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BOOK REVIEWS & SHORT NOTICES

James Bannerman, *The Church of Christ*: *A Treatise on the Nature, Powers, Ordinances, Discipline and Government of the Christian Church.* 1869. Repr., Banner of Truth Trust, 2015. Pp. xxv + 1009. $50.00 (cloth).

The recent publication (2015) of James Bannerman's *Church of Christ* by Banner of Truth Trust is noteworthy, given its historic influence in ecclesiology and polity. It now appears in one volume, to keep the price down, and English translations have replaced all the Latin, German and French quotations from the (original) 1869 edition. The subtitle of the book, *A Treatise on the Nature, Powers, Ordinances, Discipline and Government of the Christian Church*, as such older subtitles tend to, says it all: Bannerman covers the field with both comprehension and conciseness.

Many have more recently come to embrace Reformed soteriology without adopting Presbyterian ecclesiology and polity. It is helpful to have this seminal work readily available, as noted by Carl Trueman, in his foreword. While admitting that few will agree with all that Bannerman writes (he calls Bannerman's advocacy of the Establishment Principle a "pious hope," reflecting a "now impractical model of church and state"), Trueman insists that Bannerman's lectures are just the tonic necessary to stimulate biblical and historical reflections on the church, beset as it is with the opposition of our post-modern times.

As noted earlier, Bannerman's subtitle is quite descriptive and furnishes the reader with a highly organized, and navigable work. Part I is on the "Nature of the Church," examining the definition of the church in Scripture; the spirituality of the church; the church both as visible and invisible, catholic and local; the marks and members of the church; as well as the church in its relation to the world and to the state (the last having a number of sections). Part II is on the "Power of the Church," setting forth the source of church power, as well as its rule, nature, limits, design, and primary subject. Part III addresses "Matters in Regard to which Church Power is Exercised," in three divisions: in regard to doctrine, ordinances (including sacraments), and discipline. This makes up the bulk of the book (over 400 pages). Part IV is an examination of the "Parties in Whom the Right to Exercise Church Power is Vested," focusing on the divine appointment of a form of church government and the extraordinary office-bearers of the church, before looking at the various non-Presbyterian systems proposed (the Roman Catholic, Episcopalian and the "Independent," the latter comprised of both those who favor congregational rule as well as those who oppose connectional accountability).

Bannerman begins by looking at how the Bible defines the church and then proceeds to speak of the church as a divine and spiritual institution. To say that it is divine is to say that church's author is God, not man. This would stand over against all sorts of human voluntary societies (not the state, however, which also is of divine

origin, though not its particular form, as with the church). That the church is spiritual is to say that it is not civil (as is the state) or biological (as is the family). It is the divine institution given to that which pertains to the spirit and is not chiefly political or the like. This insistence on the church as a divine *and* spiritual institution colors all the rest of the work and may be its genius.

This church is visible and invisible. Insofar as it is the company of those who profess the true religion together with their children, the church is visible. Insofar as it is a spiritual entity, comprised of the elect of all ages, it is invisible. The church in its essence, however, is invisible. Bannerman's discussion of this is quite significant, especially over against the claims of Rome which sees the essence of the church as visible (all those in communion with the Bishop of Rome). This church is catholic (universal in its extent) and local, both of which refer to one, singular church. Both the local and the universal church may be spoken of in the singular.

On the notes (or marks) of the church, Bannerman asserts that there is a distinction between that which makes for the being of the church and that which makes for its well-being. Bannerman argues that the most essential mark of the church is the profession of the true religion—saving faith in Jesus Christ. Rome, however, contents herself in an external and formalized expression of the attributes of the church and does not attend to the heart of the matter, a true profession of saving faith. Rome unchurches all not in communion with her. Bannerman closes this section with a discussion on the relation of the church to the world (as witness), and relationship to the state (from which it is distinct, yet by which it is supported). If one wants a reasonable argument for an established Church (one not dependent on or setting forth some theory of "nations covenanting with God,") this is the place to go.

Part II of Bannerman's work is a treatment of the power of the church. The source of ecclesial power is the Lord Jesus Christ, not the state (as in the Erastian theory) or the Bishop of Rome (as in the Popish theory). Since Christ is the source, the church's rule is the Word of Christ, the Bible. This makes church power, then, ministerial and declarative (not magisterial and legislative, as Rome has it). The church does not have the power to declare canon law but only to minister and declare the Word of God. Here is the foundation for true Christian liberty, which is never at liberty to do anything other than please God. The end or design of church power is that the church has all the necessary power to carry out its divinely-appointed mission of gathering and perfecting the saints. Bannerman argues that the proper subjects of such power are both the office-bearers and the church as a whole as befitted by gifts and circumstances.

The rest of the volume, having established the nature and power of the church, concerns itself with how that power is exercised in doctrine, ordinances, and discipline; which as previously noted, is the bulk of the volume, and merits careful attention. Regarding doctrine, the church has the power to declare God's Word, and to agree on what it means and does not mean (this is the power to draft creeds and confessions). Bannerman ably deals with the standard objections to creeds and confessions by those who oppose them in principle. Regarding ordinances, church power is exercised in both the right and responsibility of the church to make

provisions for public worship. Here Bannerman illuminates the regulative principle (not then called that), which is the use of liturgies and imposed forms of prayers, the Christian Sabbath and ecclesiastical holidays, and then the Christian ministry, including apostolic succession, ordination, and the independent theory of the ministry (opposed to Presbyterian).

In the penultimate section of Part III, Bannerman deals with the Sacraments in general as well as the dominical sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, along the way dealing with Romish perversions and infant baptism (and objections to it, together with its efficacy and the matter of modes). Finally, in the last main division of Part III, Bannerman addresses church power as it is exercised in regard to discipline. Bannerman has a good discussion of nature, design, and limits of church discipline: it is for the glory of Christ, the good of the body, and the restoration of the offender.

In Part IV, Bannerman examines the parties in whom the right to exercise church power is vested and in the first section argues that Presbyterian church government both locally and connectionally is divinely appointed. God has not left the government of his church to the whims of human convention. This understanding of ecclesial power is markedly Presbyterian, in principles and outline. The appendices of this volume deal with church-state matters, Voluntaryism (the conviction that the church should not be established and supported by the state), the Book of Common Order, and more. There are a few disappointments in the book, chiefly the lack of any sustained discussion of the two or three office question, having to do with the distinctiveness of the office of minister. However, given its historical understanding, scriptural reasoning and systemic completeness, Bannerman's considered treatment of the doctrine of the church and its polity is indispensable.

—Alan D. Strange

Joel R. Beeke, *Debated Issues in Sovereign Predestination: Early Lutheran Predestination, Calvinian Reprobation, and Variations in Genevan Lapsarianism*. Reformed Historical Theology 42. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017. Pp. 252. $84.00 (hardcover).

Predestination has frequently occupied the attention of those who are interested in the Bible and theology. Some people make the mistake of equating predestination with Reformed theology, while others react to this trend by underemphasizing the doctrine, emphasizing other distinctive features of Reformed theology exclusively. This tendency to take these opposite extremes is true in historical scholarship as well. While some have argued, mistakenly, that predestination was the central dogma, or teaching, of Reformed theology after Calvin, others have downplayed predestination as a vital component of Reformed thought. In *Debated Issues in Sovereign Predestination*, Joel Beeke presents a balanced approach to the subject. His treatment is a useful introduction to the distinctive features of the early

Reformed doctrine of predestination as compared to Lutheran theology, and to later developments in Reformed thought. His clear and insightful analysis helps readers better understand the development of historic Reformed doctrine without over exalting the importance in the Reformed system of theology.

The greatest strengths of Beeke's work is his simplicity and clarity. Beeke illustrates the Reformed doctrine of predestination by examining the related doctrine of reprobation. He describes the advantage of proceeding this way, writing, "The doctrine of reprobation acts as a hinge upon which the entire doctrine of God's sovereignty in salvation turns…. One's view of reprobation functions as a window into his understanding of election" (66).

This book is divided into three sections. The first section treats predestination in early Lutheran theology, focusing on Lutheran authors, such as, Melanchthon, and the Formula of Concord. The second section explores the doctrine of reprobation in Calvin's theology throughout his career as a theologian and author. The third and final section of the book, traces predestination themes in post-Calvin Geneva beginning with Beza, through Turretin, and into the thought of early Enlightenment professors of theology. His basic conclusion is that while Lutheranism tended to hesitate in either affirming or denying reprobation, Reformed authors regarded it as necessitated by Scripture and by logical inference from the implication of election to salvation. While later Reformed authors differed over the order of the divine decrees, these emphases remained consistent until the post-Enlightenment decline of Reformed theology. Beeke's treatment of these themes is simple, without oversimplifying the relevant issues. His explanation of various Reformed and Arminian positions on the logical order of the divine decrees in chapter thirteen, is particularly clear and straightforward. These features, and others, make his book an excellent starting point for those desiring to understand the doctrinal and pastoral function of predestination in classic Reformed theology.

The only real drawback of this work is that the author depends on too many secondary sources or translated works in the process of building his arguments. It is important in a work of this kind to draw primarily from original Latin texts, rather than getting this material second hand through other authors or translators. However, Beeke more than makes up for this fact through the usefulness of his analysis, though drawing more fully from original sources in their original languages would simply make a good work even better.

Debated Issues in Sovereign Predestination presents the development of the Reformed doctrine of predestination coherently and in a straightforward manner. Beeke achieves this through the lens of the place of reprobation in the Reformed system. The author neither overestimates nor underestimates the role of predestination within classic Reformed theology. Such a clear and well-balanced analysis is precisely what is needed in good historical theology. Beeke's treatment of this subject will help pastors and theological students as well as historians of classic Reformed theology.

—Ryan M. McGraw

Oliver D. Crisp. *Deviant Calvinism: Broadening Reformed Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014. Pp. xi + 260. $34.00 (paperback). *Saving Calvinism: Expanding the Reformed Tradition.* DownersGrove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016. Pp. 165. $18.00 (paperback).

Oliver Crisp has written a number of intriguing and insightful books in recent years. He is a theologian with philosophical forte that fits with his project of doing theology in the analytic mode. The two volumes presented here are related in theme, each treating aspects of the wider Reformed tradition. Although these books do not overlap in every respect, they do echo one another and treat some topics in common. *Deviant Calvinism* (*DC),* published first, is the meatier, more academic volume. *Saving Calvinism* (*SC*) is deliberately written for a broader audience. Both books aim to re-introduce readers to the wider tradition of Calvinism, and both debunk the notion that TULIP, as such, captures what it means to be Reformed. Both books also show how some prominent Reformed voices from the past have been forgotten—voices that have something to offer believers today—including those who regard themselves as *Young, Restless, and Reformed*. Moreover, both books have provocative titles. Who, after all, are the deviants in *DC*? And what needs saving in *SC*?

Turning to *DC* first, in successive chapters Crisp focuses on issues surrounding faith and tradition, the idea of eternal justification, non-deterministic Calvinism relative to human freedom, followed by four chapters treating varieties of universalism, and then a chapter on the double-payment objection pertaining to the doctrine of unlimited atonement. In short, Crisp brings to the fore forgotten Reformed thinkers whose ideas deserve analysis and reflection. Relative to writers who have defended some version of eternal justification, Crisp mentions Karl Barth, Abraham Kuyper, Herman Hoeksema, John Gill, and William Twisse. Critics of this doctrine includes Herman Bavinck, Louis Berkhof, and G.C. Berkouwer. On the topic of libertarian Calvinism, Crisp bids us to examine the work of John Girardeau, Sir William Hamilton, and William Cunningham, and the recent volume *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, edited by van Asselt, Bac, and te Velde. On universalism Crisp looks at a variety of writers, among others Augustine, Karl Barth, and William Hastie. On particularism Crisp explores ideas in John Owen and some modern writers. The last two chapters devote extended attention to Amyraldian ideas, specifically hypothetical universalism and the objection to its doctrine of Christ shedding his blood for persons who are finally damned for their sins. Here Crisp once more brings John Owen into the discussion, along with Charles Hodge, but focuses on Robert L. Dabney and John Davenant who seek to refute the "double-payment" objection.

Crisp's aim is to show how these varied construals of sound doctrine, even if little known today, are fibers in the fabric of the Reformed theological garment; they belong to the Reformed family of ideas. With their rediscovery, they are receiving renewed attention. This is what Crisp means by the subtitle of this book, "Broadening Reformed Theology." His project is to expose and debunk myths that otherwise inhibit this goal. Crisp says, "Some myths still persist: that Reformed

theologians exercise an anti-experiential religion; that they all hold to a doctrine of double predestination; that they are theological determinists, effectively denying human freedom; that the internal logic of their views about divine ordination should drive them to embrace universalism; and that they regard the atonement as definite in scope and intended for a particular number of people, the elect, so that the vast majority of the human race is simply damned without any chance of salvation" (237). What is mythological here, is that each claim is not the *whole* story. Crisp is not denying that theological precision has its place; but the lines can be drawn narrower than the Reformed confessions themselves, and this disallows theology to flourish.

In this book readers will find much to chew on. Crisp desires a softer, wider Calvinism, inclusive of the deviant Calvinists; indeed, they are not deviants after all.

Should Crisp's provocative volume on deviant Calvinism fail to make one deviate from his or her own theological path, Crisp bids readers to still embrace a wider perspective on what constitutes the Reformed tradition and avail themselves of insights from that bigger world.

The smaller, more recent volume authored by Crisp, is entitled *Saving Calvinism*. This book, like *DC*, wants to alert Reformed Christians to their "theological amnesia," inasmuch as they have forgotten much of their Reformed heritage. Crisp pleads that we must read old books alongside new ones.

Chapter one of *SC* punctures the notion that Calvinism is simply a big balloon called TULIP. Chapter two explores how the doctrine of election, God's eternal purpose, is a blessed (not a sinister) doctrine, especially as he leaves in God's hands the final salvific scope of divine election. This topic segues to the third chapter which treats free will and salvation. The views of Jonathan Edwards and John Girardeau are explored, along with their accompanying theological consequences. Crisp is more sympathetic with Edwards's position, even though Girardeau's view aims to distance Calvinism from raw determinism and its attendant problems. In the fourth chapter Crisp, in dialogue with William G.T. Shedd, B.B. Warfield, and Karl Barth, argues for an optimistic version of particularism. In the last two chapters of this book, Crisp examines the doctrine of the atonement relative to its nature (chapter five) and its scope (chapter six). These last two chapters return to themes also explored in *DC.*

In summarizing his own work, Crisp is not suggesting that TULIP should be jettisoned. Instead, he is arguing that TULIP allows a more accommodating embrace of ideas than often thought. Crisp likens theological traditions to great rivers carving up a rugged landscape. That landscape is diverse and textured, deep and wide. The Reformed tradition is no exception. It is confessional in nature, but the confessions allow reasonable diversity. The confessions themselves do not forbid the writing of new confessions. Core commitments can be constructed in ways that reveal disagreement without failing to qualify as orthodox and catholic in the best senses of those terms. In *SC* what Crisp wants to save is the Reformed tradition itself—to save it from losing its diversity. He also wants to rescue some theologians of that tradition from the dustbins of history.

Like *DC*, this shorter, simpler book, addresses topics that are controversial. However, in engaging Crisp's views, along with the views of writers he evokes and examines, readers are forced to think through issues afresh and sharpen their own convictions on the topics presented. Crisp is Professor of Systematic Theology in the School of Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary. Crisp's writing is lucid, his mind is sharply analytic, and his manner of engaging theological controversy is irenic.

—J. Mark Beach

Peter H. Davids, *A Theology of James, Peter and Jude: Living in the Light of the Coming King.* Biblical Theology of the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014. Pp. 340. $39.99 (hardcover).

