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BOOK REVIEWS & SHORT NOTICES

Archibald Alexander. *God, Creation, and Human Rebellion: Lecture Notes of Archibald Alexander from the Hand of Charles Hodge.* Edited by Travis Fentiman. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019. Pp. xxxix + 169. $22.00 (hardcover).

Archibald Alexander (1772–1851) was the first professor at Princeton Theological Seminary at its founding (1812), serving as the first systematic theologian and then in other positions until his death. Alexander was also a master preacher, bringing along his student and protégé Charles Hodge (1797–1878) on his pulpit travels when Hodge was a young student in the Seminary. Hodge, whose father died when he was six months old, revered Alexander not only as a mentor but also as a father figure and always strove to please him. In this book, we see Alexander as teacher and Hodge as student. The latter takes notes on the former's lectures in the initial loci of the systematic encyclopedia: prolegomena, theology proper, and anthropology.

They were both ardent Old Schoolers after the division of the PCUSA (1837) as well as New Side proponents from the Presbyterian division of the previous century (1741–1758), though, to Alexander's disappointment, Hodge was not as zealous a supporter of the First Great Awakening as was he. Hodge had questions and hesitations about the Awakening that the more revivalist Alexander did not share. Nevertheless, Hodge was converted in 1815 under the Calvinistic preaching of Asahel Nettleton in the Second Great Awakening.

When Alexander retired from the systematics chair in 1840, or as it was called at that point, "didactic and polemic theology," Hodge, who had been in the biblical division since 1820, gave way to Alexander's insistence that he assume the chair, a change he loathed to make, but one in which he gained his great reputation. Hodge's reluctance stemmed from his extensive training in ancient Near Eastern languages and his sense that he was more fit for biblical studies, together with the dread of being an unworthy successor to the master. He had learned not only about piety and preaching from Alexander but had also learned his theology from him, an intensely biblical and practical as well as a rational theology. Both were influenced by the Scottish Common Sense Philosophy, though not as fatally so, as Paul Helseth has shown, setting straight Sydney Ahlstrom and others who insisted that Old Princeton's embrace of such led ultimately to the seminary's undoing and giving way to liberalism (see Paul Kjoss Helseth, *"Right Reason" and the Princeton Mind: An Unorthodox Proposal* [Phillipsburg, PA: P&R, 2010].).

Given that Hodge succeeded Alexander in the chair in theology and was also influenced widely by Alexander, it is especially interesting to read Hodge's own notes from his predecessor's lectures, yielding important insight into both men. It is helpful to see what the issues were when Alexander taught Hodge compared to the

issues later in the century when Hodge published his own Systematic Theology (1872) in the last decade of his life.

In the volume before us, we have the lectures of Alexander refracted through the lens of Hodge, a doubly interesting account of the state of theology in Old Princeton in her earlier years. In seventeen fairly short chapters, Alexander's lectures cover prolegomena (including scripture), theology proper, and anthropology, not exhaustively but concisely and compellingly. These are all put forth in the form of questions, totaling five hundred, running consecutively until the end. Alexander's approach is reminiscent of Francis Turretin's, whose *Elenctics* was the primary text for the class, albeit in Latin, a tradition followed by Hodge, who also used Turretin when he became the systematician following Alexander until Hodge published his own theology.

This is a useful publication, enabling us to see how Alexander taught theology in the early years of Princeton, how Hodge, as his later successor, apprehended such, and how it shaped Hodge's own theology, providing points of comparison and contrast. One of the things that marked Old Princeton, especially among Archibald Alexander, Samuel Miller, and Charles Hodge, was a commitment to rigorous scholarship combined with fervent piety. That is in evidence in these notes, as the subject matter is treated carefully and thoughtfully as well as reverentially and biblically. Alexander cites leading Christian and secular thinkers as necessary, always treating the divine subject matter with a devotional spirit that clarifies that the subject matter was of the highest import and precious to all those to whom the Lord is dear.

—Alan D. Strange

Herman Bavinck. *The Wonderful Works of God: Instruction in the Christian Religion According to the Reformed Confession.* Introduction by R. Carlton Wynne. A republication of *Our Reasonable Faith.* Glenside, PA: Westminster Seminary Press, 2019. Pp. xxxiii + 659. $49.99 (hardcover).

One of the noteworthy developments in the recent study of Reformed theology is the renaissance of interest in the theology and writings of Herman Bavinck. The principal event and stimulus for renewed interest in Bavinck's theology was the publication of his classic four-volume *Reformed Dogmatics* in English (Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend; [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic], 2003–2008). Subsequent to the publication of this new English translation of Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics*, a one-volume abridged edition was published in 2011. In more recent years, several other important works of Bavinck have been published in English translation. At present, John Bolt, the editor of the English edition of Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics*, is spearheading an ongoing project to translate and prepare for publication an English translation of a previously unpublished study of Bavinck on the subject of Christian ethics. In addition to the translation and publication of his works in English, Bavinck's theological work has

become the focus of a Bavinck theological study society and has given rise to numerous secondary studies, including dissertations on diverse aspects of his thought.

I mention these developments to set a context for this brief notice regarding another significant illustration of renewed interest in Bavinck and his contributions to Reformed theology: the republication of an English translation of Bavinck's *Magnalia Dei* by Westminster Seminary Press.

Bavinck originally wrote this work in 1909 in a particularly productive period of his life not long after assuming the chair of theology at The Free University of Amsterdam (*Vrije Universiteit*). Though Bavinck was a successor in this chair to Abraham Kuyper, he distinguished himself as Kuyper's equal, perhaps even his superior, at least in the academic field of Reformed theology. While working on a revised and expanded version of the *Reformed Dogmatics* (1906–1911), Bavinck prepared a condensed and more popular summary of his four-volume dogmatics entitled, *The Wonderful Works of God: Instruction in the Christian Religion According to the Reformed Confession* (Dutch: *Magnalia Dei: Onderwijzing in de Christelijke Religie naar Gereformeerde* Belijdenis). First published in the Dutch language in 1909, Bavinck's *Magnalia Dei* was subsequently translated into English by Henry Zylstra and published by Eerdmans with the title *Our Reasonable Faith* (1956). Though the new Westminster Seminary Press edition of Bavinck's work is a republication of Zylstra's English translation, it properly restores Bavinck's original title and drops the misleading title utilized in the 1956 edition. Unlike the previous title, which did not come close to a "dynamically equivalent" rendering of the Dutch title, the new, accurate title captures the burden of Bavinck's entire theological project: the task of theology is to capture to the fullest extent possible the wonder and glory of the works of the triune God in creation and redemption and to do so in a way that is faithful to the testimony of Scripture and the summary of that testimony in the catholic creeds of the church and the confessions of the Reformed churches.

Because Bavinck's distillation of his dogmatics in popular form has been available to English readers for some time, this new edition does not require a great deal of comment. Bavinck summarizes the "wonderful works of God" in an order that corresponds to his more academic presentation in the *Reformed Dogmatics.* In the first eight chapters, he treats questions of introduction, the nature of revelation (how God who is "man's highest end" can be known), and the place of Scripture and the confessions in Christian theology. In the remaining sixteen chapters, he follows the usual sequence of theological topics, treating in order the doctrine of God in his works of creation and providence, the doctrine of man in the original and fallen estates, the doctrine of salvation through the means of the covenant of grace and the saving work of Christ as Mediator, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit who ministers the saving benefits of Christ's work to those who are brought into fellowship with him, the doctrine of the church, and the doctrine of the last things. What distinguishes the work throughout is the way Bavinck masterfully covers the full range of theological topics, utilizing Scripture and confession, but in a way that is accessible to a wide range of readers. Readers will discover that the high praise for Bavinck's work

among the endorsements listed in the frontispiece of this edition are not an instance of undue flattery.

My only regret regarding this new publication by Westminster Seminary Press is that it does not include headings within each of the chapters to aid the reader in following the order and sequence of topics that Bavinck discusses. Though the original Dutch edition of Bavinck's *Magnalia Dei* did not provide such headings, they would be a helpful guide for readers to follow the flow of Bavinck's thought and to find his discussion of particular topics. This problem is mitigated somewhat by the excellent subject and Scripture indexes prepared by Charles Williams for this edition. But the addition of such headings would further enhance the value of the book for a general readership.

In a brief notice like this, I trust it is permissible to conclude with my own endorsement of the book: "I am delighted that Bavinck's *Magnalia Dei* is now available in this new publication. The English title, *The Wonderful Works of God*, captures accurately the burden of Bavinck's comprehensive summary of his *Reformed Dogmatics.* In every one of the theological topics that Bavinck treats, we are encouraged to focus upon the wonderful works of the Triune God in creation and redemption. Readers will find this volume a fresh, accessible and comprehensive exposition of Reformed theology. Church members, students and teachers alike will not find a better single-volume treatment of biblical teaching than Bavinck's *Magnalia Dei*" (pp. iv–v).

—Cornelis P. Venema

Michael Behe. *Darwin Devolves: The New Science About DNA That Challenges Evolution.* San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 2019. Pp. 342. $28.99 (hardcover).

An online biography notes that Michael J. Behe is Professor of Biological Sciences at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania and a Senior Fellow at Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture. He received his Ph.D. in Biochemistry from the University of Pennsylvania in 1978. Behe's current research involves delineation of design and natural selection in protein structures. This latest book of his, like previous ones, has aroused much hostility among dogmatic neo-Darwinians, even as it has fostered admiration and appreciation among those who find a naturalist narrative woefully deficient in explaining the world as we see it.

Behe, and others, have discovered that unguided evolution, the hallmark of the secularist scientific academy, is, in fact, not the real story, certainly not the one supported by careful laboratory work over recent decades. The observed laboratory evidence, in other words, does not support the theory of evolution as Darwin and company have promulgated it. The Darwinian and neo-Darwinian supposition has been that evolution, insofar as it involves natural selection, means the bettering of species in the process of their development, or evolution. This fascinating book chronicles the surprising-to-many revelation that evolution often appears more to

involve devolution, not supporting but undermining the central conviction of Darwinism and neo-Darwinism.

Behe has long been the *bête noire* of the Darwinian establishment. As a biochemist, he made an enormous contribution to the field, and he challenged the naturalism of Darwinianism when he noted that certain cellular processes bore the mark of irreducible complexity. This means that they could not have come together "favorable" bit by bit until they could accomplish the task that they came to perform. Rather, like a Rube Goldberg machine—a mousetrap is a simple example—until all the parts needed for successful function were in place, one did not have a working structure. So, until certain cellular functions would not operate apart from a very finely tuned construction and what would appear to be intelligent design, you had nothing. Thus, such mechanisms bear evidence of design, rather than, as Darwinism insists, having been brought together over much time apart from any intelligence on the part of a designer.

Over the years, Behe has continued to research and write, finding much wanting in unguided evolution. So many things, not just at the cellular level, which is comparatively large, but from the most massive cosmic level (including the universe itself) down to quantum mechanics and the structure of DNA, show unmistakable evidence of design; in fact, they are not really explicable apart from design. Behe has for years now showed that various structures are irreducibly complex, requiring a designer, and not supportive of Darwinism and neo-Darwinism.

In his latest book, under review here, Behe argues that not only is a designer required to explain what occurs in "nature" but also that neo-Darwinism, now that we have been able to look at the development of species for some scores of years, with greater and greater precision, cannot account for what we see. We would expect, given the doctrine of natural selection, that "every day, in every way, everything is growing better and better." Even as the students of Noam Chomsky have not found his transformational grammar able to explain the development of articulate speech over the last sixty-plus years, though all assumed that it would, so neo-Darwinism and its theory of the survival of the fittest has not played out in the lab. In other words, another beautiful theory slain by an ugly gang of facts, as a friend would say.

The Darwinian process of natural selection means simply that species develop (evolve) in ways favorable to the strongest and best traits, cumulatively and over time, bringing such to better and better places and developing new and higher life forms. Behe, however, claims that such evolution as we have witnessed, particularly in our labs, has tended in more than a few cases to "Break or blunt any functional gene whose loss would increase the number of a species' offspring." This is what he means by noting what appears to be devolution instead of evolution. These "anomalies" do not support the reigning paradigm of neo-Darwinism, to use Kuhnian language and analysis. *Science* and other publications in the field claim that Behe is really looking at outliers that do not disturb "normal science" (neo-Darwinism). Behe, however, argues that such findings as he cites are not isolated and are incommensurable with neo-Darwinism, creating a crisis that heralds a coming scientific revolution and overthrow of Darwinism at some future point.

It is interesting that Harvard professor of molecular genetics Andrew Murray, in *Current Biology*, hardly a water carrier for Christians concerned about naturalism, quite recently wrote this:

> In laboratory-based experimental evolution of novel phenotypes and the human domestication of crops, the majority of the mutations that lead to adaptation are loss-of-function mutations that impair or eliminate the function of genes rather than gain-of-function mutations that increase or qualitatively alter the function of proteins. Here, I speculate that easier access to loss-of-function mutations has led them to play a major role in the adaptive radiations that occur when populations have access to many unoccupied ecological niches. (Cited from evolutionnews.org 2020/05, accessed on 10/5/20.)

As Murray proceeds in this very carefully argued article, this discovery of the "majority of mutations" being "loss-of-function" mutations does challenge the Darwinian hypothesis, even as Murray's acknowledgment of such is quite understated and phrased so not as to ruffle too many fellow scientists' feathers.

