



Volume 63 | Issue 2

Article 11


12-1-2020

Kreider's "A practical primer on theological method: Table manners for discussing God, his works, and his ways" (book review)

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Recommended Citation

DiRoberts, Kyle D. (2020) "Kreider's "A practical primer on theological method: Table manners for discussing God, his works, and his ways" (book review)," *The Christian Librarian*: Vol. 63 : Iss. 2 , Article 11.

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Book Reviews



Kreider, R. G., Svigel, M.J. (2019). *A practical primer on theological method: Table manners for discussing God, his works, and his ways*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 182 pp. \$16.99. ISBN 9780310588801

Michael J. Svigel and Glenn R. Kreider have written *A Practical Primer on Theological Method*. Svigel is chair and professor of theological studies at Dallas Theological Seminary. Kreider is professor of theological studies at Dallas Theological Seminary and editor-in-chief of *Bibliotheca Sacra*. Their latest book is an introduction to theological method. However, the authors caution against letting one's guard down with the use of the term "primer." They assert, "the subject of theological method is not a simple one" (p. 11). Yet, they hope to have found a balance whereby the book is "not too hard, not too soft," but rather, "just right" (p. 11).

In *A Practical Primer on Theological Method*, the authors describe that they will be arguing for an "integrative theological method in the classic Christian tradition" (p. 11). As a result, Svigel and Kreider have made a "conscious attempt to interact with the insights and perspectives of theological traditions sometimes much broader than our own" (p. 12). The introduction and chapters 1-3 provide the "theological, philosophical and methodological foundation of this book" (p. 13). Chapters 4-11 focus upon the necessary perspectives for a "well-balanced approach to theological discourse" (p. 13). These perspectives include: the interpreter, theologian, the burden of the virtuous, philosopher, scientist, artist, minister, and historian.

The book concludes with the illustration of a table, whereby all the perspectives have a rightful and necessary seat. Svigel and Kreider assert, "Obviously, the Table doesn't actually exist. But it could. And maybe it should" (p. 163). It's seated together, in community, where each perspective helps to inform and challenge one's theological method. For the authors, the Table gives "us a concrete image of the kinds of interrelated, interdependent fields of labor that have contributed to our discourse concerning God, his works, and his ways throughout the history of Christian theology" (p. 163). For Svigel and Kreider, "Our hope is that this primer will help you determine your own place at the Table. And we hope that you might actually pull up a chair to a real table with other Christians, share a meal or coffee together, and experience the remarkable work of Christian theology" (p. 166).

A Practical Primer on Theological Method is well-documented with footnotes throughout. The authors have defined key terms and provide helpful answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs). At the beginning of each chapter there is a “Centerpiece” feature, which provides the reader with the “basic thesis of each chapter in one or two short sentences” (p. 13). Svigel and Kredier have achieved their purpose and *A Practical Primer on Theological Method* will be a helpful resource for church small groups, ministry leaders, pastors, theologians, and university or seminary students.

Reviewer

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