In the *Biblical Theology of the New Testament* series published by Zondervan, author Peter H. Davids has written an academically significant volume on the theology of James, Peter, and Jude. Having already written major commentaries on the books which are the focus of this volume, he is an undoubtedly qualified scholar for this endeavor. Put in their historical order, James, Jude, and 1 and 2 Peter form four of the seven "Catholic" or General Epistles. At least two of them (James and 1 Peter), and possibly the others (with the exception of 2 and 3 John), were letters sent to multiple churches. I agree with Davids that a good hearing is what these letters deserve, for it is true that their voices have been quite often neglected both in the academy and in the church.

Peter, James, and Jude are united in the fact that they speak about Jesus as the Christ, the Anointed One. Additionally, sacrificial terminology is most prominent in 1 Peter. The title "Savior" is found only in 2 Peter and Jude, but their particular Christological emphases are built on the common foundation that Jesus is Lord. In all these four letters Jesus is confessed as Lord. Davids does not mention it, but I would state explicitly that this title clearly has the overtones of the Old Testament name of YHWH. This is certainly the case when Jesus is called the "Lord of glory" in James 2:1.

Davids rightly remarks that another feature of these four letters is that they all view sin as rooted in desire. He notes that a quarter of the uses of the Greek term for desire (ἐπιθυμία) occur in these four relatively short letters. All these letters speak about the coming day of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the reason that Davids gave his work the subtitle: *Living in the Light of the Coming King*. James says that it is near (Jas 5:8) or at the door (Jas 5:9). In 1 Peter 1:7 we read about the revelation of Jesus Christ, and in his second letter Peter makes clear what the purpose is in the delay of the coming of Christ. Jude uses the prophecy of 1 Enoch 1:9 to describe the coming of the Lord to execute judgment.

It is likely that 1 Peter is also dependent on traditions we know from 1 Enoch when we read in 1 Peter 3:19 about the spirits in prison. Davids rightly stresses that there is no evidence that Jude regarded 1 Enoch as Scripture. But more than Davids, I am inclined to say that the canon was already closed around the beginning of the

first century. The Old Testament, in the form we know it, was regarded by all parties within Judaism in the first century as divine Scripture. It is clear that within certain groups of the Judaism of the Second Temple, including the sect of Qumran, some other books were seen almost on the same level.

It is certainly true that Jude made use of traditions found in the Second Temple literature that add to the Old Testament. I find the explanation (not explicitly given by Davids) of Curtis P. Giese (*2 Peter and Jude*, Concordia Commentary [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing, 2012]) on James, really satisfying. Giese states that Jude had a selective favorable impression of 1 Enoch and quoted a portion as prophetic and factual, but that there is no evidence that he considered the rest of 1 Enoch as authentic and inspired. Additionally, he does not affirm 1 Enoch's interpretation of Genesis 6 with reference to the angels.

James, Jude, and 1 and 2 Peter all claim to have been written by an author identified with the early community of Jesus's followers in Jerusalem. James is the brother of Jesus and Jude the brother of James. Peter is one of the Twelve and within that circle, in a certain sense, the most important one. With regard to the often disputed authorship of these epistles, Davids remarks that the use of a secretary or amanuensis (who quite often had significant freedom in the composition of a letter), was very usual in the ancient world, and he assumes that this may be the case here. It seems to me that it is possible that less freedom was given to the secretary or amanuensis than Davids suggests. But surely the differences between 1 and 2 Peter are most easily explained in this way as John Calvin noted in his commentary on 2 Peter.

The work of Davids is a reliable guide to these often neglected letters of the New Testament. There is always the danger to concentrate on the Pauline letters, and not listen with equal attention to the voices of the other New Testament epistles. First Peter especially reminds us that we are pilgrims, and was of great importance to the Christian community which was such a small minority within society. In particular 2 Peter, but also Jude, and in another way 1 Peter, are clear that Jesus is a divine monarch who far surpasses all earthly powers. James does well in reminding us that true faith is most demonstrated through good works and a godly life, and we must not live by the values of this age. The volume written by Davids is the third in a projected eight-volume set. I am personally and eagerly looking for the publication of the other forthcoming volumes.

—Pieter de Vries

William D. Dennison, *In Defense of the Eschaton: Essays in Reformed Apologetics*. Edited by James Douglas Baird. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015. Pp. xxviii + 197. $29.00 (paperback).

In Defense of the Eschaton is an anthology composed of eleven chapters, consisting of eight articles and three book reviews written by William D. Dennison over the course of nearly twenty years (1993-2011). While these chapters touch upon a host

of issues in apologetic method and application—including the history of philosophy, epistemology, common grace, the antithesis, Christian education, and natural and special revelation—they are unified around a basic idea first developed in Dennison's ThM thesis, *Paul's Two-Age Construction: Its Significance for Apologetics*. In this seminal volume Dennison constructs a biblical and distinctly Reformed theological foundation upon which his subsequent work is built. This review will begin with a brief explication of this foundational idea, followed by a summary of two of its applications, and conclude with a few suggested areas for further study.

In his ThM work, Dennison provides a masterful integration of eschatology and apologetics along the lines of the Apostle Paul's comprehensive division of history into two ages: the present age and the age to come (see Eph. 1:21). This redemptive-historical scheme supplies the architectural structure for his biblically-constructed apologetic method. Here Dennison is synthesizing and advancing the methodological insights of two premier Reformed theologians of the twentieth century: Geerhardus Vos and Cornelius Van Til. Predominantly, he is drawing upon Vos's conception of the history of special revelation (or biblical theology), as supernatural, progressive, and organic, as well as Van Til's commitment to the self-contained ontological Trinity as the sole alpha and omega point for a coherent system of knowledge. It is this keen sensitivity to redemptive-history and unwavering allegiance to the triune God of Scripture that is a noteworthy strength and unique contribution of Dennison's work. It equips him not to discard his confessionally Reformed distinctions in the apologetic endeavor, but rather to consistently and robustly maintain and apply them.

The question, then, is how does Paul's two-age construction of history impact the apologetic task of the church today? Dennison points out that there is a fundamental epistemological and ethical (not metaphysical or psychological) antithesis between the two ages. The present age is defined by the first Adam, who failed to remain faithful to the absolute authority of God's Word and "was caught in the web of seduction by the god of this age" (107). The corresponding epistemology of all unbelievers who are in Adam is an autonomous rationalism or empiricism: beginning and ending with man's own mind or senses. Those who are in Adam are conditioned by a mind of rebellion against the Creator and defiantly prop themselves up as independent, absolute interpreters of the world.

The age to come, on the other hand, is defined by the second and last Adam, that is, the glorified person of Christ, who lives by every word that comes from the mouth of God. The corresponding epistemology of all believers in Christ begins and ends with God's Word (thinking God's thoughts *after* him). In union with Christ, the believer has been raised with him and seated with him in the heavenly places (Col. 3:1; Eph. 2:6). For this reason they are to set their minds on things that are *above*, not on things that are on *earth* (Col. 3:2). Dennison has termed this biblical way of thinking, *eschatological*. James Baird, in his helpful introduction to the volume, explains this choice of term: "If Christians are to think biblically, they must think in a way that is principally shaped not by abstract systematic categories, but rather by the epochal structure of redemptive history as set forth in Scripture. Paul

was mentally drawn up into the progressive unfolding of the triune God's plan … so should we be drawn up, especially when confronting the challenges of unbelief" (xxiii). The believer is today redemptive-historically positioned in the age to come, that is, in the eschaton, while the unbeliever remains entirely in the present age. This redemptive-historical divide between the believer and unbeliever defines the apologetic task as "a defense (*apologia*) of the final state of heavenly life, a state into which [the believer] has already entered through Christ; he is in defense of the eschaton" (108). Apologetics, then, is "the vindication of the presence of Christ and his church against the various forms of the non-Christian philosophy of life that constantly attempt to invade and intrude that presence" (130). This is the basic redemptive-historical structure that Dennison is working with in the various articles and reviews that comprise *In Defense of the Eschaton*.

In its first application, Dennison properly situates Van Til's worldview approach not in "the context of an analysis of language," as he argues John Frame does because of his commitment to analytic philosophy, but rather "in the context of history" (28). The economic Trinity has revealed ontological knowledge of God to man *in history*. This self-revelation of God was progressively and organically given in the facts of redemptive-history. It is upon this revelation that "our knowledge of anything is dependent" and Van Til's epistemology was shaped. In other words, "God's providential control of the creation is unfolded in the context of the ontological Trinity's revelation of himself in history (economic Trinity)" (29). In short, Van Til's epistemology "was concerned with a holistic philosophy of life embedded in a philosophy of history" (32).

A second application deals with Van Til's formulation of the doctrine of common grace. Dennison argues that a proper understanding of Van Til's position requires that it be situated within the holistic context of his philosophy of history, which takes shape according to biblical revelation. The question is where does common grace find its source in history? Van Til does *not* locate it after the fall, as if it were God's non-redemptive response to the reprobate, but rather, in the pre-redemptive state. There Adam received pre-redemptive revelation in his original status as the federal head and representative of all mankind. "Being in union with Adam's original status," writes Dennison, "mankind has a holistic consciousness of pre-redemptive revelation within them and the testimony of a holistic pre-redemptive revelation to them that continues throughout all the stages of history, even to the final consummation. Van Til calls the continuation of this original status *common grace*" (50).

Following the fall, the pre-redemptive common grace that belonged to the original state continues in man as he now exists in a depraved state. This is so, because mankind continues in his *metaphysical* and *psychological* knowledge from his original pre-redemptive state (remaining the image of God and being unable to escape God's revelation outside and within himself), which enables him to be a person who can contribute greatly to human culture. Yet, sin has produced in him an *epistemological* and *ethical* rebellion against this original pre-redemptive revelation. So while the unbeliever can correctly affirm that 2+2=4, for example, this mathematical proposition operates for him "in the context of man-interpreted

facts and a chance created universe which are epistemologically and ethically antithetical to the continual meaning and purposes of God's revelation." It is only the believer who can truly interpret the facts of this world as to their definition and explanation, which cannot be separated, since he does so with "a heart in obedience to his Creator and with a confession that his Creator is the fountain of all truth" (54). For Van Til, those who reject any notion of common grace, like Hoeksema, deny any significance to a Reformed conception of revelational history.

It would be helpful to conclude with three suggestions (one theological, one exegetical, and one practical) for the advancement of Reformed apologetics in the vein of Dennison's work. First, while Dennison is helpful in situating Van Til's epistemology within the holistic context of his philosophy of revelation, especially in chapter 2, it is surprising that he does not deal at all with what Van Til termed his "representational principle." In his *A Survey of Christian Epistemology,* Van Til states that this principle is "the heart of the Christian theistic theory of knowledge" (2d ed [Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1980], 109). This principle provides a deeper integration of the elements already present in Dennison's work: Trinity, covenant, and eschatology. Van Til writes, "The *covenant idea* is nothing but the expression of the *representational principle* consistently applied to all reality. The foundation of the representational principle among men is the fact that the *Trinity* exists in the form of a mutually exhaustive representation of the three Persons that constitute it" (96). In other words, eschatology is the historical consummation of the covenant idea, which expresses the representational principle that is grounded in the perichoretic relations of the ontological Trinity. While the implications of this for Van Til's apologetic cannot be explored further here, the reader is pointed to the work of Lane Tipton in his dissertation, "The Triune Personal God: Trinitarian Theology in the Thought of Cornelius Van Til" (PhD diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 2004).

Second, apologists often draw from Romans 1-3 where Paul speaks about certain unbelievers who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth (1:18). The extent of this suppression as to its noetic effects upon individuals and its universality among all peoples has been debated. Even within Reformed circles it has formed a dividing line between classical and presuppositional (or covenantal) apologetics. Dennison, being of the latter conviction, writes, "In Romans 1:18-3:20, Paul sets up a strict antithesis between the righteous and the unrighteous upon the landscape of creation in revelational history" (145). In order to advance the presuppositional position it would be helpful to integrate the exegetical insights found in Marcus Mininger's recent publication, *Uncovering the Theme of Revelation in Romans 1:16-3:26: Discovering a New Approach to Paul's Argument,* WUNT 2/445 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017). While soteriological concerns have often dominated Reformed exegesis of these early chapters of Romans, Mininger uncovers a deeper theme of revelation that does not contradict but more firmly establishes these concerns. The implications of this for apologetics remain to be developed.

Third, Reformed apologetics in the vein of Van Til, rarely ever get beyond methodology, either positively constructing it or deconstructing ones that are

inconsistent with the self-attesting Christ of Scripture. While this volume is filled with such methodological concerns, as is found in its critical review of Timothy Keller's book *The Reason for God*, Dennison is to be commended for its actual application in such fields as classical Christian education and interdisciplinary studies. His work, however, is far from exhaustive, and so presents a challenge to all who take up and read to continue in the present day defense of the eschaton, beginning and ending with God's Word.

—Daniel Ragusa

Darren Dochuk, Thomas Kidd, and Kurt W. Peterson, eds., *American Evangelicalism: George Marsden and the State of American Religious History*. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2014. Pp. xvi + 518. $66.00 (hardcover).

George Marsden has long been hailed as the dean of American religious historians, and this festschrift is a fitting tribute to him and his service to the American academy. This volume is written and edited by former students of Professor Marsden, particularly those who "have benefited directly from George's instruction—whether through coursework, dissertation advising, or scholarly consultation—and have pursued research and writing agendas shaped under his counsel" (xv). Contributors to the foreword of this work are the notable religious historians Nathan Hatch, Mark Noll, Harry Stout and Grant Wacker who, together with Marsden, Jon Butler, and a few others, have signally influenced American religious history in recent decades.

The editors divided the book into five sections, with each section addressing one of Marsden's major works and its time period. One of Marsden's virtues was quality rather than quantity. Some contemporaries in the same field have written more, but no one has written as clearly, carefully, and contextually as has Dr. Marsden, which is exemplified by the first section of this work. Section one deals with Marsden's peerless biography, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (published in 2003, the 300th anniversary of Edward's birth). Marsden did not address things chronologically in his career: beginning with Edwards and the American colonial period. But when he arrived there, Edwards, one of the most important figures in American religious history, received remarkable treatment at Marsden's hand, as fully recognized and appreciated by Douglas Sweeney, Thomas Kidd, and John Wigger, who each, in turn, discuss Marsden's presentation of Edwards, isolating themes that they freshly address in the course of which they point in new directions in our grappling with the history of American religion. In general, all of the contributions, in each of the five parts, explore different methodologies and approaches to the history of evangelicalism and the American religious past.

Section two takes us back to the beginning of Marsden's career and the publication of his first book, his Ph.D. dissertation from Yale University (under the great colonial American historian Edmund Morgan), *The Evangelical Mind and the*

New School Presbyterian Experience (1970). Several leading students interact with this work, with Margaret Bendroth dealing with the historians and historiography to emerge from Marsden's work here, and Jay Case with the intersection of this and African-American religious history. Peter Wallace deals most directly with Marsden's contribution in his dissertation. Wallace himself has notably contributed to the literature with a massive dissertation under Marsden at Notre Dame, serving as the Old School counterpart to Marsden's New School thesis. Wallace's dissertation treats, in greater depth and breadth, all the main issues confronting the Old School and also merits publication.

Section three concerns itself with Marsden's *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (1980). This was Marsden's customarily, level-headed treatment of dispensationalism and fundamentalism (dispensationalists were all fundamentalists, but not vice-versa; fundamentalism was a broader category, including Princetonians as well as international scholars). Five former students of Marsden contribute here, exploring the roles of particular figures like D.L. Moody and R.A. Torrey, as well as the impact of Marsden's work on the whole field of the study of fundamentalist Christianity, including modern fundamentalism.