Much of the scientific establishment continues to dismiss out of hand the work in which Behe and his colleagues that criticize unguided evolution engage. The reigning neo-Darwinian paradigm, however, continues to suffer from anomalies for which it cannot account. Given the entrenched nature of this paradigm and how unthinkable it is for such secularists to entertain the notion of a creator or designer, it seems unlikely that this naturalism will ever recognize that the conflict really lies not between science and religion but between naturalism and science, as Alvin Plantinga has so ably argued. For those committed to unguided evolution, their naturalism enjoys revisionary immunity. The only way they would jettison such and embrace a supernaturalism consonant with science is either through a religious conversion or a change of thinking so fundamental and a candor so rare among unbelievers that it would be tantamount to conversion. Such neo-Darwinians would have to adopt different presuppositions. Meanwhile, Behe and his colleagues should plow ahead, showing, even as Plantinga has in philosophy, that if unguided evolution is true, the world is not behaving in such a way that corresponds to and is consonant with such evolutionary theory.

—Alan D. Strange

Richard P. Belcher, Jr. *The Fulfillment of the Promises of God: An Explanation of Covenant Theology*. Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire, Great Britain: Mentor, 2020. Pp. 324. $19.99 (paperback).

A number of years ago, John Stek wrote an article in the *Calvin Theological Journal* that lamented what he termed a "covenant overload" in Reformed theology (John H. Stek, "'Covenant' Overload in Reformed Theology," *Calvin Theological Journal* 29

[1994]:12-41.). Stek, who was at the time a professor of Old Testament theology at Calvin Theological Seminary, lamented the way in which Reformed theologians were imposing a systematic grid upon the biblical account of God's dealings with his people throughout the course of redemptive history. Rather than acknowledging the diversity of covenants (plural), Reformed theologians were inclined to flatten the story of God's work of redemption into a unified covenant framework. As a biblical theologian, Stek was concerned that an overly-systematized covenant theology was serving as a kind of hermeneutical grid that pressed the richness of the biblical writings into an artificial mold.

Although I have some sympathy for Stek's concern, I also believe his lament was overstated and possibly symptomatic of a false disjunction between biblical and systematic (dogmatic) theology. While systematic theology must be attentive to exegesis and a biblical-theological treatment of the unfolding of God's redemptive purposes in history, it must also ask questions regarding the unity and coherence of the Bible's witness. Furthermore, since the reading of the Scriptures takes place within and for the sake of the church, it is not permissible to engage the task without a sympathetic appreciation for the church's systematic summary of their teaching as this is codified in creeds and confessions. Insights from the past are not to be taken lightly, nor ought they to be disregarded carelessly. Especially in a period of history that disrespects the past and privileges the insights of the present, it is incumbent upon biblical and systematic theologians to engage each other and mutually enrich their respective disciplines.

I mention this because Richard P. Belcher, Jr.'s book on covenant theology expressly seeks to combine the best fruits of biblical and systematic theology. Belcher, who teaches Old Testament theology at Reformed Theological Seminary Charlotte, is not only a specialist in Old Testament studies but also a theologian who subscribes to the "system of doctrine" set forth in the Westminster Standards. This is a rare combination among contemporary theologians, who typically view the disciplines of biblical and systematic theology as alternative approaches that enjoy at best a wary truce in their relation to the other. Belcher sees the matter differently and informs his reader at the outset that he aims to engage the biblical data directly, but in a way that demonstrates the fidelity of the Westminster Standard's treatment of covenant theology to that data. As he describes it, "one of the purposes of this book is to help seminary students, elders, and lay people understand covenant theology and to navigate the various approaches to it that are prominent today. Then, other approaches will be compared to the viewpoint of the Westminster Standards" (p. 16).

To achieve his purpose in writing what might be regarded suspiciously by some as "yet another" book on covenant theology, Belcher begins with a broad overview or introduction to covenant theology in the first two chapters. In these chapters, he acknowledges the difficulty of covenant theology and the diversity of opinion on a number of issues, even within the circle of confessionally Reformed theologians. Noting that Reformed theology has traditionally been "bi-covenantal," distinguishing the pre-fall "covenant of works" from the post-fall "covenant of grace," Belcher rightly maintains that this distinction was an important basis for interpreting the work of Christ, particularly his active and passive obedience as the

basis for our justification and restoration to favor with God. As chapter 7 of the Westminster Confession of Faith describes the pre-fall and post-fall covenants, the work of Christ provides a basis for fallen sinners, who are liable to condemnation and death due to Adam's original and their own actual sins, to be restored to favor with God and granted the inheritance of eternal life. In his treatment of traditional Reformed bi-covenantalism, Belcher helpfully identifies some of the key questions that have often been controverted: Should we call the pre-fall relationship between God and (the human race in) Adam a "covenant"? Should we denominate the pre-fall covenant a "covenant of works" (most common), a "covenant of nature," or a "covenant of life"? Are there "elements of grace" in the pre-fall covenant relationship? And what is the connection between the covenant of works and the gospel?

After these introductory chapters, the bulk of Belcher's study consists of a series of chapters that treat the initiation and administration of the post-fall covenant of grace (chapters 3–8). In these chapters, Belcher traces the biblical record of the covenant of grace in its unity and progressive unfolding. Readers familiar with Reformed theology will find Belcher's treatment both a distinctly Reformed (Westminster Standards) and biblically-based handling of the unfolding of God's gracious covenant with his people throughout the course of redemptive history. Subsequent to the chapters that unfold the various administrations of the covenant of grace, Belcher engages a number of issues that have been recently disputed regarding covenant theology within and outside of the Reformed theological community. These chapters address a wide range of representative authors and viewpoints in more recent discussions of covenant theology, including the following: some minor variations within the framework of Reformed theology (e.g., the views of O. Palmer Robertson and John Murray), as well as some more significant departures from the historical Reformed view (e.g., W. J. Dumbrell, Paul R. Williamson, "federal vision"); a review and extensive evaluation of the formulations of Meredith Kline, especially his claim that the Mosaic economy was "in some sense" an administration or republication of the covenant of works; and an extensive review of formulations of the doctrine of the covenant among "confessional Baptists" and the viewpoint known as "progressive covenantalism" (Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum). Belcher's study concludes with a chapter on the benefits of covenant theology, noting how it helps us see the history of redemption as one that expresses God's plan to redeem his people through a gracious covenant whose promises are fulfilled ultimately in Jesus Christ.

As my review of the range of topics addressed by Belcher indicates, this book fulfills the promise of its subtitle, "an explanation of covenant theology." Few books provide a more competent overview of classic Reformed covenant theology. Belcher consistently adheres to his stated purpose to give the reader a biblical and confessional account of the consensus viewpoint. His criticisms of those whose formulations stray more or less from the consensus viewpoint are invariably presented in an irenic and charitable fashion. One of the strengths of Belcher's study is his willingness to grant diverse formulations of some issues in covenant theology, so long as these differences do not adversely impact key features of the gospel

message regarding Christ's saving work, especially in respect to the doctrine of justification. For example, though he finds Meredith Kline's views on the Mosaic covenant to be problematic, he nonetheless gratefully acknowledges Kline's clarity regarding the doctrine of justification upon the basis of Christ's active and passive obedience.

In addition to fulfilling his purpose to provide an introduction to Reformed covenant theology, Belcher provides a helpful review of present and ongoing debates that church members and theologians will likely confront today. Readers who want an accessible, competent, and comprehensive introduction to covenant theology, as well as the state of present discussion about disputed issues, will find Belcher's study a most helpful resource.

—Cornelis P. Venema

Robert J. Cara. *Cracking the Foundation of the New Perspective on Paul: Covenantal Nomism Versus Reformed Covenantal Theology*. Reformed Exegetical and Doctrinal Studies. Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire, Great Britain: Mentor, 2017. Pp. 312. $19.99 (paperback).

For a period of time, the so-called "new perspective" on Paul appeared to be on the way to become the default position among contemporary biblical scholars, especially those whose special interest was in New Testament and particularly Pauline studies. With the exception of some confessionally Lutheran and Reformed theologians, advocacy of a new perspective upon Paul's doctrine of justification and his relation to his ancestral religion, Judaism, had largely captured the imagination of many. However, the attractiveness and cogency of the new perspective has waned in the face of new studies that have contested a number of the basic foundations of the new perspective.

Robert J. Cara, Provost, Chief Academic Officer, and Hugh and Sallie Reaves Professor of New Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary (Charlotte), is among those who have authored studies that raise serious questions regarding the new perspective. As the title and subtitle of his study indicate, Cara's specific aim is to "crack the foundation" of the new perspective on Paul by contesting one of its principal claims. This claim is associated with the name of E. P. Sanders, whose influential study of "Second Temple Judaism," *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, laid the foundation for building a new perspective on Paul. According to leading proponents of a new perspective on Paul (e.g., N. T. Wright and James D. G. Dunn), Sander's "new" view of Judaism requires a "new" view of Paul.

Cara introduces his study by noting the foundational importance of Sanders's new view of Second Temple Judaism that he denominated "covenantal nomism." Based upon his reading of the sources within the Second Temple period prior to and contemporaneous with the writing of the New Testament, Sanders claimed that the Judaism of Paul's day was not a "works righteousness" religion. Utilizing a paradigm that distinguishes religions by the way they view "getting into" and

"staying in" the community of those who belong to God, Sanders maintained that the common view within Judaism in Paul's day was that members of God's covenant community "get in" the community by grace or election, but "stay in" by works. Membership in the community of God's people was based upon God's gracious initiative in electing Israel and granting them corresponding privileges such as the law and provisions for repenting and making atonement for sin. Though the members of God's covenant people, Israel, were obliged to obey God's law in order to maintain their membership and favored status, they did not become members upon the basis of their own performance of good works. According to Sanders's interpretation of Second Temple Judaism, it is no longer possible to maintain that Paul formulated his doctrine of justification to oppose some or another form of "legalism." No such legalism can be found within the Judaism with which Paul was acquainted, and therefore Paul's opposition to the Judaizers must be addressed to a different problem than what the traditional interpretation of Paul has assumed. At the end of the day, there is no evidence to show that Second Temple Judaism was legalistic, and therefore the traditional assumption that Paul was opposing such legalism in his New Testament letters is without merit (no pun intended).

While Cara presents a biblical and theological case against other features of the new perspective on Paul, the main burden of his book is focused upon the cracks or weaknesses in Sanders's case. Based upon a careful reading of a variety of representative sources for an understanding of Second Temple Judaism, Cara summarizes his "primary thesis" to be that "there are many examples of works righteousness (Pelagian and semi-Pelagian versions) in Second Temple Judaism literature and Sanders's uniform covenantal nomism is mistaken. Hence, the new-perspective-on-Judaism foundation crumbles and the NPP house concerning justification comes tumbling down" (pp. 198–99). Cara also aims to make a case for a "second thesis," namely, that writers who defend the new perspective on Paul generally ignore or misinterpret passages in Paul's writings like Ephesians 2:8–10, Titus 3:4–7, and 2 Timothy 1:8–10. New perspective authors often ignore these passages because they judge them not to belong to the authentic letters of Paul. Or, even when they acknowledge them to belong to a corpus of writings that exhibit Paul's influence, they do not acknowledge the way they express a strong theology of grace in which human works performed in obedience to the law play no role either in gaining entrance into favor with God or, in the final judgment, remaining in God's favor through works.

Cara begins his book with two introductory chapters that provide the framework for his study. In the first chapter, "Foundation of the New Perspective on Paul," he seeks to demonstrate the importance of Sanders's thesis for the new perspective. Since new perspective writers proceed from the conviction that Second Temple Judaism was not legalistic, they assume that the problem to which Paul's doctrine was addressed must lie elsewhere. For most new perspective writers, Paul's doctrine was addressed to a kind of Jewish "nationalism" or "exclusivism" that required the Gentiles to obey certain "boundary marker" requirements in the law, namely, the rite of circumcision, prohibitions regarding the eating of certain foods, and the obligations regarding feast-day observances. After demonstrating the critical

importance of Sanders's thesis to the development of a new perspective on Paul's view of justification, Cara's second chapter presents an overview of the traditional Reformed interpretation of Paul and a critical assessment of what Sanders's means by "covenantal nomism." When Sanders's notion of "covenantal nomism" is measured by the traditional Reformed view of "legalistic works righteousness," Cara judges it, ironically, to be in its own way a form of legalism. In Cara's estimation, Sanders's argument, and its use by new perspective authors, fail to show that Second Temple Judaism is not a form of works righteousness. If those whom God graciously grants entrance into his covenant community are required to perform works of obedience to the law in order to maintain their status as members of the community and to be justified in the final judgment, the main tenet of legalism, whether in a Pelagian or semi-Pelagian form, is granted.

By his own admission, the central and most important chapter in Cara's book is the one that treats the question of "Works Righteousness in Jewish Literature?" (chapter 3). In this chapter, Cara works his way carefully through various categories of Jewish literature in the Second Temple Period. These categories include apocrypha, Old Testament pseudepigrapha, Dead Sea Scrolls, and Rabbinic Literature. While Cara acknowledges differing degrees and forms of legalism in the various categories of literature that he canvases, he identifies a pervasive presence of some kind of legalism in all of them. In this respect, he confirms the presence of the kind of evidence for legalism in Second Temple Judaism that were noted in an earlier study, *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, edited by the well-known evangelical New Testament scholar, D. A. Carson. (See *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, ed. D.A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark Seifrid, 2 vols [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001-2004].). Upon the basis of his consideration of these sources, Cara concludes that the foundation of the new perspective of Paul is cracked and broken, incapable of sustaining the weight that is placed upon it.

