

ty. This book also omits some recent discussions on the Trinity. While Holmes addresses many of the Trinitarian issues of modern theology, he neglects other important contemporary challenges to the traditional understanding of Trinity. For example, in the book *The Eternal Generation of the Son: Maintaining Orthodoxy in Trinitarian Theology* (IVP, 2012), Kevin Giles lists thirteen individuals who have published in support of removing the phrase "eternally begotten of the Father" from the historic creeds (p. 30). This revival of the discussion about ism deserves treatment in the review of contemporary issues.

I recommend the reading of this book to those who want to understand not only the differences between the classical and modern renditions of the doctrine of the Trinity, but also to better understand the presuppositional differences behind such interpretations.

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El problema de la identidad bíblica del cristianismo. Las presuposiciones filosóficas de la teología cristiana: desde los presocráticos al protestantismo, by Raúl Kerbs. Libertador San Martín, Argentina: Editorial Universidad Adventista del Plata / Adventus, Editorial Universitaria Iberoamericana, 2014. 671 pp. + 7 pp. bibliography. ISBN 978-987-1378-32-6. Softcover, US\$24.00.

El problema de la identidad bíblica del cristianismo [*The Problem of Christianity's Biblical Identity. The Philosophical Presuppositions of Christian Theology: From the Presocratics to Protestantism*] is a massive document, the product of an extensive research by professor Raúl Kerbs to clarify the impact of the Greek philosophical presuppositions on Christian thought and identity. Dr. Kerbs is particularly qualified for such a task. He holds a doctoral degree in Philosophy from the National University of Córdoba, Argentina, with a dissertation focused on the religious speech of Paul Ricoeur. He continued with post-doctoral studies at Tübingen and has served as professor of Philosophy at River Plate Adventist University for over twenty years. His book deserves serious attention.

The question of the influence of Greek philosophy upon ty necessitates a new approach to the issue of the relationship between Greek philosophy and Christianity. The book has two basic objectives (p. 27). First, to offer a panoramic presentation of the thought of leading philosophers and theologians, from the pre-Socratics to the Protestant orthodoxy of the seventeenth century. Second, to show differences between

these basic presuppositions between Greek philosophy and biblical revelation. These two basic objectives, however, are the ground for the primary purpose of the work: to demonstrate that Christian theological thought—whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, built biblical hermeneutics using the Greek philosophical interpretation of the basic presuppositions of the mind, and not their biblical interpretation. Consequently, Kerbs in this book is not primarily focused on historical events—even though his presentation follows a chronological order, but instead is primarily theological. History is only a means to illustrate his main thesis: Christianity completely lost its biblical identity and replaced it with a philosophical one (p. 28).

But what are the basic presuppositions? The authors build upon the work of Fernando Canale in relation to the analysis of the structure of reason. Kerbs explains that the human mind works in an anticipatory, systematic, and interpretative way. This means that the mind operates—in the process of knowledge—on a set of previous ideas about the object of knowledge. Such ideas have a systematic connection among them. Consequently, to know implies always to interpret in the light of these previous presuppositions. While there are many presuppositions, all of them are ultimately related to three “types” of fundamental presuppositions (p. 33): the presupposition regarding reality or being in general (ontological), the presupposition regarding the way in which the mind knows (epistemological), and the presupposition regarding the connection between all things, or unifying principle (systematic). This last presupposition can be described as an articulating principle, which means that reality is always thought of as a whole articulated and unified in a coherent manner. The systematic interpretation of the interconnection of the different elements of reality as a whole includes the connection of the previous ideas (presuppositions) about God, the human being and the world with the presuppositions regarding the reality as a whole and the presupposition regarding the nature of the knowledge.

Kerbs makes explicit the presuppositions in the interpretation of being and knowing in general, the interpretation of God, the world and humanity, and the interpretation of the principle of unity, in the various systems of thought. The first five chapters are dedicated to Greek philosophy. This section covers the pre-Socratics, Sophists, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and especially, the philosophy legacy after Aristotle, specifically the Cynics, Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics, Syncretism, Eclecticism, Plotinus and the Gnostics. At the risk of oversimplification it can be said that Greek philosophy assumes the Parmenidean interpretation of being as essentially one, timeless, unchangeable and immutable. The temporal-material world is not actually real. To know, in consequence, is the denial of which is known through the physical senses: multiplicity, temporality mutability, changeability. This proceed is known as the *via negativa* (way

of negation). Reality as a whole is seen as a hierarchical structure divided into two basic parts: timelessness and temporality. The idea of metaphysical hierarchy becomes the principle of articulation in Greek philosophy. At the same time, the divine notion is linked to timelessness, whereas the world and human beings are interpreted in terms of a metaphysical dualism (for example, the world of ideas versus the world of appearances, or Plato's description of the soul versus the body).