Section four focuses on *The Soul of the American University* (1994), which is Marsden's examination of the secularization of the academy. American universities and colleges were once under the thrall of the "Protestant establishment." Having thrown off that yoke, institutions embraced unbelief as the new establishment credo. Thus, there is no tolerance for a Christian perspective within academia. Marsden traces this history (while fairly pointing out many problems of the era in which Protestantism dominated), and laments the vicious secularism that has marginalized Christianity and Christians. He argues that if feminist and other such perspectives can have their say that Christianity should too as part of the "many voices" that contribute to the post-modern mix. Marsden's argues this point very much in the same fashion that Alvin Plantinga contends that Christianity should have a place at the table when it comes to philosophy. Four students address this topic, including a fascinating essay by Rick Ostrander on "The Southernization of the Evangelical Mind," and another on the place of evangelical ministries in the secular university. There is something almost quaint about the contributions in this section, not to mention Marsden's book of twenty three years ago. The events of the last three years (since the book was published) have often cast biblical Christianity as an illegitimate voice promoting hatred, and it would be a fair to consider how this might impact Marsden's work and the reflection on it.

Section five concludes with *Reforming Evangelicalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (1987). This work of Marsden extends his earlier work on fundamentalism and shows how it transformed itself from its cultural backwater status to a more significant player as fundamentalism developed into a broader evangelicalism. Westminster Theological Seminary, founded in reaction to the liberalization of Princeton Theological Seminary in 1929, The Bible Presbyterian Seminary (Faith), and other such schools, including dispensational ones like Dallas Theological Seminary, all seemed to some, like Charles Fuller (and Billy Graham), to be fighting in a rear-guard fashion . This is why they and many others, including

significant theological conservatives like Carl F.H. Henry and Harold Lindsell, founded Fuller Seminary. Fuller would be a place where one could stay inside the PCUSA, instead of leaving it like Westminster students did, and seek to bring the church back to a more evangelical place from within (though its success in this is quite questionable). Several fine essays address this and the place of such in post-World War II America, including evangelicals on the left end of the political spectrum.

This volume closes with a list of Marsden's doctoral students and their dissertations, as well as a helpful bibliography of his works. Marsden has commanded the attention and earned the respect that he has due to his careful research and use of sources, his excellent and engaging mind, expressing his thoughts cogently and compellingly, all in a way that is scrupulously fair in his treatment of persons and subject matter and supremely contextual in all that he writes. He also has proven a very fine teacher and there is no greater tribute to that than this volume of thoughtful essays that appropriate and extend his immeasurable contributions to the scholarship of American religious history.

—Alan D. Strange

Douglas J. Douma, *The Presbyterian Philosopher: The Authorized Biography of Gordon H. Clark.* Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2017. Pp. xxv + 292. $37.00 (paperback).

The cachet "authorized," especially when part of the title or subtitle of a biography, seems to imply that the cooperation of heirs to the subject lends authority to the book. Of course, it often means that the author's treatment of the life of the subject meets with the approval of the heirs, and in the Christian context, that the book is a panegyric. It's then fair to ask: Is this book hagiography or a critical look at the subject in his context? I believe that this volume, despite some mild criticism of Clark here and there, tends to the former, particularly seeking to serve as a corrective to what is perceived to be "bad press" about Gordon H. Clark. Clark has indeed received censure with respect to a number of events in his life, particularly surrounding his seeking ordination in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church Presbytery of Philadelphia, and crossing swords with Cornelius Van Til in the process. The question raised by Douma is whether the criticism that Clark has suffered has been fair. Douma does not think that it has; this reviewer thinks otherwise.

Clark claimed that human knowledge vis-à-vis divine knowledge is univocal, which is to say, that there is an identity between God's knowledge as Creator and ours as creatures. To be sure, Clark conceded, God knows in a far greater measure than we do: his knowledge is, in every respect, of an incomparably greater degree than ours. Van Til argued that human knowledge in this respect is analogical, which is to say, that it is both like and unlike God's knowledge. The difference, in other words, is not just in degree but in kind. God is a different kind of being than humans, an affirmation that is key to the Creator/creature distinction, which Van Tilians

commonly alleged Clark to fail to make. This means, as Van Tilians in the matters before the OPC in the late 40s sought to maintain, albeit clumsily at times, that there is no single point of *identity* between the knowledge of God and man, although there are countless points of *likeness* (man being made in the image of God and given reason by God to understand God's general and special revelation). Clark's insistence on univocal knowledge, many contemporaries and later observers insisted, tends to deny or diminish the incomprehensibility of God, as well as divine simplicity.

With respect to all the facts of Clark's life, as far as I can tell, Douma gets it right (except for the significant omission about Clark's view of saving faith, below). Clark is an important figure in twentieth-century church history, which Douma explores. This book is valuable and worth reading for that reason alone. To the chagrin of some like Edmund P. Clowney, Douma notes, critics have labeled Clark a rationalist. I do not believe that Douma has cleared him of this, either with respect to Clark's position on univocal knowledge and divine simplicity, or, as below, with respect to Clark's position on saving faith. Additionally, I do not think that Douma satisfactorily demonstrates that Clark surmounted his Nestorian tendencies.

Having said all of that, I am not sure that Clark's differences were not internecine disputes that were properly in-house. Douma does a good job in setting forth all the particulars of the "Clark case" (chapters 6-8), and showing how clarity was lacking at points. But, perhaps even more so, Douma raises questions about whether the differences that parties genuinely had with Clark were the proper subject for complaint, or instead, something that could arguably have been constructed in such a way as to remain within confessional bounds.

While Douma gives admirable attention to the details of Clark's life, he falters at times in the broader context. He describes (chapters 4-5) the New School/Old School division in the Presbyterian Church as lasting from 1837-1865, at which point they reunited. The New and Old Schools in the North, in fact, reunited in 1869 (in the South they did so during the War). There are places that, here and there, when not focusing directly on Clark, Douma stumbles, though these slips do not mar the overall value of the work.

One of the most egregious positions staked out by Clark theologically is his position on saving faith. A volume by Clark addressed this, entitled *What is Saving Faith?* published posthumously in 2004 (by the Trinity Foundation), and reviewed by this writer in this Journal in that same year (*Mid-America Journal of Theology* 15 [2004]: 217-226). There were actually two works being published under this title: *Faith and Saving Faith* (first published by Trinity in 1983) and *The Johannine Logos* (first published in 1972). While the two works addressed concerns particular to each, they both treated the nature of saving faith and both came to a unified position. Saving faith, as Clark asserts time and again, consists in intellectual assent to the propositions of Scripture, most particularly to the propositions that define the way of salvation (*What is Saving Faith?* 82-88).

What is important here is that Clark defines faith as "assent alone." All the Reformers rejected such an intellectualized definition of faith, insisting that it properly consisted not only of *notitia* and *assensus* [knowledge and assent], but also

crucially and formatively, of *fiducia* [trust]. In this work on faith, Clark repeatedly asserts that he does not know what this "something else" that is needed in addition to knowledge and assent is. His rationalism does not seem to permit him to recognize what "trust" is, and he repeatedly evacuates faith of trust, believing that anything in addition to assent must be a work foreign to the biblical notion of faith.

I belabor this to note that there is no discussion of this whatsoever in this volume by Douma. He fails to list either *Faith and Saving Faith* (1983) or *What is Saving Faith?* (2004) in his bibliography. Is Douma unaware of this seminal work published in Clark's lifetime and republished a dozen or so years ago? Certainly Clark does discuss his (arguably) Sandemanian view of faith in other works of his, including *The Johannine Logos*, which are cited in the bibliography; but Douma does not mention this at all in his biography of Clark. Even if one deems that Douma has rehabilitated Clark with respect to the Clark-Van Til debate, Douma's failure to engage Clark's deficient view of faith is a serious shortcoming in this work.

As noted above, I believe that Clark's rationalism remains evident in the so-called Clark-Van Til controversy. However, even if one believes that the holes Douma pokes in this clear Clark of the charge, Clark's intellectualized definition of faith demonstrates that he nevertheless remains a rationalist. The more recondite debate about whether human knowledge is analogical or univocal with respect to God's knowledge may not be clear, especially to those untrained philosophically. The person in the pew, however, can recognize that to define faith in a way that robs it of trust, which is personal, and reduce it to a knowledge of and assent to propositions, is an inadequate, rationalistic view of faith that is not what the Scriptures teach, and a view not held by the Reformers. It gives me no pleasure to point this out once again, but I have to do so in the face of this new attempt to exonerate Gordon Clark of rationalism. His reputation as a rationalist is a just one, and we must be especially careful to repudiate his deficient view of saving faith.

—Alan D. Strange

John M. Frame, *Apologetics: A Justification of Christian Belief*. 2d ed. Edited by Joseph E. Torres. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 2015. Pp. xliii + 328. $19.99 (paperback).

After more than twenty years, this book is an "extensively redeveloped and expanded version" of Frame's *Apologetics to the Glory of God* (1994). A whole new generation of would-be, presuppositional apologists now have easy access to Frame's apologetic approach, which he has long described as a sympathetic critical interaction (*inter alia*) with the apologetics of Cornelius Van Til (1895-1986). By this, Frame means that his appropriation of Van Til's insight and transcendental approach is not as a groupie nor as a debunker, but as one who appreciates Van Til's approach and develops his own constructive apologetics from that launch pad.

Frame can be remarkably effective in doing so and much of that is reflected in this re-worked volume. I had the privilege in 2013 of hearing Frame as one of the

keynote speakers at the ETS national convention in Baltimore, MD. Frame gave an excellent address that had many in the room assenting to what he said, many of whom I knew did not self-identify as Reformed (never mind presuppostional, or covenantal, to use Scott Oliphint's favored term). Professor Frame was giving his distinctive approach without the lingo and without announcing that it was Reformed, and he was winning over the large broadly evangelical audience.

I found this to be quite encouraging and a testament to the reality that if we define our approach to apologetics or soteriology or other theological branches largely in biblical terms we may be able to persuade at least some fellow evangelicals who would otherwise give us no hearing if we used explicitly Reformed language. Though Frame uses plenty of standard apologetic terminology in this volume, the spirit of employing an approach that is thoroughly biblical above all pervades the book and, together with Frame's customary charity and irenic tone, makes this an invaluable resource for all interested apologists.

Frame begins with the basics (definitions, presuppositions, circular arguments, the sufficiency of Scripture, etc.), and proceeds to set forth and engage the basics of philosophy (metaphysics, including the being of God; epistemology and ethics). After some methodological considerations, he plunges into the heart of his approach—the transcendental argument for the existence of God (i.e., without God you cannot prove anything else, which is to say that God is the necessary and indispensable precondition of all predication). Deny God, according to Frame, and you deny the possibility of logic, ethics, and science, which all unbelievers admit exist.

Continuing with positive proofs for God's existence, Frame examines the classic theistic arguments (extending back to Anselm and Aquinas), as well as the evidence for the person and work of Christ. Negatively, Frame proceeds to an excellent extended discussion on the problem of evil and the critique of unbelief, showing the latter to be internally inconsistent and incoherent. Finally, Frame ends with an illustrative dialog with an unbeliever in which the reader will observe him employing the method(s) set forth herein this work.

A series of seven appendices follow the completed work, including ones addressing the Ligonier Apologetics (of Sproul, Gerstner and company), fideism, divine aseity, and a helpful apologetics glossary. Throughout this welcomed second edition, Frame continues to express himself with his usual clarity and evangelical zeal, one of the greatest strengths of an approach that does not see apologetics as a rationalistic enterprise that lays the groundwork for gospel presentation, but rather one that views the tasks as complementary, and puts apologetics fully in the service of the gospel.

—Alan D. Strange

Jonathan I. Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament: An exegetical and biblical-theological study.* New Studies in Biblical Theology 42. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017. Pp. 203. $22.00 (paperback).

This book is different from most books on preaching. Most of them deal with practical matters, focusing on the "how to's" of preaching. In contrast, Griffiths attempts to set before the reader the Scriptural warrant for preaching in a 'post-apostolic context'. I dare say, I agree with the author's claim that most Evangelical and Reformed pastors today assume "the distinctiveness and centrality of 'preaching'" without being able "to articulate a fully adequate definition of preaching from Scripture" (1). Griffiths seeks to help preachers articulate a Scriptural definition of preaching in the post-apostolic era, setting it apart from other forms of word ministry in the Church.

Why do we need a biblical basis for preaching today? The main reason Griffiths gives is worth quoting in full: "Establishing whether there is a biblical basis for the practice of 'preaching' is vitally important because our conclusions on that matter will determine whether we cling to preaching in times when it falls out of favour in evangelical culture or in seasons of church life when it appears to be less effective. If the significance of preaching is merely its historical pedigree or practical usefulness, then there is little compelling reason to maintain the practice of preaching when times change" (4).

Apart from helping us maintain the centrality and necessity of preaching, clarifying the biblical-theological nature of preaching has significant effects on a number of aspects in our ministry and church life. It determines how preachers prepare and deliver their sermons, how they pray for their preaching, and it shapes the congregation's expectations of preaching, to name but a few. It also has a significant impact on our conviction of whether the preaching ministry ought to exclude women, or not. These reasons shows us why looking closely at the scriptural warrant for preaching is so important.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I deals with foundational matters: the word of God in biblical theology, the language of 'preaching' in the New Testament, and how preaching is distinct from, and related to the general word ministries of all believers.

Part II, the central part of the book, is exegetical studies on some of the key biblical passages on preaching. It covers these topics: the preacher's charge (2 Tim. 3-4); the preacher's commission (Rom. 10); the power of the gospel in authentic Christian preaching (1 Cor.); beholding the glory of God in preaching (2 Cor. 2-6); preaching the very words of God (1 Thess. 1-2); and finally, preaching to the gathered people of God (Heb.)

Part III summarizes the exegetical findings and then seeks to formulate the Biblical-theological conclusions we can draw from this exegetical work. There are also two excurses. One on the identity of the preachers in Philippians 1:14-18 who preach Christ with the wrong motives; and the other, on Biblical-theological connections between the New Testament preaching and Old Testament prophesy.

The reader will appreciate the brevity and yet thoroughness with which Griffiths discuss these central passages on preaching. The chapter on Hebrews was particularly fascinating, as it reveals the biblical perspective on preaching in action. Griffiths' "Summary and conclusions" are also of great value, and should be returned to often, since they contain much encouragement to preachers. Two examples of this encouragement will suffice. First, making the point that *Preaching is a proclamation of the word of God*, Griffiths states: "The New Testament makes it clear that preachers act as God's heralds who proclaim his word on his behalf. When authentic, faithful Christian preaching of the biblical word takes place, *that preaching constitutes a true proclamation of the word of God that enables God's own voice to be heard.* This is the implication of Paul's teaching concerning the commissioning of preachers in Romans 10; it is the force of Timothy's commission in 2 Timothy 4:2; it is the plain implication of 1 Thessalonians 2:13; and it is manifestly the conviction of the writer of Hebrews who believes that through his preached 'word' the living God is addressing his people 'today' " (122).

God himself still speaks to his people through the proclamation of His word, which ought to be a great encouragement to pastors regarding the importance of their preaching.

The second example comes a little later in this work, when Griffiths emphasizes the context of preaching within the Christian assembly. Commenting on Hebrews 12:18-25, he makes this amazing point: "Within the progression of God's salvation purposes, the Christian assembly addressed by the Hebrews sermon (and with it, the local Christian assembly today) stands between those two great assemblies. For God's people here on earth, so much of the experience of the heavenly assembly in Zion remains a future reality. However, there is one experience we on earth share in common with God's people gathered in heaven: as we gather in an earthly assembly to hear God's word proclaimed, we hear the same God addressing us from heaven through his word (Heb. 12:25). And so the experience of hearing the proclamation of God's word alongside God's people in the local church is nothing less than a foretaste of heaven" (132).