In my estimation, Cara's study is a welcome addition to the growing body of literature that challenges many of the assumptions and arguments of the advocates of the new perspective on Paul. Cara confirms and adds further evidence to the case for legalism in Second Temple Judaism that earlier studies, including the volume edited by Carson, had identified. His study will prove useful to those who have an interest in evaluating the claims of new perspective authors, especially their confidence in Sanders's case for what he calls "covenantal nomism." Cara adds to the value of his book in this respect by providing a lengthy appendix, "Overview of Judaism's Literary Sources," and an extensive bibliography of sources. His book is a worthy contribution on a subject of continuing importance.

—Cornelis P. Venema

Elizabeth Agnew Cochran. *Protestant Virtue and Stoic Ethic*s. T&T Clark Enquiries in Theological Ethics. New York, NY: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2019. Pp. x + 216. $39.95 (paperback).

As Christian theologians have looked for an alternative to secular perspectives on ethics, many Christian theologians have turned to the Christian tradition of virtue ethics. By this, they mean, what type of person ought we to be? What characteristics or virtues should characterize the good person? Perhaps the most prominent proponent of virtue ethics in the history of the Christian church is Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas developed his ethic in dialogue with Aristotle. (For a good discussion of how and to what degree Aquinas adopted an Aristotelean approach, see Josef Pieper, *Guide to Thomas Aquinas,* trans., Richard and Clara Winston [San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1986] pp. 43–54.) In light of this fact, it is not surprising to see many Roman Catholic (and Protestant) theologians turn to the teachings of Aristotle for the formulation of a modern virtue ethic. As Stanley Hauweras and Charles Pinches put it: "Why choose Aristotle? At least one answer is that Aquinas found Aristotle such a fruitful resource for his account of the virtues—and we believe Aquinas's account of the virtues remains unmatched in Christian theology" (Stanley Hauweras and Charles Pinches, *Christians Among the Virtues: Theological Conversations with Ancient and Modern Ethics* [Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997], p. xiii. They go on to say: "for those of us who work within or nearby the Catholic tradition, Aristotle remains an essential conversation partner" [p. xiv].).

Elizabeth Agnew Cochran is one who commends this emphasis on virtue ethics. However, she suggests that Protestant theology has a unique vision for virtue rooted in its theological perspective and doctrine of justification by faith alone. In her view, a Protestant view of virtue ethics sees faith as the root virtue and love as the central virtue that develops as the fruit of faith. She writes:

> This Protestant ethic envisions virtuous character as embodied in faith. Faith discerns God's benevolent oversight of the world both in reflecting on God's radical self-revelation in the incarnate Jesus Christ and in recognizing the ways in which God encounters individual human beings. Faith is fully embodied as this discernment is coupled with consent to God, an extended and dispositional stance of trust in God's providential goodness and love for the created order. In turn, faith places us in a relationship with God that informs a more complete understanding of our own place in the universe, and as we feel and show gratitude and love for God, we simultaneously grow in love for our neighbors, recognizing that all created beings share a relation because of our common relation to God. This love guides and orders our understanding of the value of other possible goods so that we can determine when to embrace particular emotions and when to resist them (pp. 195–96).

She goes on to say: "Faith has a value in the Christian life that differentiates faith from other possible goods, and after justification, it functions as a sustained

disposition through which human beings pursue and cultivate the characteristic goods and ends for which they were created" (p. 91). She defines virtue this way: "A virtue is a moral disposition or character trait that benefits its possessor and leads to her flourishing, and through its relation to this end of flourishing, a virtue can be said to make its possessor a 'good human being'" (p. 92). This description gives primacy to faith and love as the heart of a Protestant virtue ethic. It also gives us a glimpse of the value of a Protestant virtue ethic and suggests that Protestants have a unique contribution to make to the broader discussion of virtue ethics.

In developing this virtue ethic, Cochran suggests that Protestants may have a better discussion partner than Aristotle for this development: the Stoic philosophers. Cochran explains that there is significant overlap between the way that the Stoics developed their ethic and the way that Protestants developed theirs. She proposes that interaction with the Stoics is helpful because they also reflected on many of the same issues that arise in the formulation of a Protestant virtue ethic. This can enrich a renewed formulation of Protestant virtue ethics. It is important to note here that Cochran is not saying that Protestant virtue ethics is dependent on Stoic ethics (p. 196). However, she argues that "in thinking about expanding the historical sources that we might consider for further *clarifying* a Christian ethic, we would be remiss to overlook Protestant thinkers' recurrent interest in Stoic thought" (p. 196; emphasis hers). What this means is that Stoicism "complements and enriches current studies of virtue and Christian thought, and challenges ethicists to think about the scope of virtue ethics in increasingly expanding ways" (p. 45). Cochran recognizes that we can look at various philosophies to help us sharpen and clarify our thinking, but, according to Cochran, Stoicism has been one of those philosophies particularly helpful to Protestants and can be again.

Cochran recognizes there will be objections to the use of the Stoics in the formulation of a Protestant virtue ethic. The first objection comes from modern virtue ethicists. These ethicists are looking for an alternative to the impasse of modern ethics rooted in the Enlightenment. (See Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* [Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007].) They see Stoic ethics as a precursor to Enlightenment ethics, principally because of its adoption by various proponents of the Scottish Enlightenment. Cochran points out that there may be another reason for the connection between Scotland and the Stoics: Scottish Presbyterian theology. She notes that there are Stoic affinities with Reformed theology: virtue as revealed in divine character that humans are to imitate, virtue acquired through a transformative experience, and humans being morally accountable for their actions and "radically dependent upon divine providence" (p. 21). Cochran also suggests that current scholarship shows "the continuity among ancient ethical schools, including Stoicism and Aristotelianism, that differentiates them from modern approaches to ethics" (p. 11). She cites as an example of this the work of Julia Annas, who argues that we should understand both Aristotle and the Stoics "in a teleological framework," which could be contrasted with modern ethics (p. 12). Cochran is arguing that modern virtue ethicists' critique of Stoicism may have overstated Stoicism's discontinuity with other ancient ethical traditions as well as its continuity with Enlightenment ethics.

The second objection is that Stoicism presents a competing theological system to Christianity, and so is not a good discussion partner for a Protestant virtue ethic. Of course, every Christian theologian would agree that there are significant and crucial differences between Stoicism and Christianity. Cochran suggests that these differences would include Stoicism's purported view of God as impersonal, its *apatheia*, its high view of moral nature, and its diminution of love, especially in its rejection of grief (paraphrase of pp.13–15). She argues, however, that the contrast is probably overstated. Either way, she says that whatever the differences, there are enough similarities to be helpful in clarifying and thinking through a modern Protestant approach to ethics. In some ways, the proof will be in the eating. If a person finds it helpful and illuminating, then that person will be inclined to accept these arguments. If not, they will not. So, what does Cochran see as the similarities? The similarity between Protestant faith and Stoic assent to providence and that both Protestant faith and Stoic assent lead to love; the need for a "conversion" experience; the emphasis on moral accountability and the divine providential government of all things; and the calibration of emotion to faith (for Protestants) or assent (for Stoics).

As we look at these four areas, they do seem to provide evidence of a potentially helpful dialogue between Protestantism and Stoicism on these issues. However, Cochran's discussion is plagued by a lack of clarity on the Protestant theological tradition. She explains the Protestant tradition in confusing ways and, at several points, misstates it. As we will see below, her case for continuity could actually be strengthened by greater clarity in stating the Protestant tradition.

The Overlap with Stoicism: Assent to Providence

According to Cochran, the heart of the Roman Stoic ethic is assent to God's providence. This willingness to accept what God brings about through providence was at the heart of their philosophy. This assent involves an intellectual apprehension of God's providential government of the world as well as a moral element of saying "yes" to it, i.e., assent. This is similar to a Protestant perspective on faith. Cochran says:

> First, although faith is not restricted to mere academic belief, it is nonetheless rooted in a propositional belief in God's goodness, just as stoic assent emerges from an intellectual recognition of divine goodness. Second, while faith is propositionally rooted, it is more adequately understood as a disposition of trust in God akin to the moral dimension of assent (p. 94).

In other words, faith embraces Christ but also trusts in the divine goodness in His providence in a way that is structurally similar to the Stoic view of assent. (See a good example of how this is tied together in the *Heidelberg Catechism*, Q/A 1 and Q/A 26–28 in *The Heidelberg Catechism in German, Latin, and English* [New York, NY: Charles Scribner, 1863], pp. 131–132 and 160–161.) There is a primacy of

assent in the Roman Stoic ethic, just as there is a primacy of faith in the Protestant ethic.

What is more striking is the connection between assent and love in the Stoics that is parallel to faith and love in Protestants. Considering Stoic ethics, Cochran explains that as one sees God's government of the world and assents to it, that person can also assent to the world and the people in it. This develops a *eupatheia* (good emotion) toward others that can be called love and affection. She says: "for the Roman Stoics, impartial love for all beings emerges as our trust in divine providence increases" (p. 76). She compares this view to Calvin and Edwards, who emphasize the connection of faith and love: "Ultimately, an understanding of faith necessarily embodied in love more adequately represents the core of a Protestant virtue ethic than does a virtue ethic that isolates faith from love" (p. 106). She notes that Edwards, in his book *The Nature of True Virtue*, "clearly aligns true virtue with benevolence, a general love for God and the created world as a whole" (p. 108). It is not hard to see the similarity of Edwards' view of virtue and that of the Stoics.

Cochran makes less of this similarity than she could because she misstates the Protestant theological tradition. Throughout her book, she misses key distinctions in Protestant theology that could have strengthened her case. In this case, the similarity between assent and faith and assent's relation to *eupatheia* and faith's relation to love are strong. It would seem that this would provide a context for a Protestant virtue ethic that emphasizes the primacy of the *virtue* of faith. However, Cochran warns, "historical Protestant theologians resist the notion that faith is a virtue . . . ." (p. 92). This is not an accurate picture of "historical Protestant theologians." While recognizing that faith does not justify because it is a virtue, in other respects, it *certainly* is a virtue, according to the Protestant tradition. Here are a couple of examples. The Southern Presbyterian theologian Robert Lewis Dabney says "that we define faith as a holy exercise of the soul; but we do not attribute its instrumentality to justify, to its holiness . . . . It is neither strange nor unreasonable, that a thing should have two or more attributes . . ." (Robert Lewis Dabney, *Systematic Theology* [St. Louis, MO: Presbyterian Publishing Company, 1878], p. 607; Cf. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 Vols. [New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887], 3.108: "Faith is not only the condition of the Spirit's dwelling in us as the source of spiritual life, but we live by faith. That is, the continuance and exercise of spiritual life involve and suppose the constant exercise of faith. We live by exercising faith in God, in his attributes, in his providence, in his promises, and in all the truths which He has revealed."). The Genevan theologian of the 17th century, Francis Turretin, calls faith "a universal virtue" because of its "various relations" (Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison Jr., 3 Vols. [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1994], 15.7.2). This is because "[f]aith is viewed in different lights: either in the act itself of justification or in the person of the justified or in the effect of justification. In the person justified it is well called 'the beginning of righteousness'; not imputed but inherent because it is the root of all virtue" (Turretin, *Institutes*, 16.7.15). These examples could be easily multiplied. Clearly, Protestant theologians have had no problem calling faith a virtue, even though it does not justify because of its virtue. Indeed, the virtue of faith

has primacy in a way similar to assent in Stoic virtue ethics. This theme is worth developing as one considers a formulation of a Protestant virtue ethic.

The Overlap with Stoicism: Conversion

One intriguing aspect of Stoic thought is, in the words of Cochran, the "Stoic conviction of paramount importance for this project . . . that virtue is unified, singular, and transformative good" (p. 55). This commitment to the unity of the virtues leads the Stoics "to an understanding of the virtues acquired through a marked experience of transformation akin to a conversion" (p. 60). She believes that there is a parallel to the Protestant view:

> [T]he Stoic understanding of virtue as a unity and conception of virtue as acquired all at once offers an entry point for reflecting on how Protestants can intelligibly advocate a view of virtue that allows for some measure of linear growth while simultaneously retaining an insistent openness to the interruption of this process by the transformative workings of a particularistic grace (p. 43).

The Stoics can speak of a definitive transformation, but they also describe a process of growth. This interesting way of thinking about virtue provides a place for Protestants to enter the discussion comparing it to their own view of conversion.

Cochran notes that for Protestants, conversion is both definitive and then gradual throughout life. Note that She is right to say that *conversion* does two things: "[F]irst, it restores their relationship with God in a manner that changes their status before God; and second, it equips them with moral capabilities that are lacking in persons who have not undergone conversion" (p. 116). She confirms this from Calvin: "Calvin can also speak of conversion as gradual. For example, in his 1557 Commentary on the Psalms, he could 'characterize conversion itself as a gradual process through which a Christian is formed in holiness, and reformed in God's image, over time'" (p. 119). This definitive and gradual approach to conversion has a promising opening for interaction with the Stoics. The problem is that Cochran brings in confusion on this point by speaking of justification as if it were what Protestants would generally call "sanctification." For example, she explains justification this way: "First, justification constitutes a relational change between a Christian and God. . . . [Second,] justification introduces traits that are qualitatively distinct from preceding experiences in a person's life" (p. 121). She says that justification changes a person "decisively through equipping her with concrete moral capacities that are wholly lacking in the unregenerate" (p. 123). This is not what the Protestant view of *justification* is. Justification does not introduce new "traits." It changes one's status, as she rightly notes.

