

**Some Christmas recommendations**.

From Stephen McQuoid December 2013

**Exploring Christian Doctrine by Tony lane** SPCK Publishing (21 Nov 2013)

I was over in Ireland for the weekend preaching so bought a book for the plane. Published in 2013 by SPCK who usually don’t assume an evangelical position the book **Exploring Christian Doctrine** is well worth having. The author Tony Lane is the chairman of the elders at Northwood Hills Evangelical Church which is one of the Partnership churches in North West London. Tony is a significant scholar and the Professor of Historical Theology at the London School of Theology. The book is essentially his theology course at LTS and as you read it you can imagine him lecturing. It is no replacement for Wayne Grudem’s Systematic Theology, but it’s not meant to be. Tony is simply trying to open up the subject. Anyone well read in theology will just flick through because it doesn’t break new ground. However what it does very well is include what must be some of Tony’s ‘off the cuff’ comments and asides during a lectures. For example in each chapter he has shaded boxes on the page with titles such as ‘Tension to hold’, ‘sceptics corner’, ‘worship’ and ‘what do you think of my answer’. These are the product of many years of teaching, applying and answering questions.

Some chapters may cause you to ponder, for example he suggests that there is no evidence that the world was perfect at the time when Adam and Eve were living in it (p.84). He also quotes more widely than just evangelical scholars, but is not afraid to state the shortcomings of liberalism. Neither is he afraid to show where evangelicals make theological mistakes. What is useful is his insistence that those who marry the spirit of this age may be widowers in the next (p.48). All in all it is a good book with much to commend and certainly a useful teaching aid.  Makes a nice Christmas prezzie.