

Hocking, David L. *The Nature of God in Plain Language*. Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1984. 180 pp. \$8.95.

One of the great needs today is for solid, sound theological thinking to be expressed in terms that are meaningful to those in the pew. This recent book by David L. Hocking, a pastor in Santa Ana, California, appears to be an attempt to meet this need.

The Nature of God in Plain Language is very readable (I might even say preachable), full of interesting illustrations from everyday life. The volume contains simplified arguments for the existence of God, a discussion of different modes by which God reveals himself, and a treatment of God's personality, uniqueness, and eternal nature. The latter part of the book treats the topics of God's omniscience, his faithfulness, and his love. The best chapters are, in my view, the ones in the middle of the book, where Hocking wrestles in some depth with the issues of God's omnipotence and omnipresence.

I believe that the typical lay person will enjoy this book and find some helpful insights in it. However, I am disappointed that the book does not deal more frequently with the theological terms and concepts familiar to the serious student. These could have been introduced in such a way as not to discourage the lay person, while yet making the book useful also for theological students as an introductory text in the Doctrine of God. As it stands, the publication fails to probe sufficiently the depths of theological thinking so as to be considered a theological textbook. Rather, the intended audience appears to be the non-Christian and the beginning Christian.

Also, the author's approach seems to be more apologetic than theological, with many items simply being asserted rather than reasoned out. Thoughtful readers, however, would undoubtedly appreciate wrestling with the difficult issues in a topic such as the nature of God.

In spite of my foregoing negative observations, I would like to commend Hocking and Word Books Publishers for the approach attempted in this volume. There is a need for this sort of approach. Apparently, Word Books plans to produce a series on theological topics "In Plain Language," and this is indeed a commendable project. I only hope that in future volumes the potential reader will be kept in mind who, while perhaps not wishing to wrestle with Latin, long names, historical detail, and various technical matters, nevertheless does desire to wrestle in depth with doctrine.

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