Cochran is on the right track with seeing a parallel here, however. Conversion is definitive and progressive. For the Stoics, the question is, how can you have progress in virtue when virtue is one, complete, and unified? This is similar to the point that Edwards makes in a quote cited by Cochran: "All the graces of Christianity always go together, so that where there is one, there are all; and when one is wanting, all are

wanting" (p. 110). How can you have progress if all the graces "go together"? As James puts it: "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it" (James 2:10). *The Heidelberg Catechism* demonstrates the issue. In discussing the misery of our condition, the Catechism makes clear that God requires perfect obedience and that all sin deserves the just wrath of God against sin. So, how can we talk about humans who disobey constantly having virtue in any sense? The Catechism shows one way to make that distinction in Q&A 114: "Can those who are converted to God keep these commandments perfectly? Answer. No: but even the holiest men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of this obedience; yet so, that with earnest purpose they begin to live, not only according to some, but according to all the commandments of God." There is a general and real beginning that is consistent with the broad picture of virtue laid out in the law that forms a sort of outline of virtue. However, we are very far from the full picture of virtue that God created humans to show forth. This theological question of how works can be good and virtue can be real in light of the perfection demanded in the law may be a more fruitful point of discussion with the Stoics in this matter.

The Overlap with Stoicism: Free Will & Providence

A third area of convergence of Protestant virtue with Stoic ethics is in the area of providence and free will. Cochran writes: "Luther, Calvin, and Edwards all affirm that human beings are in some ways subject to necessity. At the same time, all three thinkers indicate that human beings are morally accountable for their actions, a conviction that is theologically crucial for preserving God's character" (p. 159). This has a strong parallel in the Stoics: "The Stoics are helpful conversation partners for this task because they advance a philosophical framework that couples moral responsibility with a conception of human beings as subject to a certain kind of necessity" (p. 137). The conversation on free will and determinism had been going on a long time before the Reformation and even before the coming of Christ. Knowing this, it is not surprising that we can find insight from this discussion. In the Stoics, we have a similar perspective to that of Reformed Protestantism, including Luther, Calvin, and Edwards.

It is important here to distinguish between the relation of free will to God's providence and free will in conversion. The similarity is in the former, not the latter. The Stoics clearly have a stronger view of human reason's capacity for good on its own, but it is still "instructive because it gives rise to an understanding of moral agency that lies partly in recognizing oneself as subject to some measure of necessity caused by divine providence" (p. 169). Cochran is concerned, however, that "Calvin makes clear that God is the author of human actions after conversion so that humans do not participate in achieving the good *in any sense*" (p. 165, emphasis added). This is a strong statement. She notes that we need to have an "understanding of humans as, in some sense, the authors of their own actions" so that we can have an "adequate understanding of moral agency in humans" (p. 167). She believes that "their discussions of free will prove inadequate for maintaining an account of moral agency appropriate for this growth" (p. 167).

Is this an accurate perspective on Calvin or the Reformed tradition? Does he reject believers from achieving the good "in any sense"? In his discussion of Philippians 2:12–13 he says, "Paul does not reason here as to how far our ability extends, but simply teaches that God acts in us in such a manner, that he, at the same time, does not allow us to be inactive, but exercises us diligently, after having stirred us up by a secret influence" (John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, trans. John Pringle [Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1851], p. 69). Calvin says in the same place, "it is our part to embrace by faith what he gives, and by obedience act suitably to his calling; but we have neither from ourselves. Hence we act only when he has prepared us for acting" (Calvin, *Commentaries*, p. 69). This sort of distinction is rather common. Turretin explains it well. He distinguishes between the first moment of regeneration when human beings are passive to the subsequent change in which they are active.

> The question does not concern the second stage of conversion in which it is certain that man is not merely passive but cooperates with God (or rather operates under him). Indeed, he actually believes and converts himself to God; while being acted upon, he acts; and being regenerated and moved by God, he moves himself to the exercise of new life. (15.5.2)

This indicates we do participate in achieving the good *in some sense*. What Protestants have resisted is *an unqualified sense* of free actions in the Christian life without a recognition of the necessity of the gracious influx of God's power in order to do them. These quotations demonstrate that there are probably even more opportunities for interaction between Stoics and Protestants on this issue than Cochran might conceive.

The Overlap with Stoicism: Emotions

At first blush, the Stoic perspective on emotions may seem to be contrary to the biblical picture of emotions. The idea of *apatheia* often strikes people as rejecting all emotion. However, Cochran explains that a more nuanced perspective is needed. "*Apatheia* is best understood as a counterpart to virtuous assent, a means through which moral agents work to align their emotions with the virtue of consenting to divine providence" (p. 80). Seneca distinguishes being moved by impressions to surrendering oneself to impressions (p. 84). A more nuanced understanding would recognize that "the Stoics simultaneously stress that virtue can still be compatible with certain affective mental states" (p. 86). They are the *eupatheiai*. These emotions include certain types of love and friendship, as well as joy, reverence, and longing.

Explained in that way, the Stoic perspective is much more compatible with a biblical and Protestant conception of virtue. Edwards has a caution about emotions. He "indirectly tempers the place of emotions in the Christian life by upholding religious affections, rather than emotions or passions per se, and aligning these affections with the will informed by reason" (p. 175). Luther believed that anger was

legitimate at times, but it needed to be properly calibrated to one's situation. He writes: "Anger is sometimes necessary and proper. But be sure that you use it correctly. You are commended to get angry, not on your own behalf, but on behalf of your office and of God: you must not confuse the two, your person and your office" (p. 177). She sees something similar in Calvin's discussion of grief: "Christians should therefore not eradicate their grief, Calvin concludes, but instead should 'bridle' this emotion" (p. 188).

Cochran concludes from all this that Stoic and Protestant perspectives on emotions are much closer than the common stereotype might indicate. Both groups believe that emotion should be calibrated to a proper perspective of the world. For example, she explains that "Calvin's understanding of reason as ruling the soul is so decisive that he is ultimately consistent with the Stoics in suggesting that the remedy for problematic emotions lies in intellectual meditation on the goodness of divine providence" (p. 183). She concludes that Protestants can have a fruitful dialogue with Stoics on how to calibrate emotion to their principles:

> Stoic *apatheia* need not require rejecting all emotional states and instead treats virtues as a singular standard through which a moral agent can assess the appropriateness of a given emotion. A Protestant understanding of the moral status of emotions shares with the Stoics this fundamental conviction that attention to virtue is central to discerning whether a certain emotion should be pursued (p. 185).

A proper view of emotion is crucial to obtaining moral excellence or virtue. Both Protestants and Stoics believe that emotions need to be calibrated to fit with an overarching theological vision.

Conclusion

The renewed emphasis on virtue ethics in the 20th century opens up many avenues for Christian theologians to reflect on how their theological perspective integrates with a flourishing human life. For many Christian theologians, Aristotle provides a helpful discussion partner on how to develop this perspective. Elizabeth Agnew Cochran has made a significant contribution to this discussion by pointing out that there are other helpful ancient discussion partners that can contribute to our formulation of a virtue ethic. In the Stoics, Cochran sees one such helpful partner. She suggests a parallel between Protestantism and the Stoics in the basic structure of the relationship of faith and love, the unity of virtue, providence and free will, and the calibration of emotion to the content of faith. She seems to have proved her case that the Stoics are a helpful discussion partner for Protestants; however, her case falls short to some degree because she misses some of the nuances of the Protestant theological tradition. As demonstrated above, this clearer statement of the Protestant tradition would strengthen her thesis, not detract from it.

—Wes White

Brandon D. Crowe. *The Hope of Israel: The Resurrection of Christ in the Acts of the Apostles*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020. Pp. xvi + 239. $29.99 (paperback).

The question of the resurrection's place in the apostolic gospel has been a driving concern for the field of New Testament studies for the past several decades. What started with Richard Gaffin's justly famous dissertation has expanded beyond the Pauline letters and moved throughout various parts of the New Testament canon. While Christians have always known that the resurrection is of first importance (see 1 Cor. 15:4, 17), various interpreters, even influential ones, have missed the true significance of the Easter day event. Brandon Crowe's newest book, *The Hope of Israel*, takes the insights of older scholars, especially Richard Gaffin, and applies a resurrection lens to the *Acts of the Apostles*, offering readers a well-crafted and articulate analysis of *how* Luke places Christ's resurrection at the center of his history of the early church.

The significance of Crowe's thesis lies in its scope rather than its basic subject. In *The Hope of Israel*, Crowe argues that "the resurrection of Christ is one of the major emphases of Acts, which unifies and provides coherence for the theology of Luke's second volume" (p. 5). The second half of that sentence is key to understanding the book's argument. Scholars have long recognized that Luke emphasizes the resurrection in Acts. Very few, though, have sought to lay out in detail the way that the resurrection actually makes sense of the book as a whole. In Crowe's reading of Acts, it is not enough simply to showcase a resurrection theology. By interacting with the important works of Kevin Anderson and Daniel Marguerat, among others, Crowe picks up where they left off and pushes for a more comprehensive account of the Resurrection in Acts, one that places Christ's resurrection in the "warp and woof" of the text, holding together all its various threads.

Crowe divides his work evenly into two sections. The first section is concerned with providing the biblical material necessary to substantiate the thesis of the book. Carefully working through a number of significant episodes in the narrative of Acts, Crowe demonstrates resurrection as an exegetical centerpiece. Though much of Crowe's exegesis borrows from other thinkers, he displays a careful eye for the shape of the narrative, highlighting lesser-known scenes (or scenes not usually associated with a resurrection theology) to produce a richly textured account of how the resurrection can be found in the book. Crowe does not attempt an exhaustive reading, but a representative one, a reading that establishes the main foundations of his argument. His exegesis is largely persuasive—the resurrection appears throughout Acts, Luke explicitly and implicitly building out a robust theology. Still, the representative treatment felt a little rushed at times. Though intended for a more popular audience than an academic monograph, one may still wish that Crowe had taken more space to comb through the biblical material.

After putting forth the exegetical case, Crowe moves into the second half of the book, where he concerns himself with the theological significance of the resurrection in the book of Acts. And Crowe does not simply synthesize his findings to identify a

peculiarly "Lukan" theology of the resurrection. Rather, Crowe works to show how the resurrection in Acts actually contributes to the very mechanics of theology, specifically Reformed theology. Here Crowe proves himself a proper successor of the great biblical theologians whose portraits line the halls of Westminster. Beginning with the resurrection and its place in the *historia salutis*, a common trope since Ridderbos and Gaffin, Crowe moves to the place of the resurrection in the *ordo salutis* and the uniform application of salvation throughout redemptive history. Together, these two chapters provide a wonderful example of what a healthy marriage between biblical theology and systematic theology can look like. The two complement and enhance each rather than work to the other's detriment. Reformed theology has long sought to hold the two disciplines in a proper proportion, and Crowe handles that beautifully. Because of this, Crowe interacts with figures not typically associated with or quoted in modern biblical studies. For instance, what other book written by a professor of New Testament in recent memory cites Francis Turretin's *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* thirty-three times? Though some may balk at the inclusion of such writers in a monograph on Acts, Crowe's concern with the historical and systematic approaches to the resurrection as it relates to his interpretation of Acts reveals his deep appreciation for Reformed orthodoxy and its exegetical awareness. With today's talk of theological interpretation of Scripture, Crowe makes a good case for finding able and trustworthy forerunners in forefathers of Reformed orthodoxy. If for nothing else, readers would do well to follow Crowe's example of following the exegetical thread of Reformed and confessional thought to bring out the riches and the insights too often ridiculed and disregarded.

The last two chapters of the book, still concerned with the theological significance of the resurrection in Acts, give brief treatments of two ancillary, though important, ways that a rigorous analysis of the Resurrection in Acts pushes towards theology. These are the issues of canon and church history. While looking at the former, Crowe argues that the apostolic Resurrection preaching serves as a defense of the Scriptures and suggests a "Christological maximalist" approach to hermeneutics. Though offering only tentative conclusions, such a hermeneutic could offer several suggestive exegetical implications pushing forward the discussion of a properly apostolic reading of Scripture.

Because the book straddles the line between academic and popular, several different audiences will find this resource helpful. Pastors preaching through Acts will be able to organize their series around Crowe's resurrection motif. Students looking to familiarize themselves with current trends in Acts will be well served by Crowe's thorough research and awareness of Acts scholarship. Even professors will find Crowe's suggestions stimulating and provocative enough to engage with them. *The Hope of Israel* is a rewarding read on many fronts. If nothing else, Crowe has written a book that will make readers love their Bibles more and understand its message more clearly.

—Brittain Brewer

Brian L. Hanson. *Reformation of the Commonwealth: Thomas Becon and the Politics of Evangelical Change in Tudor England*. Reformed Historical Theology 58. Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019. 250pp. $113.00 (hardcover).

When many think of the English Reformation, visions arise of heroic martyrs like Ridley and Latimer singing at the stake. Others are familiar with the colorful politics of Henry VIII, the reforms of Edward VI and Thomas Cranmer, the turmoil under "Bloody" Mary, or the rise of the Puritan movement under Elizabeth I. Fewer associate the English Reformation with an Evangelical with Lutheran convictions (pp. 21, 47), who recanted twice (p. 15), advocated for the poor under Edward VI, defended clerical vestments, and made a name for himself through publishing a collection of tracts. Yet, Thomas Becon (1512–1567) has the rare distinction of surviving four Tudor monarchs (Henry through Elizabeth), giving readers a window into the broader character of life in sixteenth-century England. Brian Hanson uses Becon's rhetoric and religious and political development in order to create a complex picture of religious and political reform during this period. This fine study broadens our understanding of the English Reformation under the Tudor monarchs in an effective and compelling way.