What a great encouragement for maintaining the centrality of preaching in our worship! Tasting heaven as God speaks to us through his word; what a great thought! *Preaching in the New Testament: An exegetical and biblical-theological study* by Jonathan I. Griffiths is a great scholarly resource and encouragement to pastors in their regular work of exegesis and preaching ministry. Griffiths' work comes with the highest recommendations.

—Jacques Roets

Julie J. Ingersoll, *Building God's Kingdom: Inside the World of Christian Reconstruction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. xix + 292. $31.93 (hardcover).

The Christian Reconstruction movement founded by Rousas Rushdoony in the 1950s has received scant notice from the academy, though the mainstream media has had occasional reports on it over the years. Generally, only followers or critics in confessionally-Reformed circles have paid much attention to it. Suddenly, or so it seems, we now have treatment of it in several established academic sources. As an example, there was the scrupulously fair treatment in the book by Michael J. McVicar on Rushdoony and his influence on the Christian right (*Christian Reconstructionism: R.J. Rushdoony and America Religious Conservatism* [Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015]; reviewed by this author in *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 26 (2015): 248-252). Then there is the treatment in the blockbuster book by Frances FitzGerald (*The Evangelicals: The Struggle to Shape America* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 2017]; reviewed elsewhere by this reviewer ["From Martin Luther to American Evangelicals." The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Committee on Christian Education Feature. Accessed January 4, 2018. https://www.opc.org/cce/feature.html?feature_id=73.]).

Professor Ingersoll's treatment of the movement, as part of the recent wave of such, is of a rather different sort. Ingersoll was married to a Presbyterian pastor who was a Reconstructionist with close ties to Rushdoony. Therefore, her subtitle is quite appropriate. Ingersoll was indeed *inside* the movement and so brings a certain personal perspective not possible with the other above mentioned authors. While her personal perspective will grant some access to the inner workings of the movement, Ingersoll's divorce and embrace of feminism undoubtedly colors her perspective so much that in her criticism of Reconstructionism, she fails to distinguish between it and the historic orthodox Christian faith. In other words, where Dr. Ingersoll claims to be critiquing Reconstructionism, she is really going after generally accepted historic Christianity. This confuses matters and renders the critique at those points unfair and unhelpful.

While there is much to critique in the Christian Reconstruction movement, especially in its patriarchal and even racist tenets, this book amounts to a hatchet job. Ingersoll criticizes the movement from the perspective of the current academic liberal agenda, which has in recent years significantly radicalized. In this light, as noted elsewhere in these reviews, mere orthodoxy appears as bigotry. From such a feminized perspective it is easy to rip Reconstructionism apart. The Christian Reconstruction movement, to be sure, merits deconstructing at many points. However, this deconstruction needs to be done fairly, and this book does not appear as a likely candidate for that.

—Alan D. Strange

Robert W. Kellemen and Jeff Forrey, eds., *Scripture and Counseling: God's Word for Life in a Broken World.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014. Pp. 480. $32.99 (hardcover).

Scripture and Counseling is a collaborative work of the Biblical Counseling Coalition (BCC), an organization which finds itself squarely within the Biblical Counseling Movement (BCM). This book enters the fray of discussion on the topic of the sufficiency of Scripture, not so much to provide a polemic for a certain positon, but to provide readers with a substantial resource to know how to best us the Scriptures for counseling.

The book is divided into two sections. Section 1 entitled "How We *View* the Bible for Life in a Broken World," seeks to help the reader develop a biblical view of how Scripture particularly relates to the complex issues of life and counseling. Section 2, "How we *Use* the Bible for Life in a Fallen World," assists readers in understanding how to take the teachings of Scriptures and apply them to counseling endeavor. Rather than providing a summary of each chapter (which is done well at the beginning of each major section of the book and can also be accessed online at the google books library), a number of observations might be more helpful.

First, every chapter of this book is filled with thoughtful, wise, and careful reflection on the sufficiency of Scripture in counseling. Throughout the book, the authors are careful to note that does not provide us with exhaustive instructions as to how we are to live life in this world. Readers will not find a single author in this volume that is simplistic or careless in their understanding of the sufficiency of Scripture. Even where one might disagree about an author's use of Scripture to address certain issues that counselees might face, such a use of Scripture is done thoughtfully, taking into account not simply a certain text, but that text's context in revelation history.

Second, every chapter of this book is thoroughly Christocentric. Christ in both his saving work and his sanctifying work is front and center on almost every page. Robert Jones' chapter entitled "The Christ-Centeredness of Biblical Counseling" (109-25) and Rob Green's chapter entitled "Using the Gospels in the Personal Ministry of the Word" (353-66) are commendable in this regard, and are just two examples of a thoroughgoing Christology that is biblical and Christ-exalting.

Third, this book avoids a simplistic understanding of the human condition that reduces every counseling situation into a hunt for besetting sin. Most counseling situations addressed in the book are couched in terms of suffering, pain and brokenness, rather than simplistically in terms of human sinfulness. In his chapter, "Using the Epistles in the Personal Ministry of the Word," Heath Lambert is careful to remind the reader that for those struggling with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) have an aching desire to be freed, yet feel trapped. In other words, he is slow to chalk such a struggle up to simply not trusting God enough. Similarly, Sam Williams, in his chapter entitled "What about the Body" (144-58), goes to great lengths to rightfully remind us of the complex and mysterious interaction between the body and soul. Williams reminds readers that it is often difficult, if not impossible to understand interaction between the material and immaterial aspects of

our persons, yet there is a true interaction. He even goes as far as to say that the brain plays a substantial role in our spiritual and mental health, particularly with the severe disorders.

Fourth, some authors display a careful appreciation of the descriptive nature of psychological study and research. Jeffery Forrey's chapter entitled "What is Psychology?" is a good example of this, as well as the consistent citations from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* as a source that is helpful in aiding us in understanding what mental illness looks like.

Fifth, it is encouraging to see a careful and balanced appreciation of the use of psychotropic medication. Again, Sam Williams cautions readers to be careful to avoid two extremes: what he calls a "Blame it on the Brain, Pass the medication, please" (156) position, downplaying the importance of the Bibles teaching on the heart; and a "Thou shalt not take Prozac" extreme, which Williams condemns as legalistic (156). In the end, the question of medication is one of wisdom and should be based on a number of factors.

Sixth, despite all of the above, there continues to be resistance in books like this to any sort of integrationist approach between theology and psychology. In the "Forward" Albert Mohler Jr. states, "It is impossible to mix orthodox theology with secular therapeutic counseling" (9). In his chapter, "Scripture is Sufficient, but to Do What?" Jeremy Pierre accuses those who would see secular psychology as necessary for a complete view of humans as those who do not adequately acknowledge the emphatic or encyclopedic authority of Scripture. A similar cautionary bell is rung in chapter 9 by Ernie Baker and Howard Eryich in which they warn readers that counseling systems are worldview-laden.

While Christians must be cautious in their approach to secularized psychological theory, a Christian worldview, and particularly a Reformed Christian worldview, requires that Christians take seriously the knowledge about God's creation that is taken from careful research and practice, no matter what the source. To be sure, there must exist a robust understanding of the antithesis, namely that unbelieving thought is, at its core, in rebellion against the Creator of the universe. However, because unbelieving theorists and practitioners are image-bearers of the Creator of the universe and are unable to consistently suppress the truth, they are able contribute to the bank of knowledge regarding the study of human beings. This contribution can include not just the descriptive aspects of mental illness, but certain facets of its remediation. The consistent skepticism displayed by the authors of this book regarding psychological theory, and evidenced by a lack of any favorable citation of non-Christian psychologists, seems inconsistent with a worldview that has a robust view of God's common grace. Although it is to be expected that Christians would seek to answer the atheistic theories of the therapeutic models that arose in the twentieth century, we may never sacrifice common grace at the altar of the antithesis lest we deny the essential goodness of creation.

Most any Christian or pastoral counselor who takes the sufficiency of Scripture seriously will benefit from this volume, especially those who find themselves squarely within the Biblical Counseling Movement. For those who would like to see

secular psychological theory carefully evaluated in light of Scripture, for both its good and bad insights, this book will leave them unfulfilled.

—Daniel Patterson

Meredith G. Kline, *Genesis: A New Commentary*. Edited by Jonathan G. Kline. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2016. Pp. xx +154. $19.95 (paperback).

Nearly 10 years after Meredith G. Kline entered into glory, readers are in possession of a new book: a short commentary on the book of Genesis. In the editor's preface, Jonathan G. Kline (grandson of the author), recounts finding a typed manuscript of this volume among his grandfather's papers and typesetting it for posterity purposes. Though Meredith G. Kline (hereafter Kline) published a similarly short, note-style commentary in 1970 as part of the revision of the *New Bible Commentary*, this earlier commentary was only an early snap-shot of his developing views on the role of Genesis as the "historical prologue" of the covenant treaty-document that is the canon of Scripture.

Though Kline is known by many readers of this journal for the framework interpretation of Genesis 1-2, appropriation of 2nd millennium BC Hittite treaties for understanding of the form and function of Deuteronomy, and a distinctive typological approach to the works-principle in biblical covenant administrations, he must first and foremost be understood as a biblical-theologian in the tradition of Geerhardus Vos. Kline's later work, in particular *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2006), reflects his more developed thinking on the role Genesis plays in setting the stage for the great redemptive-historical storyline developed throughout the remainder of the biblical canon. Since this book offered a paradigm-shaping treatment of Genesis that builds upon the work of Vos, the great value of *Genesis: A New Commentary* vis-à-vis his earlier Genesis commentary is that it incorporates the insights of *Kingdom Prologue*, modeling Kline's approach to the biblical book via his more developed biblical-theological thinking. Whether or not readers of this review follow Kline in his particular theological formulations, they will find his treatment of themes and events beneficial for understanding Genesis in its full canonical significance.

Several strengths commend this volume to readers of this journal. First this work serves as an exemplar of a Klinean (and in many respects, Vosian) exposition of the book of Genesis. Kline's name is often invoked in theological discourse, generally as providing exegetical support for or against theological positions, i.e., the Reformed resurgence of Two-Kingdom Theology, recent republication debates, Theonomy and Christian Reconstructionism, Monocovenantalism, etc. And while the fruit of Kline's exegesis certainly gets employed in these debates, his exegesis as such is informative for any biblical scholar who affirms the essential unity of the Old and New Testament Scriptures. Certainly there are times when Kline's exegesis feels a bit fanciful (e.g., his treatment of Zechariah in *Glory in Our Midst: A*

Biblical-Theological Reading of Zechariah's Night Visions [Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001]), but in *Genesis: A New Commentary*, the insights remain quite restrained though still creative and fresh. Many readers lament our lack of actual biblical commentaries by Geerhardus Vos; but at least with Kline we have an example of how a Vosian biblical theology guides exegesis of an entire biblical book.

Another strength of this volume is its value for orienting interpreters to significant biblical-theological themes in the units and subunits within the book of Genesis. Kline follows many interpreters by viewing the *toledot* formulae (אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת; cf. Gen. 2:4, [5:1], 6:9, 10:1, etc.), as a cue to its overarching organization. Lower level units within each *toledot* are also delineated, giving pastors guidance for selecting passages for preaching that cohere around a given theological theme emphasized by the book.

There are several examples of this; I will note just a few. Kline regularly relates the theme of "supernatural intervention needed for fulfillment of divine promises" to the theme of "inadequacy of human resources to do so." And so, concerning the birth of Jacob's sons, Kline writes: "The account of their births continues the main theological emphases of the preceding narratives: the covenanted salvation is bestowed as a gift of divine grace in spite of human contrariness and as a miracle of divine power, not an achievement of human cunning" (102; cf. pgs. 54, 92). Kline further unpacks this theme against the NT backdrop, casting it in terms of the contrast between "the principles of faith and the works of the flesh" (103), especially as Rachel resorts even to mandrakes for their supposed ability to overcome her barrenness. (Cf. pg. 110 where Jacob's prostration before Esau is also cast in terms of the "emptiness of the apparent victories [over Esau] he had won earlier by his works of the flesh.") Other NT connections are highlighted in several places, usually in terms of typology (e.g., 58, 61, 80), but also in terms of prophetic fulfillment (e.g., 67, 77-78). As Kline's notes are fairly brief, pastors will find a quick orientation to the theological profile of a passage within a short word count.

Another benefit of this volume is its genuine improvement over Kline's 1970 Genesis commentary mentioned above. While his remarks on the flood still reflect a hesitancy to be dogmatic about its extent, he has mitigated his language, no longer calling it "precarious" to assume that the flood had a worldwide extent (as he did in 1970), and instead stressing the fact that Scripture does, at times use "universal-sounding terms for more limited situations (cf. Dan 2:38; 4:22; 5:19)" (35), while still insisting that the central trunk of human history had been severed. While some readers will feel Kline has not gone far enough, we do see he has retreated from his earlier dogmatism in an effort to better account for the details of the biblical text.

Two other examples of welcome improvements are his treatment of circumcision in Genesis 17, and his thicker description of the role of the Ishmael *toledot* in Genesis 25:12-18. In the case of the former, the conclusions of Kline's *By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Sign of Circumcision and Baptism* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968]) have been more meaningfully worked into the notes (68-70). And in the case of the later, while still quite brief, this reviewer found insightful Kline's suggestion that "this genealogy of Ishmael serves

to dismiss Ishmael from the context of the Abrahamic Covenant (*at least, until its new covenant stage*), leaving the premessianic future of that covenant to Isaac and his descendants" (89; emphasis added). The role of ethnic Israel vis-à-vis the nations is one Kline deals with elsewhere in his writings, and seeing how he applies it here, provides a fruitful line of inquiry in how to preach the Ishmael narratives.

A few items leave this volume open to critique. Those not convinced by his framework interpretation of Genesis 1:1-2:4 will find his opening exegesis disappointing, though it should be noted that Kline does not defend or articulate the position per se, but mostly assumes it. For example, his equation of the "bush of the field" (שִׂיחַ הַשָּׂדֶה) in Gen 2:5 with the plant life of Gen 1:11-12 is not defended exegetically, but simply asserted. Additionally, the note-style nature of this commentary causes Kline to be overly brief in areas that should be unpacked in more detail to be best appreciated. For example, his treatment of לְרוּחַ הַיּוֹם in Gen 3:8 as the thunderous arrival of Yahweh in judgment, translating it as "The Spirit of the day" in place of the "cool of the day" found in many English translations, (made famous by his book *Images of the Spirit* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980]), is merely hinted at in a single sentence (22). This is just enough to alert readers to this unique reading, but not enough to convince them of its legitimacy. Stray insights like these may even lead some readers toward viewing Kline's exegesis as *overly* creative.

Kline's treatment of Genesis 4 as the divine charter for the common-grace role of the city (26), which has wide ranging implications for discussions of the relationship between politics and the Christian faith, sounds also like a creative overstatement. And Kline's discussion of Abraham's receipt of the typological kingdom via "his faithful performance of covenant obligations," linked *directly* to Christ's own receipt of the eternal kingdom via his own obedience (62), muddies the discussion by its brevity, and will likely reinforce the views of those who feel Kline is imprecise, overly innovative, and thus to be read with suspicion.

Nevertheless, even readers critical of so-called "Klinean" thought will find that *Genesis: A New Commentary* provides a brief, but overall useful model for interpreting Genesis in an unashamedly covenantal, redemptive-historical manor. While the book does not sufficiently introduce Klinean themes to serve as an introduction to Kline's thought (readers will still need to pore through *Kingdom Prologue* or acquire the newly published *Essential Writings of Meredith G. Kline* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2017] for that), it does illustrate how Kline approaches the text of Scripture in its progressively-unfolding, organic character. The editorial work by Jonathan Kline has not only ensured a cleanly-laid-out volume, it has added several helpful features, in particular the definition of Hebrew words in footnotes which Kline himself did not himself provide, and footnotes directing readers to Kline's earlier works so as to compensate for the brevity of the commentary.