From chapter seven forward Kerbs explains the interpretation of the basic presuppositions of the mind in the context of Christian thought. Chapter six, however, produces an intentional break whereby the author dedicates almost one hundred pages to explain the biblical interpretation of the basic presuppositions of the mind (p. 205ff). While somebody could object that the Bible is not a book of philosophy, Kerbs demonstrates convincingly that the Bible, as a product of the cooperation between the divine and human minds, necessarily involves an implicit interpretation of the basic presuppositions of the mind. In contrast to Greek philosophy, the biblical interpretation of God as an infinitely temporal being, determines the interpretation of being in general as temporal. The actions of God are temporal actions, including His historical presence, prescience, predestination and providence. In consonance, knowledge is interpreted as temporal. The mind can know that which is temporal, particular, concrete, and unrepeatable. The Bible interprets the world as a temporal creation of God, and human being as an indivisible unity. The principle of unity is Christ. Through His mediatorial work—established by the Trinity before the creation and the fall (Prov 8:22-32)—He articulates the divine-human relationship, looking for the final harmony of the universe.

Chapters seven to eleven demonstrate that, contrary to what is expected, Christianity in general adopted the Greek philosophical presuppositions of the mind. The Church Fathers, Clement of Alexandria, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas and William of Ockham each assumed the timeless view of the being of God and of the reality in general, as well as the *via negativa* that denies the positive biblical statements regarding the nature of God. The hierarchical understanding of reality was adopted as the unifying metaphysical principle. The cosmological and anthropological dualism was strictly maintained, despite biblical evidence against it. In the last chapter Kerbs perceptively explains the philosophical presuppositions of the mind in theology through the Protestant Reformers. Although they embraced the *sola Scriptura* principle, they essentially adopted the same Greek philosophical presuppositions used by Roman Catholic theologians.

The most significant contribution of Kerbs is to deconstruct Christian theology and, to some extent, philosophy in general. The author uses an impressive array of sources, employing materials written in Spanish, Eng-

lish, German, and Latin. Despite some minor editorial mistakes, the book is a valuable addition for theological libraries. The author explains complex issues in a way that is accessible even for the common person. Scholar will find useful material in his carefully documented footnotes along with 154 figures and 20 tables.

Unfortunately, the book does not discuss the topic of presuppositions in the context of modern and postmodern theology and philosophy. This is an area that the author hopes to tackle with another future volume (p. 663ff). A noticeable omission, for example, is the fact that he does not mention Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, a classical defender of the *via negativa*. He made a profound impact on eastern and western theology, which is almost comparable to Augustine's influence.

In conclusion, Kerbs demonstrates the main thesis of this book that Christian thought in general was built upon Greek philosophical presuppositions, which in turn meant the loss of a true biblical identity. The book ably explains presuppositions that operate in the interpretation of reality as a whole, the biblical doctrines, and the biblical texts. Such concepts are especially relevant for the fields of Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology. The book should be mandatory reading for any person who wants to be loyal to the *sola Scriptura* principle.

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Conscience on Trial: The Fate of Fourteen Pacifists in Stalin's Ukraine, 1952-1953, by Hiroaki Kuromiya. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012. x pp. + 208 pp + 4 pp. index. ISBN 978-1-4426-4461-8. Hardcover, US\$60.00.

The 1952 trial of the fourteen Ukrainian Adventists expertly presented in Hiroaki Kuromiya's latest book *Conscience on Trial* may seem at first to be a rather minor episode in the history of Soviet religious oppression. In reality the stories and background statistics may even be surprising to those who don't know this part of the world, but scholars conversant with this part of the world will find nothing in this volume that is startlingly new. It is common knowledge that Stalin was a communist and atheist, who believed that the sacred cause justified the most extreme measures against Christians.

Kuromiya does not exactly seek to present another panoramic shot of history, although he presents an excellent backdrop for this study. Neither is he building a case of some average, representative Soviet citizens