Hanson's narrative is somewhat messy and complex. This makes his research more compelling and realistic. Using a cross-disciplinary approach of religious, political, social, and intellectual history, his primary argument is that one's views during this period often developed over time and were situation-dependent. The author chose the term "Evangelical" to describe Becon rather than "Protestant," arguing persuasively that this was the more common term prior to the 1560s. His work is more of a complex narrative than it is a neat and tidy thesis. The theme running through the book is Becon's idea of the "common weale," which term reflected his developing views on his ideal picture of English religion and society. Hanson unfolds his material in seven chapters. After unfolding Becon's Lutheran views of justification and religious concerns under Henry VIII (ch. 1), he shifts to Becon's recantations, silence, and isolation under a time of persecution (ch. 2). He then shows, perhaps surprisingly, Becon's criticism of the reign of Edward VI (ch. 3) for its perceived neglect of social justice and proper care for the poor. Chapter four is something of an interlude, examining the role of gender-related themes in Becon's works. Hanson concludes that, contrary to the opinion of many scholars, Becon used masculine and feminine metaphors indiscriminately in critiquing his opponents, and he held a higher view of female piety and the role of women in the church than merely submitting to their husbands as the weaker sex. Chapters four through seven focus more directly on Becon's rhetoric in relation to his self-perception as a prophet, his exile under Mary, and his continued verbal political protests under Elizabeth. The downside of this approach is that the narrative appears disjointed at times, encompassing a large amalgamation of themes. The upshot is that each theme does show how a sixteenth-century Englishman's thoughts could change with the times.

A few features of the book stood out as particularly interesting. The author argues that Becon asserted that repentance was crucial to justification (p. 51). If this

meant that repentance always accompanied justification, then this position was standard. However, if it meant that repentance was integrated into justification, then this would mark a departure from standard Luther and Reformed theology at the time. In addition, the author notes that many scholars have neglected the fact that one way of responding to persecution was silence (p. 66). Silence in the press certainly marked Becon's response for a time after his first recantation, and this pattern fit other authors too. Hanson also points out that exile did not only include exile to other nations, but migration within one's own nation. Another interesting feature of this book is that in contrast to other prominent figures like Cranmer, Becon never showed evidence of remorse for his recantations and never mentioned them in his subsequent writings (p. 69). He just kept publishing and promoting Evangelical ideas as though nothing had happened. The author also notes that few others have treated the prophetic theme, which was common in Protestant theology at that time, in relation to political protest in the Edwardsian period (p. 148). While Evangelicals believed in the cessation of prophecy and miracles with the closing of the canon of Scripture, they maintained the prophetic function of Christian ministers and even left room for the return of miracles in extraordinary times. Lastly, Becon's view of submission to magistrates was both "moderate and uncommon" for his day, especially since he refused to justify armed resistance, even in extreme cases (p. 203). Making for a compelling read, such features will draw the interests of a wide range of scholars.

This study will be off the well-worn and familiar path for those interested in the English Reformation. This is the primary value of this book. Whether readers have any prior interest in Thomas Becon, they will find a story here not of heroes burned at the stake but of an Evangelical whose views developed and even swayed with the changing times. Yet in such a tumultuous period like that of the Tudor monarchs, is this not precisely what we should expect to find? Protestant views were new at the time and still in process. Religious and Political climates shifted radically in relatively short periods of time. A man with strong Lutheran views of justification, a conviction of the propriety of clerical vestments, concern for the suffering poor, wrestling with submission to political authority, and who even recanted now and then may not be a hero in our eyes, but he gives flesh and blood to the pressures that English Protestants faced under the Tudors. This is an important study that can expand our appreciation for English society in the sixteenth century.

—Ryan M. McGraw

Charles Hodge. *The Way of Life: Christian Belief and Experience.* 1841; repr., Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2020. Pp. xi + 276. $20.00 (hardcover).

As often noted here, Charles Hodge (1797–1878) was the premier Presbyterian theologian in America in the nineteenth century. He is known for training thousands of men for the ministry over the course of almost sixty years as a professor at Princeton Theological Seminary. He is particularly lionized for his *Systematic*

Theology, written near the close of his life. In addition to that book, as well as commentaries, most notably on Romans, and other historical and theological works, Hodge wrote, just after switching from biblical to theological studies at Princeton, a book that was and has remained his most popular book: *The Way of Life*. Interestingly, the American Sunday School Union, an extra-ecclesiastical publisher of Christian educational materials, supported and used by the mainline Protestant denominations, commissioned Hodge to write this book. As one would expect, the book was written to interest and guide young people in the matters of the faith, particularly as they address the doctrine of salvation, especially regeneration, justification, and sanctification.

The Old School/New School division had both doctrinal and polity causes, the doctrinal stemming largely from the unchecked, in some quarters, influence of the New Divinity movement (among the followers of Jonathan Edwards, emerging in New England, ultimately manifesting itself at Yale); the polity causes involved a lack of denominational agencies for Home Missions, Foreign Missions, Christian Education and Publication, etc. Hodge was a firm defender of the confessional faith against the New Divinity and other like errors, as well as an advocate for denominational agencies to produce literature.

Even though Old School Presbyterianism developed its own publication board for Sunday School materials, Hodge and others supported not only the denominational agencies but such extra-ecclesial ones like the American Sunday School Union, the latter having the advantage of allowing inter-denominational cooperation on projects in which such cooperation might prove helpful in reaching out across denominational lines. Hodge, appropriate to the publisher, wrote this book for intelligent and interested youth; it has, through the years, proven quite appropriate for any interested in an explication of the "way of life" as set forth in the Christian faith.

The chapters are as follows: The Scriptures are the Word of God; Sin; Causes of Indifference to the Charge of Sin; Conviction of Sin; Justification; Faith; Repentance; Profession of Religion; and Holy Living. The first chapter on the Word talks about internal and external evidences testifying to its divine origin, and all attributes that flow from such. One may dismiss Hodge's approach here as typical Old Princeton rationalism informed by Scottish Common Sense Realism.

A new paradigm has emerged, à la Paul Helseth and others, arguing that Old Princeton was not in the thrall of the Scottish philosophy, though they used it, and it impacted their thought. Hodge does make it clear here that "the most important of all the evidences of Christianity can never be appreciated, unless the heart be right in the sight of God" (pp. 1–2). One must be regenerated, in other words, to make proper sense of such evidence, which is in abundance. Hodge even says, "the Bible demands immediate and implicit faith from all who read it" (p. 3). This sounds as properly basic as the *fides quaerens intellectum* of Augustine or Anslem or the presuppositionalism of Cornelius Van Til.

Having established the Bible as God's Word, Hodge begins to unpack what is necessary in it for salvation, not only in its initiation but in its continuation until glory. Thus he discusses sin, taking it seriously, and being convicted of it. It is

someone who knows that he is a sinner that needs to hear about justification, that it's not of works, and that the law's demands are satisfied by Christ's life and death, the righteousness of Christ being the ground of our justification. This work of Christ for us is appropriated by faith, by looking to Christ for that which we need but which Christ alone gives us. Hodge makes it clear that one trusting Christ as His sole hope must profess his faith in Christ, join the church, use the means of grace, including the sacraments, in the living of the Christian life. Such Christian profession eventuates in holy living, the very nature of true religion, the meaning of sanctification.

Hodge's *Way of Life* remains a model for substantive gospel witness that seeks to reach out without dumbing down, that concerns itself with more than urging one's listener or reader "to make a decision for Christ," or "to pray the sinner's prayer." We need substance and clarity in our evangelistic efforts and outreach. We need to do in our own time what Hodge did in his, and it is good to have this book at hand as a guide and encouragement.

—Alan D. Strange

Robert Letham. *Systematic Theology*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019. Pp. 1072. $50.00 (hardcover).

In recent decades, a number of new systematic theologies have been authored by Reformed theologians. Those familiar with these works may be skeptical regarding the need for yet another systematic theology that aims to set forth in comprehensive form the teaching of Scripture on the full range of theological topics. However, if there is a contemporary theologian equal to the task of writing another systematic theology, Robert Letham is eminently qualified to do so. Letham, who teaches systematic and historical theology at Union School of Theology (Wales), is well known as the author of *The Work of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1993), *Union With Christ* (Phillipsburg, PA: P&R, 2011), and his much-acclaimed *The Holy Trinity* (recently published in a second edition; Phillipsburg, PA: P&R, 2019). As Sinclair Ferguson observes, Letham's *Systematic Theology* is properly regarded as his *magnum opus*, the ripe fruit of a lifetime spent in service to the church as a pastor and teacher.

In the introduction to his *Systematic Theology*, Letham addresses the obvious question any would-be reader is likely to ask: Do we really need yet *another* book of this kind? Though the answer to this question will ultimately be determined by those who take the trouble to read what he has written, I believe Letham provides an accurate and convincing case regarding his study as a helpful contribution to the treasury of contemporary Reformed theological resources. Several features that distinguish his book from others of its kind are especially noteworthy.

In the first place, Letham chooses not to spend an undue amount of time on questions of "prolegomena." Whereas many systematic theologies begin with a lengthy exposition of introductory and foundational matters, Letham offers a brief

introductory statement of his aims. He intends to write a "Christian" theology that is properly "catholic," acknowledging the ecumenical consensus of the early centuries of the church. Although he openly expresses his intention to write a systematic theology that is confessionally Reformed, he locates Reformed theology within the broader theological tradition of the catholic Christian church as it has developed throughout its history. Readers familiar with Letham's work on the holy Trinity will not be surprised that he consistently writes from the conviction that theology should not be narrowly partisan or sectarian even when written from a confessional viewpoint. The Reformational slogan *sola Scriptura* ("Scripture alone") properly affirms that the Scriptures are the source and final norm for Christian theology, but it may not be used in a biblicistic fashion that ignores the great "tradition" of the church's engagement with Scripture in the past as well as the present. As Letham puts it, he values "a retrieval and restatement of the historic doctrines of the church" (p. 35).

Consistent with his decision to offer only a brief introductory statement of his method and approach to systematic theology, Letham's book, unlike many systematic theologies, provides a compact summary of Christian teaching. Rather than many multi-volume systematic theologies that are unlikely to be read by readers who do not belong to the guild of professional theologians, Letham's book is marked by a remarkable clarity and conciseness of expression. If I may borrow a phrase from Calvin, Letham's systematic theology is characterized by "lucid brevity." While many theologians desire to achieve clarity and brevity in their writings but fail to pull it off, Letham admirably accomplishes his purpose to write a book "to be read by laypeople as well as student, ministers, and professional scholars" (p. 38). Contemporary readers may be intimidated by a book that is almost one thousand pages in length. However, those who take the trouble to read Letham on the topics he addresses will find that he has an unusual ability to formulate and express the doctrines of the Christian faith in an accessible and compelling manner.

One of the most significant features of Letham's *Systematic Theology* is the way he orders his treatment of topics. In addition to foregoing a lengthy introductory treatment of questions of theological method, Letham chooses to begin with the doctrine of the Trinity and only thereafter takes up the doctrine of Scripture. The usual order of treatment in Reformed systematic theologies is to treat the doctrine of revelation, especially inscripturated special revelation, before the first topic of theology, the doctrine of God proper. The topic of how God can be known ordinarily precedes the topic of who God is. Letham reverses this order, arguing that in the contemporary world the identity of the God who is known through Scripture is a more fundamental question than the one concerning how he reveals himself. Since "God precedes his revelation," the doctrine of Scripture is best understood within the framework of a clear understanding of the identity of the God who reveals himself. Furthermore, Letham does not follow the usual sequence of western Christian theology that first considers God's attributes and then turns to the doctrine of the Trinity. Letham first treats the doctrine of the Trinity and then the doctrine of God's attributes. In this way, Letham wants to give pride of place in his systematic summary to the Christian doctrine of God as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

That God is Triune is not an afterthought in a theology that is distinctively Christian and biblical.

The second place where Letham demures from the traditional order of topics in systematic theology is, in his estimation, even more important. Rather than treating soteriology, the doctrine of salvation, before ecclesiology, the doctrine of the church, Letham integrates them. According to Letham, the "dominance of individualism in Western society" has encouraged Christian theologians to treat the salvation of individuals in a way that is separated or isolated from the church and the ministry of the Word and sacraments. In order to resist this tendency, Letham treats what is known as the *ordo salutis* (the "order of salvation") within the context of the ministry of Christ's Spirit through the church. Through the ordinary means of grace, the Word preached and the sacraments rightly administered, Christ gathers, nurtures, and preserves his people in the way of salvation. While some Reformed readers may be uncomfortable with this decision, especially Letham's stress upon the importance and efficacy of the sacraments as genuine means of grace, it reflects Letham's desire to present a genuinely catholic statement of the Reformed faith. Contrary to the diminishment of the doctrine of the church in evangelical and even Reformed theology, Letham articulates a robust understanding of the church's indispensable place in the communication of the benefits of Christ's saving work to those whom he saves.

Among the many Reformed systematic theologies that have been written in recent times, Letham's book is among the best. I would certainly recommend it to any student preparing for the ministry. Unlike many recent works of its kind, however, Letham's is one that I would also recommend to laypeople. I am confident they will find it a helpful summary of the catholic Reformed faith of the church.

—Cornelis P. Venema

Ryan McIlhenny. *To Preach Deliverance to the Captives: Freedom and Slavery in the Protestant Mind of George Bourne, 1780–1845.* Antislavery, Abolition, and the Atlantic World. Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 2020. Pp. x + 257. $45.00 (hardcover).