Genesis: A New Commentary is a welcome addition to the library of any pastor adhering to redemptive-historical preaching, and will be especially useful for students learning to apply the biblical-theological method to the individual passages of Genesis.

—R. Andrew Compton

Peter J. Leithart. *The End of Protestantism: Pursuing Unity in a Fragmented Church.* Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2016. Pp. x + 225. $21.99 (hardcover).

This year's commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation has evoked diverse reflections and responses. Many Christians have expressed grateful appreciation for the Reformers' recovery of the principles of true religion following a renewed commitment to the supreme authority of God's Word for doctrine and life. Still others have mourned the fragmented condition of the contemporary church, pointing the finger of blame at the Reformation itself for this condition. According to this latter group, before the Reformation there was just "the church": one, holy, and undivided in its doctrine, sacraments, liturgy, and government. After the Reformation, however, the church ceased to be one in all of these respects. Worse still, the bevy of Protestant factions arising from the Reformation effectively brought on the standardization of church division, including petty confessional differences among warring Christian tribes. Based on this portrayal, one might think the Reformation did more harm than good.

In *The End of Protestantism*, author Peter Leithart—president of Theopolis Institute (Birmingham, Alabama), and adjunct senior fellow of theology and literature at New Saint Andrews College (Moscow, Idaho)—laments the widespread post-Reformation factionalism plaguing American and global Protestantism. Based on his reading of Jesus' High Priestly Prayer (John 17:21), Leithart argues that denominational sectarianism in the church represents a serious contradiction to Jesus' desire that his followers all be one, just as the Father is in him, and he in the Father.

Thus, denominationalism exists as a system created by theologically conservative evangelical Christians "to salve our conscience and to deflect the Spirit's grief" over divisions in the church. It is a system that allows us to be friendly—or at least civil—with fellow Christians outside our tribal groups, even as we cling tightly to our exclusive confessional traditions (3). Denominationalism, therefore, has afforded evangelicals the comfort of a superficial fellowship with other believers, but is, in reality, nothing short of a false unity. "It is the institutionalization of division" (4) according to Leithart. Thus, his central thesis is that, insofar as denominational tribes have engaged in self-definition-by-opposition-to other churches, denominational Protestantism is "a defection from the gospel" and must necessarily come to an end (6).

However, the author nonetheless takes heart in the prospect that the American and global denominational landscape is gradually being remapped. Old denominational divisions are breaking down at home and abroad, offering new opportunities for visible reunification. Hopeful for change, Leithart's book represents an ecclesiology and agenda for "the interim" (the time between the "already" and "not yet"), by offering a program for internal reform that would move Protestant churches closer to "full reunion," via a changed stance toward Catholics, Orthodox, Pentecostals, and other independent church movements throughout the world (5).

Leithart calls his ecclesiology and agenda "Reformational Catholicism," which he composes—like a musical score—in four "movements." The first movement (chapters 2–4) offers a forward-looking vision of a reunified Christian church patterned after biblical and Reformational principles. The author contends that the gospel promise of *reunion* ought to have wide-ranging implications for the church and its social conscience. In other words, the indicative of the church's unity, which is rooted in Christ and animated by the Holy Spirit, also entails the imperative to pursue visible unity according to "the promise of God the Father to gather the nations in Abraham's seed" (18). The church therefore, ought to strive after and pray for *what it will be* at the eschaton: one catholic body that exemplifies the virtues of the new creation.

In light of these principles, Leithart offers his own model of a reunified church in the interim. He envisions a church without denominational labels, in which there is a collective appreciation for the whole of church tradition, humility in biblical interpretation, and a shared hostility "to the politics of confessionalized Protestantism" (51). A reunified church would share a common liturgy, neither of the "high" nor popularized variety, and a mutual understanding of the sacraments. Every church recognizes the ordination and authority of the others' pastors, and all scandals, challenges, or discipline matters are the business of the whole church. For Reformational Catholicism to become reality, denominational churches will have to die to some of their most deeply held beliefs, and come together over a shared appreciation for the best each tradition has to offer. In short, biblical reunification will require the end of Protestantism "as a family of churches defined over against Rome and Orthodoxy, a collection of churches defined over against one another" (51).

In Chapters 5–7, the book's second movement, Leithart makes a case both for and against American denominationalism. He acknowledges that, in both theory and practice, the denominational model has fostered productive cross-denominational fellowship. Denominationalism has furnished a platform for Christians to argue their doctrinal differences freely and honestly, while still embracing those who differ as true believers. Historically, interdenominational partnerships have also served the global mission field by equipping "'community organizations to mobilize needed resources and allow[ing] congregations to extend their reach'" (64). Nevertheless, Leithart believes that denominational Protestantism ultimately fails to express biblical unity. It hardens *status quo* boundaries among differing groups, resulting in churches that are "homogenous and unflavored and therefore immature" (73) (in this sense, Leithart argues that denominationalism reflects and promotes the latent social divisions—racial, economic, or otherwise—in America). Denominationalism also perpetuates schisms by motivating churches to take cover in their own doctrinal foxholes, resulting in Scriptural exegesis that is lacking in honesty and openness. Leithart concludes, in the end, that denominational distinctions remain the greatest obstacle to attaining and demonstrating the unity that Jesus desires for his church.

The author's proposal for ecclesiastical unity changes tempo in chapter 8, where he composes a biblical intermezzo aimed at demonstrating from redemptive

history how God the Creator regularly reshapes the world and the church in novel ways. Leithart observes that over successive periods of church history, God often demolishes old structures and assumptions in the church and reforms them. Thus, until the eschaton, the church is always in a state of flux: dying to itself, reforming, and becoming more like God's ultimate vision of his Bride. Leithart concludes then, that the church's present state, characterized by institutional division, will (and must) also come to an end. God, "the living Creator," is still at work in his world, and "that means that the church of the future will be something *new* and, given the pattern of God's creativity, something *better*" . . . a church that is truly *one* (115).

The book's third movement (chapters 9–11) examines denominationalism from a sociological vantage point. This section contains several vignettes depicting independent and diverse religious movements illustrating how the "remapping" of the global ecclesial landscape is gradually chipping away at the edifice of the American denominational system, providing fresh opportunities for Reformational Catholicism to clear away the debris and rebuild a multi-cultural church to embody the "intersection of Protestant, Catholic, and Pentecostal interests and emphases" (128). American Protestantism—so often reflective of the concerns of American civil religion—is undergoing a radical change as its structures and polity are reshaped by the inclusion of the immigrant church. This development is best, Leithart argues, for "shattering the institutionalized division of denominationalism," and paving the way toward a truly "*Christian* catholicity" to unite America's congregations (161).

In the fourth, and final movement (chapter 12), Leithart attempts to equip theologians, pastors, and laypersons with practical directions for implementing his "interim ecclesiology" toward the ultimate goal of Christian union, and the death of denominational Protestantism. Reformational Catholicism is attainable, at least in part, when theologians agree to affirm the fundamentals of the Christian faith (i.e., the Trinitarian and Christological affirmations of the ancient creeds, and the basic details of the gospel), while at the same time fighting "the instinct to protect our distinctive elaborations of the gospel," which acts as a roadblock to reunion (173). Pastors of local congregations play an integral role in the pursuit of Christian catholicity by re-committing themselves to sound biblical exegesis, including the preaching of the law and gospel, the frequent and non-exclusive celebration of the Lord's Supper (the author prescribes weekly celebration), and building relationships with pastors of other denominations. Finally, the laity should promote biblical catholicity by becoming involved with interdenominational missions and ministries, volunteering in their local communities, advocating for human rights, distributing food and clothes to the needy, and by joyfully serving alongside Christians from other churches, making *gospel unity*, rather than a shared American civil religion, the basis for enduring fellowship.

Leithart's book represents a genuine plea for the church to reflect in its outward life the spiritual oneness that all believers have by virtue of their union with the triune God. We can certainly share the author's general lament over the fragmented nature of Protestantism, particularly, the divisions arising from petty and unsubstantial sources of conflict. This book also rings true in some of its critique of

American denominationalism, especially in its excoriation of cross-denominational apathy and the unholy matrimony between many evangelicals and certain assumptions of American civil religion. The final chapter contains useful instructions for local pastors and laypersons on how to pursue a more visible catholicity in their own contexts before a watching world.

Nevertheless, I find it difficult to recommend this book as a tenable model for church unity due, in part, to its precarious historical premise and some questionable propositions about doctrine.

First, the problematic premise of Leithart's book is that the Protestant Reformation became the unintentional source of division in a church that was previously united. It is historically inaccurate, however, to regard the medieval Roman Church as representing a unified Christendom. In fact, Roman Catholicism was rife with divisions and inequalities, including papal schisms, competing monastic orders, rival interpretations of Scripture and tradition, and clerical abuses, which left the laity starving for biblical truth. Factions also plagued the visible church centuries prior to the Great Schism of 1054, and forerunners of church reform sparked controversy in the Roman Church long before young Luther's 95 Theses were distributed in 1517.

A better historical approach to the topic of church division would be to acknowledge the difficult question faced by the Protestant Reformers: whether they had *biblical* grounds for separating themselves from a corrupted ecclesiastical body. We should remember that the Reformers sought to recover the truths from which the church of their day had departed, and it was Rome's refusal to heed the Reformers' appeals and be reformed according to God's Word that divided the Catholic Church. The Reformers certainly lamented division within the visible church, and sought to renew a single-minded commitment to God's Word through their involvement at various colloquies and disputations following their break with Rome. But they saw no possibility of unification apart from a shared commitment to biblical teaching. This historical-theological context deserved greater attention in Leithart's book.

In addition, Leithart's passing critique of Protestant confessionalization betrays an ambiguous understanding of dogma. Throughout the book, Leithart tends to regard church dogma suspiciously as that which stands in the way of Christian unity. Dogma mainly serves to rally the troops of one's own camp against others: "Doctrinal formulations function as shibboleths to expose and exclude those who mispronounce" (172). In this way, Leithart pounds a wedge between dogma and the church's desire to be biblical. Rightly conceived, however, dogma simply represents the church's understanding of what Scripture says; it reflects the desire to be biblical in all that the church believes and teaches. This is why doctrinal statements, like creeds and confessions, bear a measure of real (albeit relative) authority in the church. They have authority because they have been critically tested by the supremely authoritative standard of Scripture. Reformed people, for example, typically embrace the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards *because* they accurately present biblical truth, not *insofar as* they do (it would be immoral to embrace a creed or confession *known* to contain *false* teaching!). Of course, this is

not to claim ecclesiastical infallibility, and in many denominations there are steps in place for improving upon a confession that is found wanting against the rule of Scripture. But when dogma is rightly understood to be the church's summary of Scripture's teaching, one should not consider it to be incidental to the pursuit of biblical Christianity.

In sum, the author's repeated claim that confessional distinctions among churches mostly amount to self-definition-by-distinction is unfair. Christians from various confessional backgrounds can debate their differences on historical and exegetical grounds (hopefully resulting in greater doctrinal unanimity), but it is often the case that among different Protestant traditions, there exists a genuine desire to summarize the teaching of Scripture accurately and fully in one's own confession. The fact that perfect exegesis, unbiased interpretation, and confessional uniformity may not be expected this side of glory—due in no small part to human sin and frailty—need not detract from the foundational commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ shared by many Protestant churches (the most profound basis for unity according to Jesus' prayer in John 17:6, 8, 14, 17, 20-21). I might add, with some irony, that Leithart's own vision for Reformational Catholicism includes the prescription of certain practices, such as weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper, whose biblical foundations are far less clear than other so-called traditions that he deems negotiable. In this respect, what Leithart grants with one hand—that non-foundational doctrines should be set aside for the sake of broader unity—he takes away with the other by insisting that some highly debated practices be normative for the reunified church.

—Timothy R. Scheuers

W. Bradford Littlejohn and Scott N. Kindred-Barnes, eds., *Richard Hooker and Reformed Orthodoxy*. Reformed Historical Theology 40. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017. Pp. 355. $138.00 (hardcover).

Historic Reformed orthodoxy was marked by both unity and diversity. The development of Reformed confessional theology, coupled with the scholastic method of teaching in schools, resulted in a remarkable level of catholicity among Reformed churches without negating significant differences among Reformed authors in various parts of the post-Reformation world. With respect to this broader context, Richard Hooker's relationship to Reformed orthodox theology has been debated widely among scholars. The authors of this volume, with the partial exception of Andrew Martin's chapter on Hooker's sacramental theology, argue that readers should regard Hooker as a Reformed orthodox theologian. They do so, more or less successfully, due to the ambiguous way in which the editors of the volume describe what it meant to be Reformed. The scope and aim of this volume make it a provocative assessment of the bounds of Reformed thought in the context of the transition from Reformation to post-Reformation theology. This makes it an

interesting test case for understanding the nature of post-Reformation theology more broadly.

The book is broadly divided into three sections, treating Hooker's historical context and reception, his theological and pastoral method, and his relationship to Reformed orthodoxy. The strengths of the editor's approach to these topics, lies in the wide range of authors contributing to the book, in their contextual approach to understanding Hooker on his own terms and context, and in their comparison of Hooker's teachings to the broader stream of historic Reformed orthodoxy. Some of the most stimulating subjects treated include Hooker's views on public worship (which stood at the heart of his controversy with "Puritanism"); his use of medieval scholastic theology and method, treatment of the authentication of Scripture, teaching on imputed and inherent righteousness, and his sacramental theology. These chapters, and others, help guide readers through some of the most relevant areas to Reformed theological method and doctrine. The essays are well researched, and primarily attempt to ask historical questions rather the contemporary ones. This approach is potentially fruitful for modern theological debates, indirectly, since it allows historic authors to speak with their own voices and to raise their own concerns.

Though *Richard Hooker and Reformed Orthodoxy* achieves its aims generally, it raises some potentially problematic questions as well. The first is how one defines Reformed orthodoxy. The editors regard "the progressive liberation of historical scholarship from the straightjacket of confessional identity" (12-13), as a positive thing with regard to Richard Hooker scholarship. However, without confessional identity, as historians such as Richard Muller have argued, it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish Reformed theology from other branches of the Christian tradition. Since all theologians from this time period used an eclectic array of sources in building their theologies, and since they used a common scholastic method in their teaching, the bypassing of a broad Reformed confessional identity runs the risk of transforming "Reformed" into a meaningless historical category.

Another potential liability of some of the essays in this volume, is that they appear to take Hooker's assessment of "Puritanism" at face value (59, 64, 76, 84, 148, etc.). This conception of "Puritanism" even led one author to conclude that we should not regard William Perkins as a Puritan (71). This is problematic, if for no other reason than the fact that much historical scholarship has treated Perkins as one of the primary architects of Puritan theology. It is one thing to argue that Hooker drew precedents for his views from strands of earlier Reformed thought that stood in contrast to what he labeled as "Puritanism"; it is another to imply that many of these "Puritans" did not also stand in the mainstream of Reformed orthodoxy. The true historical situation was more complex than this presentation makes it appear at times.

Some authors in this volume run the risk of oversimplifying historical positions as well. For example, one author argues that, in agreement with the British delegation at Dort, Hooker believed that, "Christ's death is actually applied to some reprobate insofar as God's inward grace is granted to some within whom that grace does not lead eventually to eternal life" (291). This statement is potentially

misleading. Most Reformed authors believed in distinguishing between common operations of the Spirit within the visible church and the saving work of the Spirit, which applied to the elect only. They rooted both sets of benefits in Christ's death and in his work in sending the Spirit to the church. However, these common operations of the Spirit were not treated as equivalent to the Spirit's internal saving operations, which the author appears to equate in Hooker's thought. The block citation from Hooker he provides in the footnote appears to match better this reviewer's distinction between non-saving and saving operations of the Spirit on account of Christ's death than it does the author's implication that some reprobate people in the church possessed "inward grace" that did "not eventually lead to eternal life." This kind of oversimplification is closer to some modern theological debates than it is to those present in the late sixteenth century.

