Parousia is entirely consonant with the way ancient prophecy works and with the operations of the God that Christians worship*' (p. 20). The coming of the Lord, they argue, depends to an extent on us, since the God of love and grace 'is free . . . to change his mind', in line with our response to him (p. 160). The idea of a God who cooperates with his creation is, they argue, consonant with the Church's belief in a triune God.

Collaborative scholarship like this is to be welcomed. The authors have boldly tackled a question which is frequently ignored by serious scholars, and their different perspectives are valuable. At times one wishes they had done more; they could, for example, profitably have spent longer considering Jewish apocalyptic and what it teaches us about images of time and space; at times they are repetitive, anxious to ensure that the readers grasp their central 'simple' solution to the problem – that '*prophecies are conditional*' (p. 87). Simple though it may be, we may be grateful to the authors of this book for exploring its relevance to this particular problem.

Morna D. Hooker

Robinson College, Cambridge

Oliver D. Crisp, ***The Word Enfleshed: Exploring the Person and Work of Christ*** (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016); 208 pp.: 9780801098093, \$26.99 (pbk)

In this text, Crisp uses analytic theology to provide a historically engaged exploration of the person and work of Christ. A central goal of his project is to demonstrate how discrete acts of Christ (e.g. the incarnation and the atonement) are linked together and form a single dynamic work. Accordingly, Crisp highlights throughout the text how each newly introduced concept relates to the ideas presented in previous chapters. Thus, upon finishing the book, the reader is left with a panoramic view of the work of Christ.

The first of the book's nine chapters is on the eternal generation of the Son. Here, Crisp defends the classic position that the Son is eternally generated by the Father. His primary interlocutor in this chapter is Paul Helm, who rejects Crisp's stance due to concerns related to the Son's co-divinity. Chapter 2 is largely an interaction with Robert Jenson who maintains that Christ is identical to the Word. In Crisp's estimation, Jenson's position fails because it does not allow for the Second Person to participate in divine impassibility and immutability. Following this is a chapter on the incorporeality of God. Crisp argues here that