Prof. McIlhenny, who taught previously at a Christian college stateside and now at a college in Shanghai, presents us with this reworking of his doctoral dissertation. Many may not know George Bourne (1780–1845). He is an important figure, not only for the 19th century Presbyterian church but also for the rise of abolitionism among both religious and non-religious abolitionists. One of the seminal figures that Bourne influenced was William Lloyd Garrison, editor of the well-known anti-slavery newspaper *The Liberator*, which began publication in 1831. Garrison and others testified to the power and rhetoric of the transplanted Bourne's arguments in persuading them of the utter horror and sinfulness of American chattel slavery. Bourne should remain not only a figure of interest in church history but also be quite

important for broader American history, a reality embraced and well-articulated in this important new work by Dr. McIlhenny.

Reared in a "staunchly Protestant home" in England (p. 2), Bourne trained both for the ministry and writing/journalism, coming to Baltimore in 1805, where he began working as a journalist and newspaper editor. Shortly thereafter, he gained something of a reputation as a writer with biographies on Napoleon and John Wesley. He moved to Virginia in 1810 and entered the Presbyterian ministry. He had, back in England, in concert with others who opposed slavery, began to work and speak out against the institution. He came to America when he did as a nonconformist and dissenter (to the Church of England) because he perceived that the United States enjoyed greater freedom religiously, socially, economically, etc. However, he was appalled by the depredations of the institution of slavery and the exalted place that it enjoyed in American culture. Bourne came to see only too clearly what historian Edmund Morgan recognized: American freedom was built squarely on the back of American slavery.

Bourne became, particularly in moving to the Old Dominion, the slave state of Virginia, an outspoken opponent of immediate abolition, as opposed to gradual emancipation, arguing that slave-owning should disqualify one from membership in the Presbyterian church and that those who refused to manumit their slaves should be excommunicated. While the Covenanters—or Reformed Presbyterians—had always opposed slave-holding and would censure any members who engaged in it, the Presbyterian Church in the USA (PCUSA) would not do such, and Bourne's position was regarded as radical and dangerous. The significant majority of the PCUSA, especially the Old School after the split in 1837, opposed abolitionism because they saw it, unlike gradual emancipation, as fanaticism that opposed slavery at all costs, including the unity of the church and the nation.

Part of the reason that Bourne's position seemed so threatening to many in the PCUSA, and other mainstream Protestant churches, was because Bourne dipped back into recent Presbyterian history in which 1 Timothy 1:10 had been cited as a text impacting slavery. That Pauline text condemns man-stealing, and when Bourne, in his local church, presbytery, and at the General Assembly sought to condemn slavery as man-stealing on the basis of its being prohibited in the Pastoral epistles, a furor erupted. Passing over the details, what ultimately happened was not the censure of slave-holders, in Bourne's or anyone else's church, but the deposition of Bourne from the gospel ministry. Bourne called for impenitent slave-holders to be removed from the church and the response was to remove him from the ministry.

There was a judicial back and forth from 1815–1818, and at the end of it all, Bourne was defrocked and forced to leave his church (McIlhenny, chapter 2). Interestingly, in that same 1818 GA, a remarkable statement was adopted by the PCUSA condemning slavery in no uncertain terms and calling for the emancipation of slaves stateside and worldwide. More than a few observers of this action that occurred after many had left the Assembly, having already kicked Bourne out of the ministry, concluded that this action was a sop to those who thought that the Assembly should not be so quick to expel one who hated an institution that was hard to defend from a Christian perspective. Subsequently, Bourne served a

congregational church in Canada, and then upon his return to New York, several (Dutch) Reformed congregations in the New York classis.

In the midst of this judicial ordeal, Bourne wrote a book in 1816 that further fanned the flames of controversy and discord in the Presbyterian Church and beyond: *The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable* (short title). Beyond this period, McIlhenny examines in his third chapter, "The Maturation of Bourne's Antislavery Bible Argument." Bourne develops his argument against slavery, writing more books and other publications on the subject directly, as well as impliedly, one might argue, in all his works. Slavery was, in a sense, certainly evidenced in Bourne's life and work, the elephant in the room in American society up until its abolition toward the end of the Civil War in the Thirteenth Amendment.

McIlhenny treats Bourne's developed biblical arguments against slavery (pp. 88–108) in a way that makes clear, over against the claims of southern Presbyterians like Dabney and Thornwell, that virulent abolitionists rejected the Bible and based their anti-slavery sentiments on a secularism and humanism that was inimical to the Christian faith. Many abolitionists did reject the Bible since the Bible did not seem on its face to condemn slavery; Bourne, and some others, however, showed that the Bible did condemn the kind of slavery that was in America and argued that those who defended American slavery biblically twisted and abused the text of Scripture in order to do so.

Additionally, Bourne's notions of what the American republic best embodied and what true freedom entailed led him to promote women's involvement in abolitionism, seeing women as great promoters of virtue, in keeping with the nineteenth-century "cult of domesticity." His defense of marriage and rejection of divorce (1813) laid the groundwork for the place of the family in the millennium, after the defeat of slavery and its ally in oppression, the Roman Catholic Church (more on this below). This may seem counter-intuitive since Bourne's commitment to maximal freedom would presumably lead him to argue for the emancipation of slaves and full equality for women. Bourne viewed slavery as contra-nature since those made in the image of God should not be held by others in that same image. He viewed women's equality as professed by first-wave feminism also as contra-nature, since, functionally, in the family, the husband was head of the wife, a proposition as necessary for a healthy society as the abolition of slavery, as McIlhenny developed in chapter 5. This position divided the abolition movement, and Bourne decidedly maintained the traditional family as a bulwark and pillar of any righteous society, especially over against the destruction of marriage and family the institution of slavery engendered, imperiling as it did both slaves and masters, the latter often giving way to the temptation to abuse his female slaves.

A feature of Bourne's life, and of this book, that may surprise those unfamiliar with American, and broader English history, is Bourne's virulent "anti-popery," second in McIlhenny's narrative only to Bourne's disdain for slavery. They are, in fact, tied together. Bourne's anti-Catholicism is not mere religious bigotry as one would discover today in the anti-Catholicism of the media and others in our secularized culture. Bourne's animus against Rome had deep Protestant roots,

especially among those of a more progressive political approach, who championed republican government, as did Bourne, and eschewed monarchy.

In short, Bourne disliked any sort of absolutism, whether in state (as in the England from which he and much of America came) or in church, manifested chiefly in the hierarchical episcopacy of the Roman church, particularly in the claims of the papacy. To Bourne, as McIlhenny sets forth in chapters 4 and 6, slavery and popery must be defeated so that maximum freedom may reign in every sphere, such an enlightened religious and political/social forming the proper millennial future for America and the world, the former helping to lead the latter to and in such. This is how the Protestant mind of George Bourne functioned.

In his conclusion, McIlhenny muses on anti-Catholicism past and present. Certainly, in the nineteenth century, it was part of the nativism reflected in something like the Know-Nothing Party that wanted to retain the country's Protestant heritage in the face of immigration that threatened to undermine it. Protestants opposed Catholicism then, especially the progressive Protestants, because it posed an authoritarian threat to freedom. McIlhenny muses on current evangelical opposition to authoritarianism, except when it may be linked to nativism and a sort of unfettered, if not rapacious, capitalism in a figure like President Trump. Various ironies continue to abound in American history, though this book is not able to address that of the most recent times, including the concerns widely expressed about systemic racism and that corporations/business are not likely to be the friends of evangelicals (witness Google, Facebook, etc.) any more than oppressive governments are. The lesson to learn from Bourne: cherish freedom and seek to develop it over forms of control and dominance. We all still have miles to go before we sleep.

—Alan D. Strange

Dane C. Ortlund. *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020. Pp. 224. $19.99 (hardcover).

Ortlund is one of the leading editors at Crossway and a Wheaton Ph.D. in New Testament. This book contains material quite familiar to students of the Puritans and other Reformed theologians, both historic and contemporary. To well-trained ministers and others who love to plumb the depths of Reformed theology, what Ortlund foregrounds in this book will not be new. What is new is the way that he puts the materials together, making it accessible to so many in our churches today who have not read Goodwin, Owens, Edwards, Warfield, and company; even for those who have read these writers, Ortlund both packages these writings and highlights possibly overlooked passages in a way that proves a delight even to the veterans of such.

Simply put, Ortlund's book opens up, in a way that this writer has never seen collected together, the very heart of Jesus in a way that is unfailingly encouraging and heartening. Jesus, Ortlund aids us to see, is so full of tenderness, compassion,

pity, sympathy, joy, and like virtues, that we have scarcely begun to know him. We tend to think, knowing full well that Jesus is God, that his holiness, purity, and like properties renders him, at best, as reserved to us, saving us, indeed, but rather holding his nose while doing so for those who are *simul iustus et peccator*.

This book is inspiration for better gospel preaching, for family and personal devotional use, and for counseling. Ortlund is writing a book for those familiar with the evangelical faith and Reformed convictions about man's sinfulness, particularly in light of God's ineffable holiness. We have all read Sproul, Ryle, and others on the holiness of God and have rightly wondered at such purity that cannot look upon sin and the reality that God is angry with the wicked every day. Ortlund rightly understands that many of us have this part well figured out, and we deeply believe it. What we are not so quick to believe is that this same Jesus, knowing us fully and loving us completely, ever and only calls us to himself, always moves towards us, never away from us, even in our deepest sin.

Perhaps a reader just drew back in reading that last sentence, thinking, "well surely he does move away from us when we his children are ensnared in our sin." No, our sin involves us moving away from him. This is supported by the reality of our sense that when we draw nearer to him, after some time of wandering away from him (perhaps neglecting the Word, prayer, etc.), we have a very strong sense that he went nowhere. It was we who did; he was always there, like the welcoming father in the parable of the lost son, who, waiting and watching, runs to embrace the returning prodigal. We know that when we draw near, he will draw near to us because he's never gone away. It is we who have. This sensibility imbues Ortlund's book and makes it the best book of its sort that I think I have ever read. This is the kind of book that I give to all my family at Christmas. It is that good. No one reading this wants to forego purchasing this book for himself, either on Kindle or in hard copy (it is not in paperback). What are you waiting for?

—Alan D. Strange

Peter Sammons. *Reprobation: From Augustine to the Synod of Dort: The Historical Development of the Reformed Doctrine of Reprobation*. Reformed Historical Theology 63. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020. 154pp. $125.00 (hardcover).

Reprobation, or the doctrine that God passes over the non-elect and foreordains them to damnation for their sins, is often treated as the dark side of predestination. Yet, reprobation is an important part of the Reformed doctrine of predestination, completing the picture of God's sovereign purposes for all humanity. In this dense monograph, Peter Sammons contends that the doctrine of reprobation, though not developed fully until the Synod of Dort in the early seventeenth century, was a constant feature of Christian theology from the time of the early church (p. 15). Exemplifying retrieval theology (p. 14), he seeks to listen to each author treated on their own terms with an aim to bringing voices from the past into theological

conversation at the present. This work is highly readable and well argued, and it will provide clarity on a difficult issue both for students of historical and systematic theology.

The scope of this research is far reaching, spanning from the early church, through the middle ages, up to the Reformation, culminating in the Synod of Dort. Treating an impressively broad range of authors, Sammons shows the development of reprobation through three-quarters of the history of the church. The liability to such an approach is that it is difficult to develop the context of any single period adequately, resulting in a genealogy of theological ideas rather than a string of varied contexts. Yet the author seeks to be "as objective as possible" (p. 16) in his research and, in spite of the brevity of his work, achieves his goals admirably. His expansion of the Arminian context behind Dort (pp. 99–104) develops context in a much fuller way as well. In general, Sammons relies heavily on English translations of primary sources instead of on Latin original sources (with notable exceptions, e.g., pp. 39, 46–47, 88–90, 109–111). In chapter four, the author also favors Puritanism in England rather than giving a broader trajectory of the English church in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. While his treatment of key Puritan authors is illuminating for his theme, a broader Reformed trajectory in England would have rounded out his picture more fully. The frequent use of terms, like "compatibilism," which appear throughout the narrative, while being theological useful, do not adequately reflect at times the way in which historic authors expressed themselves in their contexts. Adding a few more qualifications along the way would remedy this issue to a large extent. Sammons ultimately illustrates with exceptional clarity that the church has always taught reprobation in some form or another. He leads readers well through the various expressions of the doctrine in a way that helps promote a panoramic view of church history on the subject at a glance.

A few problems arise at times from the absence of including broader contextual issues that affected theological development during the Reformation and post-Reformation periods. This comes out clearly, for example, in the author's examination of the differences between Heinrich Bullinger and John Calvin on the question of double predestination. Bullinger was hesitant about Calvin's language of double predestination, stressing permission rather than foreordination (p. 73). Sammons concludes that for Bullinger, the ultimate cause of rejection lay with the non-elect rather than with the will of God. Yet, this point is highly debatable among historians, many of whom regard Bullinger and Calvin's views on predestination as compatible. The author overstates his case when he asserts that Bullinger's *Decades* were a "far cry from Calvinist orthodoxy" (p. 93). This assumption does not account adequately for the development of Bullinger's views as well as that of Reformed orthodoxy during this formative period.

This book is a good starting place for readers interested in grasping the main issues related to the doctrine of reprobation leading up to post-Reformation Reformed thought. Reprobation is a well-chosen topic that tends to highlight other issues that have marked confessional lines for centuries. Readers will find here a well-digested and readable survey of some of the primary thinkers in Christian

history, and they will have a better grasp of what was at stake in the controversies that led up to the Synod of Dort.

—Ryan M. McGraw

Martin I. Klauber, ed. *The Theology of the Huguenot Refuge: From the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes to the Edict of Versailles*. Reformed Historical Theological Studies. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage, 2020. Pp. viii + 334. $25.00 (paperback).