Do the authors of *Richard Hooker and Reformed Orthodoxy* prove successfully that Hooker fit within the mainstream of Reformed orthodox thought? In this reviewer's opinion, the answer is both yes and no. While Hooker clearly agreed with many aspects of Reformed thought more broadly, the evidence that the authors present to prove their case appears to better substantiate Peter Lake's earlier depiction of Hooker, as a *via media* theologian. Like many authors from the time period treated, Hooker was an eclectic thinker. If shared ideas, sources, and methods make one a Reformed theologian instead of a Reformed confessional identity, then the authors prove their case clearly. However, if a Reformed confessional tradition remains a standard for assessing the ideas of historic Reformed figures, then Hooker is, in at least a few respects, the odd man out. While room for disagreement on this issue remains among scholars, the primary value of these essays is that they force readers to ask questions such as this one, as they seek to understand the character of post-Reformation Reformed theology.

—Ryan M. McGraw

Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text.* New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. Pp. lxvii + 1140. $80.00 (hardcover).

This full-length commentary represents the mature reflection of a lifetime of research by a scholar who is not only very prominent in Pauline studies but is also strongly committed to doing theology from Scripture and drawing application from the Bible for today. While commentaries proliferate on almost every biblical book, not least Romans, the stature of this commentary's author and the length of time this volume was known to be in production still created great anticipation for the arrival of this one. The present volume was also preceded by an earlier book, *Introducing Romans: Critical Issues in Paul's Most Famous Letter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), which made a sizeable down payment on Longenecker's Romans scholarship by treating the standard introductory questions covered in any commentary as well as adumbrating the main lines of his interpretation of Romans itself. Since that

earlier book worked at some length through such topics as author, date, audience, occasion, purpose, textual history, and integrity of Romans, the commentary only provides a shorter summary of introductory concerns that often refers back to the detail found in the earlier volume. True to the design of the New International Greek Testament Commentary series, the commentary also features close interaction with the Greek text and with a wide range of contemporary scholarship, adding to its weightiness and ensuring that it will be an important voice within ongoing conversations about Romans for some time to come.

Before saying more about the commentary by way of review, though, it is important to reflect on what a review of such a book seeks to accomplish. Naturally, what one wishes to read (or write) in a book review about a commentary on Romans depends significantly on what one wants when reading a commentary on Romans itself. Yet at this juncture the goals of different readers may differ considerably.

Some approach a commentary on Romans particularly concerned that it support certain conclusions about key exegetical or theological debates arising in the letter. In this case, a reviewer would do best to scout out and report on what positions the commentary takes on a variety of hot-button issues. In an extreme form, I have heard of a reader opening any new Romans commentary to see if it takes his own preferred view of the identity of the "I" speaking in Romans 7:7-25 and then sending the book back to the publisher if it does not! I hope the unhelpfulness of this sort of narrow-minded approach to commentary-reading seems obvious when put in this way. Otherwise, I should just quickly dismiss Longenecker's work myself, since his conclusions that the "I" is the unbeliever seeking God on his own power (647, 673) is not my own. Surely there is nothing to learn from an in-depth, 1140-page treatment of a complex ancient letter if it does not support my preferred view on that topic or several others like it, right?

In actual fact, though, any reader of Romans can easily learn a great deal about the letter from a thoughtful scholar whose conclusions he or she often disagrees with in the end. More important when reviewing a commentary on Romans, then, is not merely providing a catalog of the conclusions it draws but offering some assessment of how fruitful and thought-provoking a conversation partner the book proves to be along the way to arriving at those conclusions. In particular, does a given commentary ask clear questions, go about trying to answer them in an illuminating fashion, and then arrive at thought-provoking conclusions, all in a way that promotes deeper, more nuanced observation of Paul's own words and their significance?

When evaluated in this way, Longenecker's commentary certainly has much to offer all readers of Romans, though admittedly less than I had originally hoped it would. To explain, I will begin by describing aspects of this commentary that do help readers listen attentively and perceptively to Romans before then considering things about it that tend to diminish its value for the same.

With regard to the strengths of Longenecker's approach to Romans, several aspects of the commentary stand out for particular mention.

First, Longenecker is admirably attentive to the preliminary interpretative issue of what deciding exact questions are or are not best to ask from any given text in Romans as well as from the letter as a whole. This preliminary issue is one that too

many readers tend to skip over and every reader can benefit from reflecting on more, because the specific questions one asks of the text in interpretation often predetermine a great deal about what a reader does or does not notice in the text and therefore what answers he thinks he finds as a result. For example, if a reader is focused on the question how much a Christian may experience the ongoing affects of remaining sin in his life and then reads Romans 7:7-25 seeking an answer, he is likely to notice certain aspects of that passage and therefore view the whole thing in a particular way. Alternatively, if a reader is concerned with the question what unbelievers can know and experience of God apart from Christ, he also may feel he has found an answer in the same passage and view it in a different way. Again, if a reader sets the question how the Old Testament believer's experience of grace compares to that of the New Testament believer, he too may feel he has found an illuminating description in that passage, which will produce yet a different interpretation. Regardless of who is correct in this case, what is clear is the great impact our interpretative questions tend to have on our exegetical perception. In fact, simply recognizing this fact goes a long way to becoming more self-aware as a reader, since it then allows us each to ask whether the questions we are preoccupied with are really the best ones for any given passage or book in Scripture. Surely each interpreter naturally gravitates toward certain questions, which will tend to help him understand some passages well but will also tend to obscure the meaning of others**.**

In light of this, readers of Romans can learn a great deal by watching Longenecker describe both what questions past interpreters have often asked of different parts of Romans and what questions he thinks should be asked in addition or instead. Already quite early in the introduction, then (2), Longenecker reflects on a sea change in past Romans scholarship from asking why Paul's other letters are not more like Romans (a question that takes Romans as the "standard" Pauline letter, the known quantity by which other letters are to be evaluated) to instead asking why Romans is so different from the others (a question that utilizes the opposite point of reference and therefore may help us observe how unusual and unexpected certain features of the letter are). Later in the introduction (8-9), Longenecker reflects on how Raymond Brown made a distinction between asking whether Paul's readers were Jewish or Gentile and asking whether some of his readers, of whatever ethnicity, were committed theologically to the superiority of the Jews in God's redemptive plan—a distinction that more scholars would do well to pay attention to today. Similarly, Longenecker also takes his time phrasing and then rephrasing the best questions to ask about the hotly debated topic of Paul's purposes in writing Romans (9-10), comparing and contrasting sometimes subtly different questions and so challenging the reader to think very carefully about what is or is not best to be asking. No doubt readers primarily wanting to get to the bottom line and to know what answers Longenecker reaches may find this process of sifting through questions frustrating and inefficient in relation to their goals. However, such a preoccupation with the bottom line often short-changes the discovery process, which is so important to the exegetical task if one is going to remain open to observing and appreciating new things in a text as rich as Romans. By contrast, a

reader who is patient with Longenecker may find a lot of help in becoming a more patient and therefore more nuanced and fruitful reader of Romans itself, as well as of others parts of Scripture. What Longenecker's commentary may lack in economy of words it often makes up for in depth of interpretative self-awareness and humility before the text, which are always important (if underappreciated) goals. Maybe I as a reader am making unhelpful assumptions as I read, assumptions that work against the text itself. I am more likely to notice this if I first examine my own interpretative questions, something that Longenecker's commentary is likely to help me do.

Second, another strength of Longenecker's commentary is how it listens to broad swaths of past interpretation of Romans, including older interpreters that often receive less attention these days. Already in the preface he begins with a retrospective look at the impact of Romans through history that goes back as far as select figures in the second century. He also interacts in some depth with certain twentieth century voices who tend to be less influential in Romans scholarship today. This no doubt allows the octogenarian Longenecker to engage with figures of importance to various phases of his own scholarly pilgrimage and offer the mature fruit of longtime discussion with some of his peers—all valuable for younger readers to glean from, both for the sake of content and as an example of respectful debate.

Third, Longenecker has a penchant for carefully observing the text's structure and other formal characteristics. Commentary on each passage begins with a section devoted to "Form/Structure/Setting" that is far from being *pro forma*, as it were. These sections can be somewhat lengthy and carefully describe such things as formal rhetorical techniques Paul may be using, genre identification of individual sections, and the thought-background to various expressions or motifs employed. Of particular note is Longenecker's recurring interest in Paul's possible use of pre-existing materials, such as early Christian confessional formulations, general religious aphorisms known in the time period, and especially Jewish or Jewish Christian devotional or catechetical material. In fact, the last of these becomes something of a preoccupation when treating Romans 1-4 due to an interpretative perspective on those chapters that Longenecker commits himself to early in the commentary (see further below). In general, though, comments on structural and formal features in the passage are most welcome, not only for how they provide useful information about specific elements of a given passage but also for how they help instill a habit of carefully inspecting the essential "givens" of any text. A certain set of words used in a certain order—this is ultimately what must be explained during interpretation, and a habit of close attention to what is really there in front of us in black and white, prior to attempting explanation, is quite medicinal for us all, especially when dealing with a text as caught up in subsequent theological debate as Romans.

Fourth, this commentary gives significant, sometimes even extensive consideration to text-critical matters, both for the book and for individual passages. This even includes a 12-page section in the introduction that consists mainly of a broad overview of text-criticism in general along with some application to Romans in particular. Though one may legitimately ask why such a broad overview is needed in a Romans commentary, some may still find it a helpful refresher, and the

chart of the most significant manuscripts on Romans, what verses they contain, and their date (32-34) also makes for easy reference**.**

Fifth, as one would expect based on his other writings, Longenecker shows a keen interest in Paul's use of the Old Testament in Romans, including as that compares to his use of it in other letters and its use by others of his contemporaries. Programmatic questions to be asked and answered in this regard are also laid out in characteristically reflective manner in the introduction (21-23).

Sixth, after each passage Longenecker provides a section on "Biblical Theology," where he identifies and reflects on what he considers to be the significant theological affirmations Paul has made in any passage. In an age when exegetical and theological discussions can sometimes be unduly separated, this section gives Longenecker occasion to make small forays into broader questions of theology in general and of Pauline Theology in particular, connecting how Paul's meaning in one verse relates to what he says elsewhere in his corpus. It also allows interaction with the claims of more theologically oriented interpreters like Charles Cranfield, Joseph Fitzmyer, and Richard Hays as well as John Chrysostom, John Calvin, and T. F. Torrance.

Finally, interpretation of each passage also concludes with a section on "Contextualization for Today," which can sometimes be thought-provoking. Dedicated sections of this kind are not always a real asset in modern commentaries, as they require biblical scholars to ask and answer questions outside the focus of their narrower specialization and training. This can often lead to a lack of depth regarding the spiritual dynamics at issue in both the ancient world and today as well as a lack of persuasiveness about the connections between the two. Unfortunately Longenecker's comments do not entirely escape such criticisms. However, some of his comments carry more freight (e.g., the exhortation to focus more on "source and agency" than "results and consequences" on 95-96), and his consistently sober emphasis on the necessity of a spiritual response to what Paul says is still a welcome reminder in itself, even if one may wish to expound upon the particulars of that in other ways than he chooses.

Clearly then, this commentary has many strengths that commend its use. But alongside these strengths, which often facilitate fruitful observation of and reflection on the text, the commentary also admits of several weaknesses that lessen its value for these same purposes.

First, though in the aggregate Longenecker interacts with a wider range of Romans scholarship than many do, his interaction at any one place in the commentary often seems idiosyncratic and is certainly less thorough and systematic than one would hope. It is also especially weak with regard to very recent scholarship. No doubt this latter phenomenon is due in part to how long this commentary has been in production. For example, despite all the space he devotes to text-critical considerations, Longenecker limits himself to dealing with the 27th edition of *Novum Testamentum Graece*, even though the 28th edition (with the sea change in text-critical method that it ushers in) came out in 2012. Moreover, his engagement with a landmark commentary like Robert Jewett's (Hermeneia, 2007), which is one of the most thought-provoking works on Romans in recent memory,

remains noticeably sparse until after the first 500 pages of Longenecker's work. This tends to show how little impact Jewett's theses have had on the development of Longenecker's own thought, whether positively or negatively, and is emblematic of how dated Longenecker's work sometimes feels, despite its recent publication date.

Second, Longenecker's interest in showing Paul's use of traditional, and especially traditional Jewish, material in Romans 1-4 carries him beyond what the evidence seems to allow at times. For example, he states that Romans 2:14-15 likely consist of a pre-existing portion of Jewish or Jewish-Christian catechesis (238-39, 272), but the reasons he gives seem quite weak. One is that the verses begin with the preposition γάρ, but this occurs so frequently in Romans (e.g., 1:16, 17a, 17b, 18, 19b, 20, 26b; 2:1b, 1c, 11, 12, 13, 14, 24, 25, 28) that it hardly has any value for signaling the presence of pre-Pauline material. Another is that the verses incorporate "some fairly significant *hapax legomena* of wording and usage," though he does not provide details about what this means. On further investigation, it seems that only one vocabulary word in these verses (γραπτόν) appears nowhere else in Paul, yet it is not an unusual word and its cognates appear frequently enough elsewhere in Paul's letters. What "*hapax legomena* of…usage" refers to here is left vague and therefore unhelpful. Beyond that, the only additional evidence Longenecker adduces is "awkwardness of syntax," but it remains unclear why such a thing, even if present, would provide evidence of something's originating as catechesis, which assumedly would consist of a well-worn, succinct pattern of words useful for teaching novitiates with some clarity and simplicity. In the end, then, Longenecker's arguments about Romans 2:14-15 and some other texts in Romans 1-4 seem to provide more evidence about his own interpretative preoccupation with casting Romans 1-4 as "traditional" (not distinctively Pauline) than it does about either the text's prehistory or its current form.

Third, the value of Longenecker's focus on both Jewish and Old Testament backgrounds, which overall is an area of strength for his commentary, is lessened by his frequent lack of clarity about three areas of concern. One is whether the soteriological perspective and place of the Law in the Old Testament are the same or different as in later Judaism (including early, rabbinic, and even modern Judaism). Another is whether "covenantal nomism" can in any sense be called "legalistic," terms which Longenecker often places in contrast with each other. And a third is whether the Law expresses God's abiding moral rule for the life of Christians today. For example, Longenecker sometimes groups the Old Testament and Judaism of every period under the common categories "nomism" and "covenantal nomism," the latter of which he describes as "an earnest and loving obedience to the instructions God has decreed through his servant Moses" in contrast with "legalism" (464; cp. 645). And, while he says the Law has abiding value for Christians as a source for knowing God's moral judgment and for pointing beyond itself to a righteousness received from God and greater things to come in the new covenant (465), he will also contrast new covenant spirituality with both "legalism" and "covenantal nomism" in ways that suggest that the Law is not "a God-ordained way, and therefore a necessary way, for believers in Jesus to express

their faith in God and their thanks to God" (645). At the very least, such statements seem to rely on too few and poorly defined category distinctions and therefore produce a lot of unclarity about what legalism is, whether any strands of Judaism were susceptible to it, whether and in what ways Christians are to obey the Law, and how the Christian life compares and contrasts believing life under the old covenant.

