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Christianity & Literature

*Christianity and Literature: Philosophical Foundations and Critical Practice** (2011) by David Lyle Jeffrey and Gregory Maillet is published by InterVarsity Press as part of the Christian Worldview Integration Series edited by J. P. Moreland and Francis J. Beckwith. Many of Dr. Jeffrey's other writings examine the question of how living together with specific literary works shapes cultural identity. Most recently he served as the editor of an anthology called *The King James Bible and the World It Made** (Baylor University Press, 2011), honoring the 400th anniversary of the appearance of the KJV. His 1996 book, *People of the Book: Christian Identity and Literary Culture** (Eerdmans) made the argument that Christians while Christians worship the Logos, the true Word of God in Christ, they do not regard language with naive idealism. "Rather, they admit to a struggle in *and out* of language for communion and identification with the Person in whom ultimate meaning resides. All language is born crippled by the desire it lives to express. . . . Our language is like the language of lovers; even when most circular and redundant, not entirely vacuous." Jeffrey's 2003 anthology, *Houses of the Interpreter: Reading Scripture, Reading Culture** (Baylor), includes essays on "Masterplot and Meaning in Biblical Narrative" and "Reading Wisely, Reading Well." Among the books recommended in the bibliography of *Christianity and Literature* are: *The Discerning Reader: Christian Perspectives on Literature and Theory*, edited by David Barratt, Roger Pooley, and Leland Ryken (Baker, 1995); Ron Hansen, *A Stay against Confusion: Essays on Faith and Fiction** (HarperCollins, 2001); Roger Lundin, *The Culture of Interpretation: Christian Faith and the Postmodern World** (Eerdmans, 1993); Denis Donoghue's *Adam's Curse: Reflections on Religion and Literature** (Notre Dame, 2001); Alan Jacobs, *A Theology of Reading: The Hermeneutics of Love** (Westview, 2001); and William Lynch, *Christ and Apollo: The Dimensions of Literary Imagination** (1960; Reprint, ISI Books, 2004). Other books that may be of interest include: Roger Lundin, editor, *There Before Us: Religion, Literature, and Culture from Emerson to Wendell Berry* (Eerdmans, 2007); Michael Edwards, *Towards a Christian Poetics* (Eerdmans, 1984); Geoffrey Hill, *Style and Faith: Essays* (Counterpoint, 2003); and Daniel E. Ritchie, *Reconstructing Literature in an Ideological Age: A Biblical Poetics and Literary Studies from Milton to Burke* (Eerdmans, 1996).

more on

Herman Dooyeweerd

Jonathan Chaplin's *Herman Dooyeweerd: Christian Philosopher of*

Disc 1

- 1 **Introduction**
- 2 **Kevin Belmonte**, on how G. K. Chesterton embraced a "defiant joy" in spite of the cynical pessimism of many of his contemporaries
- 3 **David Lyle Jeffrey & Gregory Maillet**, on why Christians cannot afford to regard literature as a mere entertaining diversion
- 4 **Mark Noll**, on what motivates anti-intellectualism among Christians and why it is a theologically indefensible prejudice

Disc 2

- 1 **Alan Jacobs**, on W. H. Auden's understanding of the vocation of "poet" and on the spiritual and historical background to Auden's 1947 book-length poem, *The Age of Anxiety*
- 2 **Jonathan Chaplin**, on the outlines and sources of the social and political thought of Herman Dooyeweerd and on his understanding of the relationship between theology and Christian philosophy

*State and Civil Society** (2011) was published by University of Notre Dame Press. Roy Clouser's *The Myth of Religious Neutrality: An Essay on the Hidden Role of Religious Belief in Theories* (Revised edition, 2005, University of Notre Dame Press) challenges the popular misconception (even among many religious people) that religion deals mostly "with morality and a person's eternal destiny rather than with the bulk of the affairs of life. Thus most of the affairs of day-to-day life are seen as neutral with respect to religious belief." By contrast, Clouser argues (following Dooyeweerd) that "religious belief controls theory making in such a way that the interpretation of the contents of a theory differs depending on the contents of the religious belief it presupposes. . . . [S]ome religious belief or other delimits an acceptable range of interpretations of the nature of whatever a hypothesis proposes. It is in this sense that . . . virtually all the major disagreements between rival theories in the sciences and in philosophy can ultimately be traced back to the differences between the religious beliefs that guide them." Clouser also wrote a much more popular book called *Knowing with the Heart: Religious Experience and Belief in God* (InterVarsity, 1999), which, from a different angle, also demonstrates how "religious belief can't be walled off from the rest of knowledge."

Other Works Mentioned

Kevin Belmonte's *Defiant Joy: The Remarkable Life and Impact of G. K. Chesterton** (2011) was published by Thomas Nelson. Mark Noll's *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind** (2011) was published by Eerdmans. The new critical edition of W. H. Auden's *The Age of Anxiety: A Baroque Eclogue** (2011), edited by Alan Jacobs, was published by Princeton University Press.

The **MARS HILL AUDIO** Journal is produced at our studio in rural central Virginia, outside of historic Charlottesville. The Journal is one of several audio products we distribute, all of them intended to encourage greater wisdom about interaction with contemporary culture.

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