In 1988 New Rochelle, New York, celebrated the tercentenary of the Huguenot founding of the city, based on the immigration of refugees from La Rochelle, France in 1688. I was asked to present lectures at the public library, which I did in four parts: "The Huguenot Christian," "The Huguenot Family and Education," "The Huguenot Citizen," and "The Huguenot Craftsman." The research for these lectures was done largely at the libraries of Huguenot Society of America and the Huguenot-Thomas Paine Historical Association of New Rochelle. The background of the refugees in France was not the focus of the lectures since I was investigating the refugees in New Rochelle, New York. So the present volume under review has refreshed and expanded my knowledge and appreciation of the situation in France during the long period of persecution from 1685 to 1787. It is easy to forget that, although the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 represented the end of religious wars in Europe, persecution by various governments did not cease.

The Huguenot theology developed in France, and by the exiles, is located in what Richard Muller called the second phase of high orthodoxy (1685–1725) when Post-Reformation orthodoxy was losing intellectual dominance in the church (p. 142; see Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: Volume One, Prolegomena to Theology*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003], pp. 30–32). Even though the period of persecution went all the way to 1787, the theologians cited in this volume wrote during this period of high orthodoxy.

The title of the book is a bit misleading. There is much more history than theology in this fascinating volume. Five very informative chapters look at the history of the Huguenot refuge from various perspectives; they are followed by seven chapters that explore the theology and activity of the exiled French Reformed churches through the lens of the individual lives of prominent theologians and preachers. The book is really a chronicle of many dimensions, highlighting theological themes appropriate to the Huguenot situation.

The importance of the volume lies in the ways in which aspects of Reformed theology were accentuated and amplified by the experience of the Huguenots who remained in France and the refugees. Thus, the theology of comfort in persecution, the doctrines of religious tolerance, and the relationship between church and state feature prominently in the stories of the seven prominent preachers and theologians. The final chapter examines the first sermon of the fiery preacher Antoine Court.

A Brief Sketch of the History of the Huguenot Refuge

A few odd terms unique to the French Huguenot Church of the seventeenth century appear in the book. Temple, for example, is the name for a church building. The volume is meticulously researched and footnoted with an excellent selected bibliography. Footnotes are at the bottom of the page for easy access.

The Edict of Nantes (1598), its revocation, the Edict of Fontainebleau (1685), and the Edict of Versailles or Tolerance (1787) mark the boundaries of this history. In 1598 "the best-loved king of France, Henry IV," proclaimed the Edict of Nantes (p. 9). The edict granted French Reformed Christians, known as Huguenots, the freedom to worship, establish educational institutions, and hold colloquies and synods in certain places. Some cities were allowed to be armed, and Huguenot judges were appointed to some courts (p. 9). Rather than religious toleration, the edict was a peace settlement that ended a decade's long war (p. 10). However, this did not end the controversies or the conflicts between the Reformed and Roman Catholic factions in France.

For example, La Rochelle resisted the return of Roman Catholicism until its surrender in 1628. From 1629 on, the Huguenots throughout France were "shorn of their military power" (pp. 19–20). After the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, the Huguenots experienced a period of peace. However, after 1661 Louis XIV eroded the liberties of the Edict of Nantes, enticing converts from Protestantism to Catholicism, closing Reformed churches (temples), and forcing some Reformed pastors to leave the country (pp. 24–25). In 1681, French soldiers, known as the *dragonnades*, began persecuting Huguenots by entering and living in their homes and pillaging and abusing their inhabitants (pp. 25, 39–40).

Finally, in 1685 the king revoked the Edict of Nantes. Reformed pastors were given two weeks to leave or deny their faith; a minority of Huguenots chose to convert to Roman Catholicism, and a few chose imprisonment. Pastors who refused to leave or convert were executed; ordinary Christians were made galley slaves. Church (temple) and school buildings were destroyed. Huguenots began to emigrate to the Netherlands, Switzerland, Brandenburg-Prussia, Hesse, the Palatinate, England, Ireland, and the American colonies of Virginia, New York, Massachusetts, and North Carolina (pp. 40–44), thus dividing them between the exiles and those who chose to remain in France (pp. 26–27). From peasants to craftsmen and professionals, the Huguenots proved a blessing to most of the places of their exile (pp. 44–46).

Chapter 3 explores the Camisard rebellion, the rebellion of the peasants of the mountains of Languedoc (a coastal region in southern France, extending from Provence to the Pyrenees Mountains and the border with Spain). They were Reformed Protestants without pastors of ecclesiastical structure who ambushed royal patrols and burned Roman Catholic churches (p. 51). Under the influence of the apocalyptic views of Rotterdam exile Pierre Jurieu, itinerant preachers, known as *prédicants*, like Claude Brousson, preached that the persecuted Huguenots, known as the "desert church," were represented in the Book of Revelation as part of end-times events (p. 54). His charismatic, prophetic preaching spawned a generation of self-

proclaimed prophets, many of whom were women and children, versed in apocalyptic biblical vocabulary (p. 56). In the end, these beleaguered, unorganized Protestants surrendered but formed the "base on which Antoine Court and the pastors 'of the Desert' would attempt to rebuild the shattered Reformed church in France" (pp. 68–69).

Apart from those who converted to Catholicism, the remnant, known as the "Church of the Desert," worshipped and held Bible studies clandestinely (pp. 28–30). Chapter 4 focuses on this church, whose existence was entirely denied by the French throne (p. 71). Despite 130,000 Protestants being "officially" converted in September after the revocation (1685), the church went underground and survived for over a century (p. 72). Pauline Duley-Haour helpfully divides the period of persecution into three eras: 1.) 1685–1715 thirty years of the "relative absence and silence for the exiled pastors," a time of "isolation and sometimes despair for French Protestantism"; 2.) 1715–44, a period in which several pastors restored the discipline of the French Reformed churches, along with the support of the exiled churches and the Protestant churches of Europe; 3.) 1744 to the French Revolution, the church was emboldened to make their presence more public and seek legal status (p. 72).

Several important preachers led in the preservation of the church during its desert period. Pierre Jurieu, exiled refugee pastor in Rotterdam, published letters of pastoral encouragement to the desert church. In France, preachers such as Claude Brousson risked their lives to minister to the persecuted church (pp. 73–77). During the period of reconstruction, Antoine Court initiated reform of the French Reformed Church at the Synod of the Desert (1715). The "reinstitutionalization was one of the strongest factors in preserving Protestantism in France" (p. 89). From 1744 until the French Revolution, the desert church made a broad appeal for support to the exiled Huguenot churches and the Protestant churches of Europe.

Chapter 5 completes the historical section by exploring the conclusion of the desert church history with the Edict of Versailles or Tolerance of 1787. Marjan Blok makes a very important point: "[T]he use of the word *tolerance* already implies a superior position of some sort, assuming the power to allow others a measure of existence. The word *pluralism* may hence be more accurate in general. For the study at hand, *tolerance* is likely the more appropriate term" (p. 91 n.2).

The king's desire to have a unified religion in his realm had proved untenable and, thus, over time was forced a move toward pluralism (p. 92). Blok traces the origins of the idea of religious tolerance and notes that the invention of the printing press played a crucial role in the movement towards pluralism (p. 94). Enlightenment thought exemplified in Voltaire was a major component in this transformation, but Huguenot theology also made a significant contribution. While the Edict of Versailles failed to grant full citizenship to Huguenots, it was a move in the right direction.

The Theology of Eight Huguenots

In chapter 6, Martin Klauber describes the ministry of Pierre Jurieu (1637–1713) as a preacher of apocalypticism and "one of the most prominent voices of the exiled

Huguenots" (p. 114). Jurieu wanted the Reformed church to be the official church of France. He ardently believed that the pope was the antichrist (p. 119). He interpreted parts of the Book of Revelation as a prophecy of the Huguenot situation (p. 120). Unlike most of his peers, he supported the miraculous events connected with the prophets of the Cévennes of Languedoc.

In chapter 7, David Martin (1639–1721) is presented by Richard Muller as typical of the Reformed Huguenot exiled pastors, who ministered at a distance via the written and the printed word. In true Post-Reformation orthodox form, he was first and foremost an exegete of the biblical text in the context of the biblical languages, commentaries, and the church fathers (p. 129). Muller has been a most persuasive apologist for the biblical orthodoxy of the so-called Scholastic theologians of the Post-Reformation era. With his keen insight into hermeneutical concerns, he is alert to Martin's opposition to the "historical-critical exegesis" (p. 136). Thus, "Martin sought to oppose the attraction of rationalist argumentation against Christian doctrine and piety" (p. 140). Muller's chapter is among the most theologically oriented in the book. Martin's theology "bears witness to the philosophical transformation of Reformed orthodoxy in the waning years of Protestant scholasticism" (p. 142). The challenge of Cartesian rationalism (of René Descartes) was coordinated by Martin, as is seen in his assertion that "'Divine Revelation' offers 'doctrines infinitely higher than natural Reason'" (p. 143). "The presence of both a priori and a posteriori patterns of argument in Martin's *Traité de la religion naturelle* (*Treatise on Natural Religion*) is quite characteristic of the Cartesian Reformed theologies of the era" (p. 146). Martin sought to overcome the doubts of the persecuted Huguenots by using proofs of the existence of God (p. 145).

Claude Brousson (1647–1698) was the "bellicose dove" in Bryan Strayer's account in chapter 8. He risked his life as a lawyer turned preacher in a way that few others did during this era. As an ardent Calvinist, he sought to help reorganize the church of the desert (p. 153). As a gifted lawyer, he successfully resisted very attractive bribes to convert to Roman Catholicism (p. 156). He advocated obedience to the government, except where it demanded what was contrary to the Word of God (p. 159). But he launched a powerful campaign against the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, citing the perpetuity of the edict stated in the document itself (p. 160). He eventually personally renounced the use of force in defying the king while enlisting the help of other armed Huguenots to fight his battles (pp. 167–68). He advocated a "carefully reasoned . . . plain-speaking, hard-hitting, prophecy-laden style of preaching" (p. 172). He was martyred in 1698 (p. 181).

In chapter 9, another of the three chapters written by Klauber, Jacques Basnage (1653–1723), is described as heir to "distinguished lawyers and Huguenot pastors" (p. 183). He was educated at the Reformed Academy of Saumur and the Academy of Geneva, which exposed him to the debates surrounding the adoption of the Helvetic Formula Consensus, in which Pierre du Moulin opposed the hypothetical universalism of Moïse Amyraut (p. 184). As a pastor, Basnage also refuted subtle arguments luring Huguenots into the Roman Catholic fold as *nouveaux convertis* (pp. 188, 191). He advocated trusting God in the worst circumstances of the persecuted French Protestant church (p. 189). He did allow that one could be a

nouveaux convertis as long as one "professed ones true faith in public and refused to participate in the Mass" (p. 193). The Mass, Basnage insisted, was idolatrous (p. 194) and insulted the perfect efficacy of the cross of Christ (p. 199). In his effort to comfort Huguenots who remained in France, he also "advised them to flee rather than remain subject to such enormous pressure to abjure their beliefs" (p. 200).

In chapter 10, John Roney shows the influence of three major works of Jacques Abbadie (1654–1727) that influenced the progress of religious freedom in Europe. Remarkably his writing had a "wide appeal among both Protestants and roan Catholics" (p. 201). The first volume, *Traité de la vérité de la religion chrétienne* (*Treatise on the Truth of the Christian Religion*), was a work of apologetics written during Abbadie's pastorate in Berlin and published in 1684.

His second volume, *L'Art de se connoître soiméme; ou, la recherche des sources de la morale* (*The Art of Knowing Yourself; or, The Search for the Sources of Morality*), was composed during his ministry in England and Ireland and published in 1692. "Abbadie reflected traditional Reformed theology and also engaged the currents of contemporary intellectual thought" (p. 201). He interacted with the rationalism and "more radical ideas" of René Descartes (1596–1650) and especially the pantheism of Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677) (p. 206). He responded brilliantly to the challenges of the early Enlightenment presented by "a small but vocal group of atheists . . . Deists, and Socinians who had employed the methods of Stoicism and Epicureanism to establish an understanding of a viable social system" (p. 208). Abbadie also defended the inspiration of Scripture and the deity of Christ.

The third volume, *Défense de la Nation Britannique ou les droits de 'Dieu, de la nature, & de la societé clairement établis au sujet de la revolution d'Angleterre, contre l'auteur de l'avis important aux Refugiés* (*Defense of the British Nation or the clearly established rights of God, Nature, & Society regarding the Revolution of England, against the author of the Important Notice to Refugees*), was also written during this same period in England and Ireland, and published in 1693. This work "became one of the most important arguments in support of William of Orange and Mary Stuart's accession to the throne in England's Glorious Revolution" (p. 201).

Roney presents an interesting discussion of the influence and presence of Aristotelian categories in Post-Reformation dogmatics (pp. 211–12). He rightly refuses to condemn the Reformed scholastics as rationalistic, concluding: "Abbadie's appropriation of Aristotelian logic offered a common field of argument in which he could engage skeptics in his day" (p.212). This chapter is on a par with Muller's in terms of theological analysis, demonstrating the important legacy of Abbadie in defending historic Christianity and promoting religious freedom.