Fourth, while Longenecker's interest in the application of Romans to today is most welcome in itself and at times leads to helpful observations, many of his comments about Romans' relevance to today remain quite vague. Often these comments amount to little more than pointing out how Paul "contextualized" his theology for his Roman audience and then insisting that we should use a similar method to do the same in our own ways in our day too. However, while it is popular for evangelical scholars today to say that we should essentially do as Paul *does* in these respects (imitating Paul's efforts at contextualization by producing our own), it is less popular to say that we should also do as Paul *says* in his letters, that is, that we should appropriate his doctrinal instruction as our own and obey his imperatives as abiding commands. Certainly theologians and pastors must grapple with cultural differences between the 1st Century and today in various ways as they seek to know exactly how to obey Pauline and other biblical imperatives and how to articulate biblical theology clearly and understandably to audiences in our own day. But they must also do these things knowing that it is not only a general way of doing theology or applying Scripture that Paul bequeaths to the church; it is also specific teachings and commands that are abidingly normative. Longenecker's comments on contextualization often fall short of impressing this upon his readers in any detail and so are likely to be less helpful to readers of this journal than they otherwise could have been**.**

Finally, the biggest liability of Longenecker's commentary, when it comes to helping illuminate the text of Romans for his readers, is his unusual and repeatedly emphasized thesis (see 16-18 and repeatedly thereafter) that the central thrust of the whole letter, which uniquely summarizes Paul's distinctive articulation of the gospel for Gentiles, is to be found only in Romans 5:1-8:39 along with 12:1-21 and 13:8-14. By contrast, while Romans 1-4 do articulate the gospel, they only do so in traditional Jewish and therefore less distinctively Pauline terms. Given the Jewish-sympathizing nature of many in Rome, those chapters help build bridges between Paul and his audience but still are not "central" to the design of the letter, which is to go beyond the traditionally "forensic" and Jewish way of articulating the gospel in terms of justification, redemption, and propitiation/expiation, with which the audience was already familiar, to convey the more "relational," "universal," and "participationist" categories of sin, death, peace, reconciliation, obedience, life, and being "in Christ" and "in the Spirit" that Paul distinctively offered to Gentiles.

Now on the one hand, this thesis does prompt Longenecker to make some useful observations about the Paul's heavier use of Old Testament quotations in Romans 1-4 and 9-11, compared to in 5:1-8:39 (e.g., 21). He also makes related observations about the prominent use of traditional and other confessional material in certain locations in the letter (e.g., 23-24).

But on the other hand, the thesis also presents several problems. To begin with, while it is important to grapple with relevant differences between the major sections of Romans (and one of the great challenges of the letter is to see how all these sections fit cohesively together), the evidence Longenecker presents to support his thesis does not entirely correspond to his conclusions. After all, Romans 13:8-14 also contains a high proportion of prominent Old Testament quotations, and one of the great pieces of confessional material Paul cites (according to Longenecker) provides the conclusion to 5:1-8:39 (24), even though such things are supposed to be part of what shows the distinctive character of Romans 1-4. Conversely, Paul's concern for the supposedly more "universal" concepts of sin, obedience, death, peace, and life as well as some "in the Spirit" and "in Christ" language clearly begin already in Romans 1-4 (e.g., 1:32; 2:7-10, 12, 29; 3:9, 19-20, 24). And the plight of the unbeliever in his attempt to live on his own insights, which Longenecker associates with Romans 5-8, is described so clearly in the opening words of 1:18-32. In these and other ways, many of the contrasts that Longenecker seeks to build between various sections of the letter seem overstated and reductionistic, obscuring how much those sections also hold in common. As a result, the helpfulness of his approach to the letter is greatly reduced at many points. Whatever the relation between Romans 1-4 and Romans 5-8 may be, labeling the one "forensic" and the other "participationist" does not suffice, and the resulting impression one may receive that forensic categories like justification are helpful for Jews but less relevant to Gentiles seems potentially quite misleading and even dangerous.

One other drawback of Longenecker's thesis also deserves mention, related to the fact that Romans 14-15 are not included in the "central thrust" of this epistle (even though 12:1-21 and 13:8-14 are). This fact seems to belie the clear, climactic significance that those chapters have within the letter, as that toward which all other sections build argumentatively as Paul seeks to both unify the divided Romans among themselves and persuade them to care about and join in supporting his desired mission to Spain. In addition to falsely dichotomizing some of its sections, Longenecker's way of dividing the letter therefore seems to obscure the unified conceptual and rhetorical force that it all has, which scholars like Francis Watson, James Dunn, and Robert Jewett as well as the entire "Romans Debate" of the last several decades have all gone to great lengths to help demonstrate.

Judged on the basis of its ability to illuminate the text of Romans for its readers, then, Longenecker's commentary has several strengths but is also of decidedly mixed quality. No doubt it is an important reference point in discussion of Romans, in particular due to the stature of its author. It also has particular value for setting interpretative questions, interacting (albeit selectively) with a broader range of scholarly literature than many do, observing formal features of the text, and inquiring after Old Testament and Jewish backgrounds. Nevertheless, its weaknesses are also quite significant, particularly for its preoccupation with pursuing some idiosyncratic theses that often seem forced on the text and obscure how many of its parts fit together. On balance, then, while this commentary is certainly important for scholars to consult right now, it still does not seem to belong in the very top tier of thought-provoking and illuminating scholarship on Romans.

As a result, it also remains less important for pastors to consult even now, and its value to the academy will probably be more short-lived than one might have expected.

—Marcus M. Mininger

Karin Maag, *Does the Reformation Still Matter?* Calvin Shorts. Grand Rapids: Calvin College Press, 2016. Pp. 112. $9.99 (paperback).

Karin Maag is eminently qualified to write a book like this, which addresses the topic of the sixteenth-century Reformation and its continuing significance today. Maag is the Director of the H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies and professor of history at Calvin College. This particular book is part of the *Calvin Shorts* series, which aims to provide contemporary Christians with short studies that illumine our present world and the challenges facing them as citizens of Christ's kingdom.

In the opening chapter, Maag explains the occasion and purpose of her study. Rather than provide "an account of the Reformation, even in condensed form," she aims to focus on "a number of significant themes," and offer "reflections on why today's Christians should still care about the Reformation" (16-17). In keeping with her interests as a Reformation historian, Maag is especially interested in the "social history" of the Reformation and its influence in what is known today as the "early modern" period. Among the questions that she addresses are:

> Is a country stronger if the majority of its people share the same beliefs? Should governments support a particular religion or worldview? If members of a particular faith feel they are under attack from their government, are these believers allowed to resist? If so, what forms can this resistance take? Can different communities of faith get along in the public arena? Can groups making competing truth claims about the fundamental values that shape their lives still find ways to coexist? (18)

The way Maag formulates the questions that interest her, signals to the reader that she is not interested in "mining" the Reformation to discover "heroes" or to identify the "right answers" that will help the contemporary church to "revitalize" itself. As she describes it, her purpose is to provide an understanding of the Reformation that helps to "make sense of today's Christian church" (22).

In order to achieve her purpose, Maag devotes three chapters to the "theological impact" of the Reformation (Chapter 2), the Reformation's "impact on worship and the laity" (Chapter 3), and the Reformation's "impact on church and state relations" (Chapter 4). These chapters treat, in a clear and concise fashion, the principal themes and practices of the Reformation: a renewed emphasis upon the authority of Scripture, the teaching of salvation by grace alone, the preparation of catechisms, the centrality of preaching, the reformation of worship, a restoration of congregational singing, an increase in the role of the laity, and the respective roles of church and state in western society and culture. Though many of these themes

and practices are discussed briefly, Maag provides the reader with a clear portrait of the landscape of the Reformation. Consistent with her interest, she gives special attention to the long-standing problem regarding the relation between the church and the state (in respect to their task, authority, and relationship).

In the concluding chapter of her study, Maag's interest in social history, especially the impact of the Reformation upon the relation between church and state, is clearly evident. After noting briefly the Reformation's contribution to the reading and interpretation of Scripture, she gives far more extensive attention to the way the Reformation posed some of the most important questions in the modern period for living peaceably in a pluralistic society and world. One of the greatest legacies of the Reformation, in Maag's opinion, is the way it compelled Christians to address the limits of the state's authority over the church, the need for resistance to the civil authorities when they overstep their boundaries, and the toleration of divergent religious convictions and communities in a pluralistic society.

Though Maag's study is not the sort that will interest those who are looking for a thorough treatment of Reformation theology or history, it does achieve its stated purpose as a volume in the *Calvin Shorts* series. It is a book that could easily be read in an evening, or on a several hour flight. It offers a crisp and broad overview of the Reformation, especially in terms of its theology, practice, and significance for modern church-state relationships. A useful summary of works for "further reading" on the subject, as well as a fairly extensive glossary that provides helpful information regarding Reformation events, persons, institutions, and the like, add greatly to its value.

—Cornelis P. Venema

Karin Maag, *Lifting Hearts to the Lord: Worship with John Calvin in Sixteenth-Century Geneva.* Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016. Pp. 224. $28.00 (paperback).

Lifting Hearts to the Lord published by Eerdmans in conjunction with the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship at Calvin Theological Seminary, is a groundbreaking and innovative study of reformed worship. This book, written by Calvin professor Karin Maag, examines the infancy and early development of reformed worship in Geneva, Switzerland from 1541-1564, and an analysis of John Calvin's influence over it. This work is part of a larger series entitled *The Church at Worship*, which is an ecumenical collection of geographical, historical, and denominational worship studies from around the world. Maag's work, along with the other books in this series, is rich in primary source material, compiled with the author's own academic contributions, and given scholarly analysis and consideration.

This work is divided into three parts that center on the key theme of the *worship community*, in which Maag investigates throughout her work. In part one, which serves as an extension of the book's introduction, Maag adeptly guides the reader to locate the worshipping community of Geneva by providing a thorough and detailed historical timeline of post-Reformation Genava. Additionally, Maag describes the

geographical setting, as well as the liturgical landscape of the Geneva that Calvin arrived in, and the Geneva Calvin instrumentally shaped. Finally, Maag provides significant themes and practices to observe, such as "place," "preaching," and "piety," as the reader begins this book.

Part two is the largest section, dominating well over three-fourths of the book. Throughout part two, Maag investigates the significant people and artifacts of Geneva's reformed worship, historical church architecture and worship space, and provides ancillary discussion of Geneva's urban geography. Provided in this section are a significant number of Calvin's sermons and theological writings on worship, including elements of the worship service such as baptismal procedures and theology, discussion on images and statues in worship, church management, administering the sacraments, and preaching. Maag synthesizes copious amounts of primary source material as she examines the identity of Reformed worship, capturing Calvin's contributions in mid-sixteenth century Geneva. Maag examines Reformed worship in both the urban cathedrals and country parishes of Geneva, noting both the variances and the parallels.

In part three, Maag provides material for devotional use, small group discussion, and further study. This inclusion is particularly helpful for churches, worship leaders, and groups to use to discuss the contents of the book, and reflect on their own settings and ministerial contexts concerning the material Maag raises in this book. This applicable section is a fantastic way to conclude this study in a forward-looking, future-oriented fashion, as the development of reformed worship will undoubtedly continually mature and transform into the future.

Written in markedly textbook fashion, Maag provides copious definitions and marginal notes to assist the reader. Additionally, Maag provides ancillary study material at the end of the book including study guides and discussion questions, to help both individual and group readers discourse and implement desired elements of worship into their own contexts. Maag also provides investigative insight into the cultural-historical context of Geneva, and Catholic worship practices which preceded the Genevan Reformation. According to Maag, Geneva is the source of this study on Reformed worship because of the extensive original manuscripts and archives, as well as the fact that it became the main stage for much of Calvin's work during his life. Maag makes the most of plentiful primary source material to examine the developments in Reformed worship, including Calvin's unique and personal contributions. Maag consults Calvin's commentaries and sermons, personal correspondence, consistory minutes, and the Genevan psalter.

The strengths of this volume are many, including a concise and defined set of study: 1541 to 1564, being the year of Calvin's death. The author's analysis of Reformed worship is narrow in scope, allowing for much more to be gleaned from this study. Although historically rooted, Maag shows that from the sixteenth century Geneva of John Calvin to the twenty-first century contemporary church, Christians are faced with the same issues and questions concerning worship and faith. These issues include living as a religious minority within society, and remaining true to one's convictions, while simultaneously and successfully co-existing with one's neighbors.

Maag writes in such a manner as to help the reader rediscover reformed worship's vibrancy, complexity, and development, through studying its formation and early expression in sixteenth century reformed Geneva. Her excellent work is a great addition and expansion on Reformed worship studies. This easy to read, highly structured, clear, concise and user-friendly book is an excellent resource and additional work that should absolutely be added to the personal library of worship leaders, pastors, students and armchair theologians alike.

—Blake I. Campbell

Scott M. Manetsch, *Calvin's Company of Pastors: Pastoral Care and the Emerging Reformed Church, 1536-1609.* Oxford Historical Studies in Theology. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. 448. $35.00 (paperback).

Calvin's Company of Pastors by Scott M. Manetsch, is a narrative history of the personalities, theological and doctrinal contributions, and ecclesial impact of Geneva's reformed ministers from John Calvin's initial arrival in Geneva, Switzerland, until after his death in the mid-sixteenth century. Examining the theological inheritors of Calvin's message and work, Manetsch examines the personal lives, backgrounds, economic and social status, work and pastoral ministry assignments of the pastors known as the "Venerable Company," which were those pastors that most closely followed Calvin, who both solidified and modified his legacy in Geneva, after his death in 1564.

Included in this group are notable theologians such as Theodore Beza, Pierre Viret, Jean Diodati and others, who effectually became the first disciples of Calvin in the Reformed Genevan movement. Manetsch assesses the degree to which Geneva's ministers and this new generation of reformed pastors were faithful to carrying on Calvin's dying wish of avoiding theological change and ecclesial innovation, an historical study largely under-examined. However, Manetsch's scholarship concurs with more recent trends in Reformed studies that are shifting focus from Calvin himself to his successors, and later Reformed developments.

The book is arranged in two general and officially undistinguished sections. Section one consists of the first five chapters, which examine the cultural-historical nature of the office and role of the minister in the church including ministerial tasks, developments of the pastoral office since the Reformation, as well as a study of the ministers themselves. Manetsch introduces the reader to some of the Reformed pastors of Geneva and members of "Calvin's Company," providing an intimate view into their lives. Section two on the other hand, more thoroughly examines the specific ministerial rights and duties, such as preaching, teaching, ecclesial discipline, the theological training of the youth through catechism, pastoral are, and administration of the sacraments. Section one focuses more on the Genevan pastors, whereas section two focuses on their roles and responsibilities.

This book extensively utilizes primary sources, including numerous unpublished, and often unconsulted documents, including personal letters,

consistory minutes, theological treatises, and published sermons. As such, Manetsch artfully traces the innovative nature and new identity of the pastoral office, which was fundamentally altered by the onset and seeming success of the Reformation, by reframing the pastoral office on *sola scriptura*. This work examines how the new reformed pastors in Geneva viewed themselves, their office, and how they were viewed simultaneously by the lay community. Manetsch delivers startlingly personal examination of these Reformed Genevan pastors, humanizing them, emphasizing their normality, and even ordinariness through highlighting their fears, pastoral struggles, successes, and failures.

One inherent weakness of this book is its limited geographic scope, which although clearly indicated, does narrow the academic latitude of this study. Additionally, one may find that the subject matter for this study may be a rather small group. This study focuses on what Manetsch calls "Calvin's Company of Pastors," consisting of Calvin's closest and most influential students and spiritual descendants. However, the strength in this limited study is that Manetsch artfully disproves a sometimes common misconception that Calvin and his followers were socially arrogant and theological haughty, or ecclesiastical strong men. Instead, this book is the product of much difficult research that brings these sometimes theologically-revered pastors and theologians, down to a more common and personable level. Therefore whatever scholarly breadth might be found lacking, Manetsch more than makes up for that in academic depth of study.

