

A Response to *Discovering Biblical Equality*

Book Review by Charles H. R. Williams

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Appreciation is due to Charles H. R. Williams for his accurate and fair summary of the general contents and purposes of *Discovering Biblical Equality* (DBE) in the first part of his review, as well as his kind endorsements in his closing remarks. However, his dialogical, academic rhetoric takes on a less irenic, even confrontational, tone (“alarming, disturbing, dark and scary, a community of trolls lurking,” etc.) when he discusses Trinitarian Subordinationism (Kevin Giles) and Redemptive Hermeneutics (William Webb, et. al.).

First, regarding the question of whether the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father is, in fact, the “historical and theological” position of the Christian church, Williams minimizes the significant complexity of the ongoing debate among evangelicals. For a thorough discussion of this subject and an evenhanded representation of both positions, see *The New Evangelical Subordinationism? Perspectives of God the Father and God the Son* (2012).

Second, in his sharp accusations toward I. Howard Marshall, William Webb, and Gordon Fee, Williams falls into the old hierarchialist/traditionalist/complementarian trap, as well as straw-person argument, of confusing one’s interpretation of key biblical texts with one’s respect for the full inspiration and authority of Scripture — to which every DBE contributor subscribes. Evangelical egalitarians *and* complementarians agree on the authority of Scripture, but disagree on interpretations of key texts.

Finally, it should be noted that the Arminianist vs. Calvinist debate has no direct bearing on the contemporary evangelical gender debate — although Williams comes across as anti-Armenian. These are separate issues. The same applies to issues of relativism, postmodernism, and semi-Plagiarism. The evangelical movement towards gender mutuality in the church, home, and society is not about analyzing biblical texts “*from* an biblical egalitarian worldview,” as Williams asserts (*italic mine*). Rather, it

is about drawing enduring principles from the teachings of the Bible, understood in their original contexts, to construct a biblical worldview, that as a result turns out to be egalitarian.

REFERENCES

- Pierce, R. W., Groothuis, R. M., & Fee, G. D. (Eds.). (2005). *Discovering biblical equality: Complementarity without hierarchy* (2nd ed.). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Jowers, D. W. & House, H. W. (Eds.). (2012). *The New Evangelical Subordinationism? Perspectives of God the Father and God the Son*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Primary research interests: Theology of Gender, Israel-Palestine Conflict, Book of Daniel.

Reason for choosing to participate in this special edition: I always enjoying interacting with other scholars on the evangelical gender debate and hope to foster clarity and reconciliation.

Purpose for speaking into the conversation of gender and biblical integration: Because of my commitment to the inspiration and authority of the biblical text, I wish to make a productive contribution to the discussion that promotes a clearer understanding of the teaching of Scripture and the ways in which the church has interpreted it