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Title: A Molinist-Anabaptist Systematic Theology

Author(s): David C. Cramer .

Source: Mennonite Quarterly Review.

Document Type: Book review

Article Preview :

A Molinist-Anabaptist Systematic Theology. By Kirk R. MacGregor. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America. 2007. Pp. 350. \$46. If not already acquainted with Kirk MacGregor through his book on Balthasar Hubmaier, (1) one would do well to get to know MacGregor's work through this latest book. A Molinist-Anabaptist Systematic Theology is worth reading not only because of its level of scholarship, but also because of MacGregor's ambitious attempt at combining what he believes to be the best in philosophical theology, Molinism, with the best in practical theology, Anabaptism. Though the former originated with a sixteenth-century Catholic theologian, Luis de Molina (1535-1600), its contemporary proponents include not only Catholic but also evangelical philosophers, such as William Lane Craig. MacGregor's work is thus best read as an evangelical appropriation of Catholic and Anabaptist thought--a combination that might be important for each of these traditions. MacGregor's understanding of systematic theology is that it should attempt to answer questions that are not clearly answered in any one biblical text and thus require a logical synthesis of biblical

exegesis and philosophical reasoning, a pairing with which MacGregor seems comfortable. Thus, this work does not proceed through the standard categories of systematic theology but rather focuses each chapter on a separate problem. After a prolegomena that offers the background to Molinism and Anabaptism-- including a brilliant deconstruction of the Augustinian notion of original sin-- MacGregor proceeds in two major directions: Molinist philosophical theology and evangelical Anabaptist practical theology. In chapter 2 MacGregor addresses the perennial question of how to synthesize a robust view of human free will with an equally robust view of divine sovereignty. MacGregor defends a Molinist view in which God's knowledge prior to creation proceeds in three logical stages: first, knowledge of every possible future state of affairs; second, knowledge of what would actually (though contingently) be the case in any world he could create; and finally, knowledge of what will indeed be the case based on the world he actually chooses to...

Source Citation (MLA 8th Edition)

Cramer, David C. "A Molinist-Anabaptist Systematic Theology." *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, vol. 83, no. 4, 2009, p. 656+. *Academic OneFile*, Accessed 27 July 2018.

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