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Levering's "Engaging the doctrine of creation: Cosmos, creatures, and the wise and good creator" (book review)

Robert Lancaster
Dordt College

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Book Reviews



Levering, M. (2017). *Engaging the doctrine of creation: Cosmos, creatures, and the wise and good creator*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. 372 pp. \$44.99. ISBN 9780801030994

Engaging the Doctrine of Creation by Matthew Levering, a professor of theology at Mundelein Seminary, University of Saint Mary of the Lake, is a sweeping theological study of God, creation, the fall, human beings, and the atonement. In many ways, this book defies characterization. Someone who comes to this book seeking concrete answers to many of the questions swirling around the creation versus evolution debate will not find them here. The reader will walk away, however, with a better sense of how theologians of the past, primarily theologians in the Roman Catholic tradition, have addressed these questions. However, there is much more to the book than that. The book is not concerned as much with the “how” questions, but with the “why” and the “what now” questions.

Levering accomplishes what he sets out to do in this book by demonstrating how creation points towards a wise and good God. Some readers may be disappointed that he does not believe in a literal, global flood or in a literal six-day creation as some Evangelical theologians do. However, with those theologians, he does not believe that modern science requires leaving the Bible behind. He does not seek to dismiss the creation narratives as simple Bible stories (p. 141). Moreover, his treatment of original sin is illuminating, and he takes the scriptural account seriously. Especially helpful is the connection he draws between creation and atonement. This book does not disappoint. It is a demonstration of how theology should be done. It certainly will spark much thought in a careful reader. It does require some theological acumen since Levering engages extensively with theologians from across the centuries. It would be worth adding to any Christian college or seminary library and would make a good book for an upper level undergraduate theology course, or any graduate level course that deals with creation, sin, or atonement.

Reviewer

Robert Lancaster, Dordt College