Daniel de Superville (1657–1728) spent most of his career as an exile in Rotterdam, according to Martin Klauber in chapter 11 (p. 225), but had been educated initially at the Reformed school in Saumur, where he was born. The school was made famous by "its illustrious and controversial faculty, led by Moise Amyraut" (p. 225). Superville then studied at the Academy of Geneva in the midst of the controversial adoption of the Helvetic Formula Consensus (1675). This confession condemned some of the errors taught in Saumur, including Amyraut's hypothetical universalism, mentioned in chapter 9 (p. 226). Having escaped the

persecution that eventually came to Saumur, he generally avoided controversy and focused on consoling the exiles in the large church in Rotterdam and the persecuted Huguenots in France (p. 228). This was done through publishing sermons and letters under three major titles: *On the Duties of the Afflicted Church* (1691), *The Truths and Duties of Religion* (1706), and *The True Communicant* (1718) (p. 229). Thus, he developed a theology of consolation, exploring themes such as God's providence, the vanity of the world, and devotion to Christ.

This chapter, in a pointed way, shows how history shapes theological concerns. For Superville, these concerns expressed in his sermons "displayed an amazing degree of empathy for the displaced French Huguenots" (p. 240).

Michael Haykin describes the "extraordinary pulpit oratory" of Jacques Saurin (1677–1730) in chapter 12. After fleeing France with his parents at age nine, he studied at Calvin's Academy, graduated with high honors, and ended up taking a call to the ministry in London. He went on to become the chaplain in the royal palace of the House of Orange (p. 245). The religious tolerance of the Netherlands also provided fertile soil for the rejection of religious authority (pp. 247–48). Saurin sought to replace autonomous reason with reason subordinated to the authority of the Bible.

Saurin's preaching emphasized the love of God, especially as it has been revealed through the person Jesus Christ and his work on the cross. He asserts that the mystery of God's love for sinners demonstrated by the cross could never be discovered by the reasoning of the greatest philosophers (p. 250).

The final chapter (chapter 13), by Otto Selles, explores the preaching of Antoine Court (1695–1760) through Court's first sermon. While he begins by declaring that "Court was no theologian," he describes Court at age ten being known in his town as "Calvin's eldest son" (p. 257). At age twenty, the autodidact "turned a meeting of fellow preachers into what has become known as the 'first synod' of the Church of the Desert" (p. 258). Court "effectively pivoted the Desert churches away from both armed rebellion and worship based on extemporaneous prophetic preaching" (p. 260). He almost single-handedly, along with Claude Brousson of chapter 8, restored order to the Desert church, demonstrating that the church that abandons the means of grace and the basic ecclesiastical structure of the New Testament will not survive.

Court's first sermon is given in full, based on the text of Hebrews 10:25 "Let us not abandon our mutual assemblies, as some have the habit" (pp. 266–82). Court's knowledge of Scripture (learned initially at the knee of his mother) is extensive, and his quotations from the Reformers and the Fathers (no doubt due to two years spent in exile in Geneva) show what a quick study this zealous young man was. He understood the mode of the church's existence as one of pilgrimage. This serves as an inspiration to every pastor who preaches from week to week in an increasingly hostile environment.

This volume reminds us of the special importance of Reformed orthodoxy to God's people in extremely difficult times. The presence of the French Confession of Faith (1559), trained pastor-preachers, and the means of grace in an organized church—these are what sustain the church at all times, but especially in hard times. The seven pastor-theologians portrayed in this book were also, and really foremost,

preachers who desired to bring strength and comfort to Christians in France as well as the exiles to whom they directly ministered. Brousson and Court, of course, were exceptions, since they risked their lives by ministering to the Church of the Desert in France.

During the Huguenot refuge, evil powers sought to cancel the truth of God's Word through political force similar to the soft persecution of contemporary forces like cancel-culture in America today. We may apply the same robust theology to ourselves as we endure the hardship our Savior told us we would inevitably face in every culture and under even the most benevolent governments. Biblically the church of Jesus Christ is always the church of "strangers and exiles on the earth" (Heb. 11:13). This volume simply amplifies the importance of the means God has provided for his church in this present evil age. I highly recommend this fascinating, inspiring, and detailed exploration of the French Huguenots of the refuge.

—Gregory E. Reynolds

David VanDrunen. *Politics after Christendom: Political Theology in a Fractured World.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020. Pp. 400. $29.99 (paperback).

Dr. David VanDrunen has now been writing for some time on covenant theology from the perspective of a natural law/two-kingdoms approach. After producing substantial volumes in those areas, he gives us this latest as a kind of capstone to that work: a political theology developed out of his understanding of the Noahic covenant. In typical fashion, especially for those familiar with his work, VanDrunen's latest is clear and thorough. He leaves no significant areas having to do with his topic untouched, and he seeks fairly to represent both those with whom he differs and the criticism that they bring to his. As always, there is much to learn from him, and we can be grateful for this able articulation of his views, even where we or others may differ from them.

The book is divided into two basic parts: "Political Theology" and "Political Ethics." The first part treats VanDrunen's view of the state of things, particularly in our post-Christendom culture, which he rightly refers to as a "fractured world." The second part sets forth how the principles of the first part apply in our world, with six chapters in addition to the first six that began the volume. VanDrunen sets forth in "Political Theology" that all civil society, which includes its government but is not limited to it, bears two pairs of characteristics that define it: legitimate, but provisional; common, but accountable. This means that civil society (in its economic, legal, and other public dimensions) is something that is legitimate (government, of whatever sort, is necessary, and thus legitimate, something given by God for the proper ordering of society; over against anarchy of varying sorts). However, unlike government in absolutized forms on the right or left, civil society is provisional, not ultimate, and will give way in the coming consummation of all things to the eternal kingdom that shall never perish.

Further, civil society as established among mankind is common, which is to say that it encompasses all here below, not simply the godly or those members of the visible church. All in any given region, the righteous and the wicked, are subject to the same systems, including the same government. At the same time, this common life is one for which all are accountable and for which everyone will be judged. To flesh this out, citizens of Pennsylvania, whether believers or not, are all part of that commonwealth, and have much in common in their outward lives, including jobs, local governments, state governments, and the like. So the lives of all together, saved and lost, are part of a system that is legitimate and common. However, a day is coming, when the sheep and goats will be separated, so this legitimate and common life that they now experience is not eternal but provisional and will come to an end. That such a life is now common does not mean, though, that it is neutral and unaccountable. On that great day just referenced, everyone will give an account of their lives in terms that make clear personal moral responsibility and accountability.

VanDrunen sees these pairs (legitimate but provisional, common but accountable) as emerging from the Noahic covenant, which is a covenant verifying a common realm in which common grace is at play. He sees this as true not only in the Old Testament but in the New: the redemption promised in the covenant of grace (since Gen. 3:15) does not change the nature of this relationship between a common kingdom that emerges from the Noahic covenant and the spiritual kingdom of grace, manifesting in the visible church, that is part of the gracious, saving covenant that God has with the elect. VanDrunen, then, reads Romans 13 and its allied New Testament passages, through the lens formed by the common kingdom concerns and approach of the Noahic covenant. VanDrunen always does a good survey of the literature, especially in the notes, showing others that support his approach as well as oppose it. One of the strengths of this work is that the breathless, highly politicized atmosphere in which we all live in the West, including the USA, while recognized by VanDrunen, does not infect this work, which enjoys a thoughtful and becalmed approach.

Then VanDrunen addresses what governs in the common kingdom, natural law, even as does special revelation additionally in the kingdom of grace. Again, all of this has been addressed by our author rather extensively in his previous works. This work seeks to draw together many strands previously developed and put together here as it impacts political theology. The last chapter (chapter 6) in the first section on theology especially seeks to bring it all together as it addresses the public life of Christians under two covenants (grace and Noahic) in which Christians are both "responsible citizens and patient sojourners" (p. 150).

VanDrunen calls for Christian engagement in the public sphere while reminding Christians that their task is neither to "redeem the culture" nor to fail to remember that they are pilgrims looking for a better country, always being clear that "this age" and its common kingdom are penultimate. This, of course, has implications for all the products of this age. VanDrunen does not say that none of the cultural products of the common kingdom will survive the fire at the end of this age and enter into the next. He seems to remain agnostic whether anything from this age (other than us, in our resurrection bodies) will be a part of the new heavens and earth. He would only

remind us that, again, apart from the new humanity in Christ, we have no distinct promise(s) that anything from this age is found in the age to come.

In the second half of the book, "Political Ethics," VanDrunen spells out the implications and consequences of his common kingdom approach. First, he addresses pluralism and religious liberty: as a consequence of the common kingdom being just that—common—he argues that this implies that civil society, certainly the state as part of that, does not properly enjoin religious conformity of any sort, but its citizens should enjoy religious liberty and the freedom to embrace various philosophies and viewpoints as long as that is done within the bounds of the law. In the next chapter, he argues that all families and commerce are part of this common kingdom and that they carry on their lives, at least in light of the Noahic covenant and natural law. I could go into detail under each of the sections that follow ("Justice and Rights"; "Customs and Laws"; "Authority and Resistance"), but I find this second part of the book to be especially useful. VanDrunen commonly deals with the various approaches that can be taken under these various headings, from right to left politically, thoroughly conversant with the literature, and providing much intellectual and practical guidance with respect to the particular issues at hand. I found this to provide much food for thought in my own musings about things pertaining to civics and politics.

One of the most frequent criticisms of VanDrunen's approach is that it accounts for proper distinctions that need to be made between the provisional and the eternal (or other ways of putting the necessary distinctions between this world and the coming one) but tends to separate the two, accounting, as some say, for diversity but not unity, manyness but not oneness (pp. 37–44, affirming "twoness"). VanDrunen acknowledges this criticism and seeks to address it in a measure (pp. 77–78). Whether he successfully does so is debatable. For example, chapter 8 on the "Family and Commerce" treats Christians and non-Christians, similarly. While non-Christians, together with Christians, certainly participate in the creation ordinances of family and labor (Sabbath/rest as the third creation ordinance produces its own conundrum that I do not think this approach ever surmounts), non-Christians do not do so substantively as do Christians.

Think of these differences between the two: Paul tells us that marriage points beyond itself to the union that subsists between Christ and the church, and its proper earthly goals are realized only in Christ. Paul also calls children (who have never professed faith) of Christian families "holy" and sees the family in his epistles as the place in which much of life is played out. None of this "in Christ" marriage and family life pertains to the non-Christian. Similarly, with labor/commerce. Christians are not to do their work to please others but to please Christ, knowing that they work ultimately for him and not their earthly bosses.

This sort of "tie-in" of the two kingdoms, and not simply their proper distinction(s), does not receive an adequate accounting on VanDrunen's approach. Even church and state are not simply sundered but properly distinguished, particularly in terms of the spirituality of the church. There are a variety of important "integration points" between the two kingdoms, whether one puts it in terms of inner and outer kingdoms, as do many two-kingdom advocates in the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries, or as Abraham Kuyper puts it in terms of sphere sovereignty. I mention both of these because VanDrunen seeks to tie his own development of two kingdoms/natural law/Noahic covenant into these earlier expressions of approaches that sought to distinguish kingdoms or spheres. And there are many points of similarity that VanDrunen properly makes.

His approach, however, in its theory, seems to suffer from a lack of points of integration in which the kingdoms overlap. I say in its theory because in its outworking, as the second part of his book evidences, I find points of integration (though not in some of the areas mentioned above, about marriage and family). I appreciate his doing so but am puzzled as to how to account for them on the basis of his theory. I am encouraged overall, however, because I find VanDrunen both personally and professionally to be someone who is open to bettering his theory and practice and who has done so ever since he began his project in this area.

—Alan D. Strange

Takayuki Yagi. *A Gift from England: William Ames and His Polemical Discourse Against Dutch Arminianism.* Reformed Historical Theology 60. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020. Pp. 202. $138.00 (hardcover).

William Ames is well-known for his substantial role in shaping high orthodox Reformed theology. Remembered for his place in training theological students and for his Puritan brand of piety, his participation in the Arminian controversy in the Netherlands is largely bypassed. Yagi Takayuki seeks to illustrate Ames' substantial input in the Arminian controversy and his broader influence on the Synod of Dort and beyond. As such, the work takes readers through some of the main contours of some of the central issues of Reformed soteriology in a way that helps them understand vital developments during this period.

Writing with succinct clarity and precision, the author leads readers through a host of complex issues in a short space. The breadth of his research is impressive, drawing not only from Ames but from a wide range of primary sources, including Ames' opponents and Reformed orthodox theology more broadly. The result is a solid book marked by robust and satisfying scholarship. He draws great attention to Ames' use of Scripture as well (e.g., pp. 88–95; 153–167), expanding our understanding of post-Reformation exegesis. Following a historical introduction, the author treats the divine will in predestination, redemption accomplished and applied, divine grace and conversion, and the perseverance of the saints. In most chapters, he illustrates how Ames and other Reformed authors sought to harmonize the disputed points of soteriology against Arminianism by pressing the unified work of all three persons of the Trinity in the salvation of the elect. Medieval Thomistic and Scotist ideas play a vital part in this narrative as well (pp. 34, 65, 71). Theological topics examined include the nature of temporary faith, necessity and contingency, the impetration and application of redemption, Christ's oblation and intercession, simultaneous power versus the power of simultaneity, whether the intellect or the

will is the seat of saving faith, and many more. Each of these areas is complex, requiring clarity and precision that is sometimes lost in historical scholarship surrounding this period. Studying Arminian and Reformed soteriologies in their contexts can be challenging, and Takayuki leads his readers through the relevant issues with exceptional skill and accuracy.

It is rare for a single volume, especially in so few pages, to include such a wealth of historical sources and background. In this respect, this volume is not only a useful study of William Ames in its own right but a sound model of historical theology. The Dutch Arminian controversy contributed to shaping high orthodox Reformed thought. Ames' long-forgotten place in this narrative deserves to be rediscovered in order to grasp better the core ideas related to predestination, redemption, conversion, and the perseverance of the saints.

—Ryan M. McGraw