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The extent to which a knowledge of sixteenth-century theological doctrines can help readers interpret the works of Edmund Spenser has long been a matter of controversy. In *Interpretation and theology in Spenser* Darryl J. Gless offers a new approach: drawing on recent literary theories, he focuses less on what Spenser intended than on the ways readers might construe both the poet's works and the theological doctrines which those works invoke. Professor Gless demonstrates the seldom-admitted fact that theological texts, like literary ones, are subject to the interpretive activity of readers. Informed by this approach to Elizabethan theology, he provides a useful survey of major doctrinal concepts, and develops a thorough analysis of the first, most widely studied, book of Spenser's Elizabethan epic *The Faerie Queene*. He concludes with series of concise illustrations of ways in which theological perspectives can enrich significant moments in later, less overtly theological, passages of Spenser's great poem.

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INTERPRETATION AND  
THEOLOGY IN SPENSER

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Department of English  
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill



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*For Victoria*

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## ABBREVIATIONS

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <i>ABR</i>          | <i>American Benedictine Review</i>  |
| <i>CritI</i>        | <i>Critical Inquiry</i>   |
| <i>ELH</i>          | <i>English Literary History</i>   |
| <i>ELR</i>          | <i>English Literary Renaissance</i>   |
| Hamilton, <i>FQ</i> | Spenser, <i>The Faerie Queene</i> , ed. A. C. Hamilton, London: Longman, 1977 |
| <i>HLQ</i>          | <i>Huntington Library Quarterly</i>   |
| <i>JWCI</i>         | <i>Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes</i>                        |
| <i>MLR</i>          | <i>Modern Language Review</i>   |
| <i>MP</i>           | <i>Modern Philology</i>   |
| <i>PMLA</i>         | <i>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America</i>             |
| <i>RES</i>          | <i>Review of English Studies</i>  |
| <i>SEL</i>          | <i>Studies in English Literature</i>  |
| <i>SP</i>           | <i>Studies in Philology</i>   |
| <i>SSr</i>          | <i>Spenser Studies</i>  |
| <i>TSLL</i>         | <i>Texas Studies in Language and Literature</i>                               |