

Constructions de la Présence et de l'absence de Paul en 2 Corinthiens dans la Perspective des Épîtres Pauliniennes et du Monde Grec." After a brief state of the research, Bieringer delves into the issue of presence and absence via Greek texts. He compares his findings with 1 Corinthians and Philipians, before doing so in a more detailed fashion with 2 Corinthians. Bieringer argues that Paul's use of this antithesis, in contrast to some writings in the wider Graeco-Roman context, shows he does not suggest that his letters are to be a substitute for his physical presence/absence. Paul, in Bieringer's estimation, points out that his real presence is similar to that found in his writings. Though Bieringer maintains this issue is in need of much fuller research, he sees his contribution to be a first step in this direction.

This is a marvelous collection of essays and Peeters is to be commended for publishing them. We owe a debt of gratitude to each author. Our understanding of Paul's writings and his Graeco-Roman context has been substantially enriched by this volume.

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### **Doubt, Faith & Certainty**

*Anthony C. Thiselton*

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017 (160 ss).

This book is another valuable contribution from the prolific pen of theologian Anthony Thiselton. The author's skills in exegesis, hermeneutics, and philosophical theology suit him well for interacting with these topics, which are among the most often debated in both theistic and atheistic circles.

Thiselton begins in chapter one with a brief, but useful discussion of the variety of meanings of doubt, faith, and certainty.

He argues that all these *realities* are frequently misunderstood, notably in popular Christian thought, which tends to assume that doubt, faith, and certainty each have one meaning. Drawing from the biblical text, philosophers, linguists, and theologians, the author makes a good case for a contextual diversity of meanings that seems closer to the truth. Doubt, for example, is not always to be taken negatively, let's say as a contrast to belief, but it can be viewed positively, since it also can refer to humility or deep reflection. The same type of argument for a plurality of meanings is made for faith. Thiselton convincingly shows the polysemy found in the biblical text (no less than 13 variations of faith) and historical theology, but underscores by appealing to Wittgenstein that there is some notion here of "family resemblances." As far as certainty goes, the author contends, it is equally varied and diverse in meaning as doubt and faith. Whether in the New Testament or in philosophical discussions a multiplicity of meanings for certainty can be discovered in numerous contexts.

After these initial claims at the outset of the book, Thiselton goes on to deal with each *reality* in greater detail. Chapters two and three tackle doubt. Chapter two is entitled Doubt and Skepticism. Beginning with the Ancient Greeks, the founders of skepticism and its variants, the author shows how skepticism has had an influence throughout history, especially in philosophy and theology. Thiselton interacts with Erasmus, Luther, Descartes, and Kierkegaard to support his arguments. This chapter closes with an interesting discussion of social and moral contributions and the effect of biblical wisdom when it comes to fending off unwarranted skepticism.

In chapter three, Doubt and Belief,

there is a robust and exceedingly helpful consideration of why doubt and belief are not necessarily mutually exclusive, as is often assumed, especially in Christian circles. Thiselton cites John Suk's book *Not Sure: A Pastor's Journey from Faith to Doubt*, before turning to give a number of biblical and philosophical examples including Jonah and Kierkegaard, to establish his point. Digging deeper still, he explores the contributions of Gadamer, Lakatos, and Kuhn, and finally compares the views of Locke and Newman on the question of whether there are degrees of doubt or belief. According to Thiselton there are legitimate differences of opinion on these matters. One thing, however, for him is clear. A complete division between doubt and belief is untenable. Yet, in order to move towards a finely balanced perspective and to advance the debate more research and insights are needed.

The next two chapters turn to examine the problematic of faith. Chapter four, *Faith as Belief or Faith as Trust?* is a worthwhile analysis of 'faith' in the Old and New Testaments. How is faith perceived in biblical testimony? Does it lay out clear lines between belief and trust? Thiselton branches out from here to explore Pascal, Kierkegaard, and Karl Barth among others on this topic, before going on and taking a close look at faith and reason in the biblical text and the Patristic writers. After this investigation, Thiselton argues that faith and reason must go together, though he claims that faith is a gift of grace. Chapter five is titled *Faith, Reason, and Argument in Biblical and Modern Thought*. This overarching, yet somewhat detailed survey deals with Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Locke, Hegel, and Pannenberg, who remain key players in debates on the subject of faith and reason. Following the interaction with these

theologians and philosophers, Thiselton assesses what significance the work of Vatican II and Pope John Paul II might have to offer for this discussion and then concludes the chapter with a short but relevant exploration of 'the faithfulness of God,' particularly in the light of Romans 3.

The final chapters; six, seven, and eight, evaluate certainty. Chapter six, *Differing Concepts and Contexts of Certainty*, begins with a basic overview of psychological and epistemic certainty, interacting with philosophy and the New Testament. Thiselton comes to the conclusion that concepts of certainty will vary since their contexts will fluctuate, which is the next topic the author considers. This section deals with four contexts: law, political-social sciences, linguistics, and quantum mechanics to show how uncertain certainty is in each of these. Building off this direction, the last part of the chapter discusses Heim, Polanyi, and Polkinghorne, and their recognition of and contributions to the ongoing transformation of a popular scientific worldview, which tends to be unaware of the quantum shifts taking place within it. While Thiselton holds that the uncertainty found in the sciences does not undermine the Christian faith, which in my view is true, I would wager, at the very least, it is a challenge to it that simply cannot be bracketed out or ignored.

In chapter seven, *Three Approaches to Certainty*, the author looks quickly at pseudo-certainty in analytical statements via Kant, Quine, and others. He then turns to examine Wittgenstein's work and in particular, his unfinished book *On Certainty*, before concluding the chapter with an insightful analysis of Reformed epistemology, as represented by Alston, Plantinga, and Wolterstorff. Thiselton

devotes a fair amount of this section to the recent popular work of Plantinga: *Knowledge and Christian Belief* (a more basic version of his Warrant series) giving a brief, but informative commentary on various chapters and topics in the book.

Chapter eight, Eschatological Certainty and the Holy Spirit, brings this fine work to a close. The author interacts with Hick, Pannenberg, and Ricoeur, especially on the subjects of verification and revelation in an eschatological context, before looking at the last judgement in the biblical text and through the eyes of theologians such as Rahner, Pannenberg, and Moltmann, concluding with an affirmation of the centrality of the Holy Spirit for present and future ‘certainty.’

I highly recommend this book. It covers a tremendous amount of ground in an accessible manner on crucial topics. Doubt, faith, and certainty are essential to better understand and to live understandably if we are to have and offer a credible and vibrant picture of God, ourselves, and the world. This work is Classic Thiselton. Well researched, written, and argued.

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**Hermeneutics and the Philosophy of Religion. The Legacy of Paul Ricoeur**  
*Ingolf U. Dalferth and Marlene A. Block, eds.*

Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015 (291 ss).

This is an important and useful volume from the 34th Annual Philosophy of Religion Conference of 2013, which was devoted to the work of Paul Ricoeur, probably the most published philosopher of the twentieth century. Ricoeur wrote so much and on such an array of topics it is difficult, nigh impossible, to adequately

represent his work, even with a dozen doctorates. Nonetheless, the efforts put forward by the group of scholars that have contributed to this conference and book is a helpful undertaking in exploring Ricoeur’s legacy, precisely because we need to take the bits and pieces of Ricoeur’s writings and try to understand them before returning to view his work more holistically.

Following the brief, but illuminating Introduction to Ricoeur’s hermeneutics by Dalferth, the rest of the book is made up of several outstanding essays and the excellent responses to them.

The first section is entitled Hermeneutics and Religion. There are three essays and three responses. This format makes for a delightful interaction between scholars and is by and large a benefit for readers. Tracy explores Ricoeur and religious forms of life, in particular, ‘manifestation and proclamation.’ Block responds to Tracy by looking into philosophy as a way of life for Ricoeur and then specifically turns to the notions of manifestation and proclamation. In the second essay of this section, Anderson deals with confidence in memory and Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of life. She especially examines the place of epistemological confidence in the later ethical and political work of Ricoeur. Livingston, in response, discusses not only the issue of confidence in memory, but also its fallibility. Schweidler, in the third essay, delves into Ricoeur’s hermeneutics via ontology and religion. Greely’s response queries Ricoeur’s picture of God and ontology, while putting forward another metaphysical orientation.

Section two is Philosophy and Biblical Poetry. There are two essays and two responses. Pallesen considers what is referred to as ‘a questioning lament,’ via