This book is both academic and practical, offering an innovative look at this pivotal period within the infancy of the Reformed church. This innovative scholarship comes notably in Manetsch's examination of the developments of pastoral ministry and identity during this time period, rather than the more common historically researched doctrinal developments and theological continuity with the post-Calvin community of Geneva. The student of reformed theology and church history will find that this work will yield many treasures regarding the social environment during and immediately the life of Calvin during the Swiss Reformation. Practically, this book may provide deep historical context for Reformed and Presbyterian pastors that may contextualize their present ministries within a reformed tradition, which in large part, was birthed out of Geneva and Calvin's ministry and ecclesial impact there.

This intimate and historical narrative of pastoral identity, describes life and ministry in sixteenth and seventeenth century reformed Geneva. Tracing pastoral identity in Geneva for over nearly a century, Manetsch objectively and forthrightly highlights both the virtues and vices of the reformed minister of Geneva, and exposes the fallacious assumption that Geneva during the time of "Calvin's Company" was some sort of theocratic utopia. Manetsch's work is a significant contribution to the study of church history and pastoral theology, and is a must read for students of the Reformation and pastors within corresponding denominational contexts.

—Blake I. Campbell

Russell Moore, *Onward: Engaging the Culture Without Losing the Gospel*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2015. Pp. ix + 224. $24.99 (hardcover).

Russell Moore is currently president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, the public-policy arm of the Southern Baptist Convention, following the long tenure of Richard Land, his more conventionally and politically conservative predecessor. Dr. Moore, who previously served as a dean at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Louisville, KY), is a protégé of its president, Albert Mohler.

Moore's background and career have influenced his current stance on public policy as reflected in this volume. Moore was an aide to a conservative Democratic Congressman in South Mississippi before pursuing his ministerial career as a Southern Baptist, earning his Ph.D. at SBTS, and embracing a staunch soteriological Calvinism. Moore affirms the inerrancy of Scripture and does not shrink from hard doctrines that are unpopular like complementarianism in family and church roles, and a literal hell. At the same time, less conventionally, he has not hesitated to press for Southern Baptist Convention repentance over racism and the call for racial justice, opposing both the candidacy of Donald Trump and the display of the Confederate flag.

At its best, Moore's determination to engage the culture without losing the gospel involves arguments for the church not to be culturally captive and swallowed by politics, particularly for the evangelical church not to be in the thrall of whatever either political party (mostly the Republican Party in more recent decades) espouses. Moore argues for a distinctly Christian vision a la Abraham Kuyper, Carl F.H. Henry and his mentor, Mohler, which distinguishes the church as "institute" from the church as "organism," calling for the church to be the church and for Christians to work to transform culture.

At its worst, Moore rejects the spirituality of the church by directly criticizing it, threatening to subordinate the church to the currently fashionable social warrior justice agenda. While the church needs to maintain a vibrant witness in word and deed, it needs to engage the culture, and do so in a way that maintains its distinct identity and calling as the church, without gospel compromise. I fear that though this is Moore's laudable goal, he seeks at points too much to ape the world rather than to challenge it. Martyn Lloyd-Jones once said that the church does the world the least good when she seeks to be most like it. Religious liberalism in the 20th century was reduced to an ethical "me-tooism," in which the secular culture set the political agenda and the church demonstrated its relevance by saying "me too."

The church does need a vibrant witness for the truth, however that voice may impact civil society, by maintaining biblical orthodoxy, not by saying "me-too" to the godless culture's attempt to be good without God. In this reviewer's opinion, Moore's admirable objectives—to engage the culture and yet maintain the faith—are too often eclipsed by an overly-politicized faith. The solution to a faith held captive by the Republican Party, for example, is not one that leans the other way politically, but one that recognizes that men and women who share the same

doctrinal confessions might have legitimately different political convictions that need not intrude into the sanctuary or disrupt the unity of the body of Christ.

—Alan D. Strange

Michael Reeves and Tim Chester, *Why the Reformation Still Matters.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016. Pp. 223. $16.99 (paperback).

Among the spate of books that have recently been published in commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation on October 31, 1517, Michael Reeves and Tim Chester have certainly authored one of the best. As the title of this work indicates, Reeves and Chester are not merely interested in a historical review of the Reformation and its influence upon the church in the modern period. Instead, they are primarily interested in identifying the main doctrinal themes of the Reformation, as well as the abiding benefits of the Reformation for the life and ministry of the church of Jesus Christ today.

For Reeves and Chester, the Reformation must be viewed as part of "our story." Many of the most characteristic features of Reformed and evangelical churches find their "roots" in what transpired in the church during the sixteenth century. The authors recognize that many moderns have a negative view of the Reformation. After all, the Reformation was born out of a conflict regarding the truth of the gospel, and from the perspective of many today, the assumptions undergirding the Reformation are no longer acceptable: "to claim to know the truth and challenge other people's perception of the truth is a ridiculous act of arrogance" (19). Furthermore, since the Reformation occurred some 500 years ago, it is also viewed as "yesterday's news," a tale of what happened long ago but which has little or no bearing on the modern world. However, for Reeves and Chester, the Reformation "continues to matter" a great deal, as they describe the burden of their argument: "evangelical churches would be well served by a rediscovery of Reformation theology. The thought of the Reformers not only challenges Catholic practice; it also challenges many aspects of evangelical practice. The Reformers are not embarrassing grandparents—they are vital conversation partners with the potential to renew and reinvigorate our churches" (20-21).

Consistent with their approach and interest in the doctrinal contributions teachings of the Reformation, Reeves and Chester treat the most important themes of Reformation theology in ten chapters: justification, Scripture, sin, grace, the theology of the cross, union with Christ, the Spirit, the sacraments, the church, and everyday life. These chapters do not treat any of these themes in an exclusively historical fashion. Although Reeves and Chester demonstrate a considerable familiarity with the history of the Reformation, its leading figures, and the theological themes that were central to it, they are also engaged throughout with the Scriptures, often adducing important textual support for Reformation views. They also offer suggestions along the way regarding the way these themes of the Reformation intersect with the life and practice of many evangelical churches today.

Finally, in the last chapter, they use the first question and answer of the Westminster Shorter Catechism ("What is the chief end of man? Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever."), to sum up the heart of the Reformation. In the same way John Calvin contended that God has joined his glory with our ultimate good, Reeves and Chester argue that the Reformation joined the glory of God in the salvation he provides us in Jesus Christ and the blessing that is ours in the joyful assurance of our salvation in him.

For those who would welcome an historically-informed, biblically-based, and warm-hearted treatment of the Reformation and its abiding contributions to the church's life and ministry, this is a book I can easily recommend. If you are a student of the Reformation and its teachings, I am confident you will agree upon reading this book. You might even be moved to give your copy to, or perhaps purchase another copy for, a friend who shares your enthusiasm for Reformation theology.

—Cornelis P. Venema

Robert Strivens, *Philip Doddridge and the Shaping of Evangelical Dissent*. Ashgate Studies in Evangelicalism. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2015. Pp. ix + 201. $109.95 (hardcover).

The eighteenth century, known as the "late orthodox" period, is notoriously difficult to navigate for many students of Reformed orthodoxy. The scholastic method coupled with the use of Aristotelian categories, which gave coherence to the "high orthodox" period, were gradually eroding. As new methods of logic, organization, and theological goals arose, great diversity occurred with it, which resulted in an explosion of theological and methodological differences. While many of these developments were rooted in seventeenth century debates, they came to their own in a new century, with widely differing results in diverse contexts. Robert Strivens' work on the theology and philosophy of Philip Doddridge invites readers to begin understanding a portion of these developments in a way that helps paint one segment of a craggy theological landscape. He does so with well-researched skill and commendable brevity.

Strivens' treatment of Doddridge is thorough, and provides a glimpse into shifts in Reformed thought in the eighteenth century. His aim is to provide readers with a fuller analysis of Doddridge's theology and philosophy in its historical context than previous research has afforded. He does so in seven chapters: treating Doddridge's relation to Richard Baxter and "moderate Calvinism," subscription to creeds and their relation to the doctrines of Scripture and of the Trinity, critical appropriations and modifications of John Locke, shifting views of natural theology as well as natural revelation and reason, Doddridge's aim and method in preaching, Christian spirituality in relation to Puritanism and cotemporary precedents, and the circle of influences and correspondents surrounding his ministry. Strivens argues that Doddridge was a "moderate Calvinist" who drew from Baxter's spirituality and

English Hypothetical Universalism, but who affirmed a Reformed view of Christ's substitution, justification, original sin, and related theological issues.

Doddridge's adoption and modifications of the philosophy of John Locke contributed to a shift in education away from Aristolelianism, as well as a rejection of many theological categories that were formerly acceptable. This had consequences, such as a partly ambiguous affirmation of the doctrine of the Trinity, which this reviewer revisits below. While he imbibed the shift in favor of showing that Christianity was not contrary to reason through the use of natural theology, Strivens argues that Doddridge still affirmed the necessity of biblical revelation for salvation. In relation to such issues, Doddridge aimed to formulate his theology in a way that drew attention to simplicity in preaching, pressing sinners to personal conversion to Christ. While his group of friends and influences included heterodox figures such as Samuel Clarke and Isaac Watts, he aimed to include among the orthodox a broad range of evangelical and "high orthodox" ministers. This paints a well-rounded picture of Doddridge as a complex figure who illustrates the persistence of older Reformed theology in some ways, and exemplifies its transformation in others.

A few features of this analysis stood out to this reader as predominantly noteworthy. In particular, his chapter treating Doddridge's view of creeds and confessions and the doctrine of the Trinity sheds light on some thorny issues. Doddridge rejected subscription to "any set of Articles." In 1719, dissenters in London voted by a small margin not to require confessional subscription in relation to the Trinity in particular (47-48). These men argued for using Scriptural language only and thought that subscription to creeds hindered unity. In this context, Doddridge advocated people writing their own confessions for ordination (49). Many today continue to debate the nature of subscription to creeds. However, the purpose of creeds and confessions has always been, in part, to serve as a standard of unity for ministers, assuring that all ministers confess and teach the same things. It is difficult to see how a church can achieve this without establishing agreed upon summaries of doctrine over which all are agreed rather than each candidate inventing his own creed upon ordination. The absence of creeds runs the risk of detaching the church from believers in all ages and making the standard of unity a moving goal line.

Strivens' treatment of Doddridge on the Trinity also clarifies important issues. Doddridge's views on the Trinity were suspect in relation to Christ's pre-existent nature, the relations within the Godhead, and his attitude toward those who held heterodox views (59). He believed that Christ had a pre-existent and changeable nature, in addition to a divine nature. This created nature was necessary, in his view, to justify Christ's incarnation without detracting from divine immutability. Watts taught this as well, adding that this nature was in fact human, which Doddridge rejected. While neither Watts nor Doddridge followed him on this point, Samuel Clarke taught the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. The relevant issue here, is that Doddridge treated all of these views as acceptable. This was a consequence both of his attitude towards confessions and his rejection of scholastic terminology, which is necessary to maintain unity in relation to historic Trinitarian

doctrine. This material can potentially provide insight into contemporary Trinitarian debates that suffer from similar dilemmas.

While this study is thoroughly researched and helpful, there are a few areas in which it could be clearer in light of further interaction with seventeenth century thought. For example, Strivens does not adequately show the shift in Reformed attributes towards natural theology and natural law at the dawn of the Enlightenment, and the diversity that increasingly existed among Reformed authors at this point (83). Engaging with wider scholarship on seventeenth century controversies on such matters, would have provided a fuller trajectory of the nature of theological developments during the eighteenth century.

Strivens' study of Philip Doddridge illustrates some of the many theological struggles that developed in the eighteenth century. The presence of such features means that studying theological developments in this time period can be a difficult task. Strivens provides part of the English context of the late orthodox period through his careful study of Philip Doddridge. This material is useful historically and has potential to bear fruit in ongoing theological discussions over key issues. All who desire clarity in understanding some of the shifts from seventeenth to eighteenth century thought will benefit from this volume greatly.

—Ryan M. McGraw

Synopsis Purioris Theologogia / *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*—Latin Text and English Translation. Volume 1: Disputations 1-23. Volume 2: Disputations 24-42. Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions—Texts & Sources. Volume editor, Dolf te Velde (vol. 1), Henk van den Belt (vol. 2), translated by Riemer A. Faber, General editors, Willem J. van Asselt† (vol. 1), Andreas J. Beck (vol. 2), William den Boer, and Riemer A. Faber. Subseries editor, Falk Eisermann. Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2015, 2016. Vol. 1, Pp. xv + 659. $210.00 (hardcover); vol. 2, Pp. xiv + 738. $154.00 (hardcover).

This Latin/English edition of the *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae* (1625) offers, at last for English readers, access to an historic and influential textbook of Reformed theology in its orthodox tradition. This projected three-volume work comes from the pen of four professors at Leiden University (Johannes Polyander, Anthonius Thysius, Antonius Walaeus, and Andreas Rivetus), written not long after the famed Arminian controversy, and the decisions of the national synod held at Dordrecht (1618-19). Since this controversy originated at Leiden, in its aftermath it is not surprising that the theological faculty sought to present a synopsis of a *purer* Reformed theology. Herein, then, we gain a glimpse into the controversies and issues that shaped Reformed theology in the opening decades of the seventeenth century.

Among the remarkable features of these volumes is the systematic presentation of Reformed thinking in a textbook form, with its scholastic characteristics and the disputative mode of instruction that typified that era. Disputative instruction

consisted of a presiding professor where a student (called the respondent) was assigned various theses on a given topic, which he was to defend against the attacks of one or more fellow students (called opponents). The presiding professor usually produced the theses, printed beforehand. Thus, the members of the theological faculty took turns treating the chief topics of theology; and over a period of time (in this case 1620 to 1624) the cycle of disputations resulted in a complete presentation of the theological topics. The complete work consists of fifty-two disputations (which form the chapters of these volumes), with Disputations 1-23 being taken up in volume one, and disputations 24-42 filling out volume two (and the remaining disputations 43-52 to be printed in the projected third volume).

The disputations of the first volume treat topics surrounding the nature of theology, the doctrine of Scripture, God's attributes, God's triune nature, creation, providence, angels and demons, and humans as created in God's image. Next follows expositions on the human fall into sin, original and actual sin, free choice, God's law, idolatry, oath-taking, the Sabbath and the Lord's Day, concluding with disputations on the gospel and on the Old and New Testaments. The second volume presents disputations on divine predestination, the incarnation, including Christ's office, his state of humiliation and exaltation, and his work of satisfaction. Disputations that follow, take up calling, faith and perseverance, repentance, justification, good works, Christian freedom, the religious practice of invocation, almsgiving and fasting, and vows, and then disputations that treat purgatory and indulgences, the church, Christ as head of the church (with a discussion also of the antichrist), and closing with a disputation on the calling of ministers and their duties.

These volumes, printed with the Latin text on the left facing page and the English translation on the right facing page, invites readers to wrestle with the Latin text (perhaps inspiring students to pursue the study of Latin) and makes serious academic study of this work ready-at-hand. Both volumes contain a fine introductory chapter that orient readers to this classic work of early Reformed orthodoxy. The third volume is projected to include a more detailed account of the historical and theological contexts which shaped the Leiden synopsis. Each of the first two volumes also includes a well-executed "Glossary of Concepts and Terms," wherein terms are explained, such as *actus*, *causa*, *essentia*, *habitus*, *necessitas*, and *ratio*, and many others. It is also noteworthy that these volumes are the product of a fine team of scholars, included among them the now deceased Willem J. van Asselt. The volumes contain, as well, a Scripture index, a general index, and an extensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources relevant for the study of Reformed theology in the early modern era.

Like all older works of theology, the Leiden Synopsis bears the marks of its setting and time period. It was not written for our age. Naturally, it engages the issues and controversies of its own situation, and as such shows itself to be a theological work composed prior to the Enlightenment. It is a work to be studied, evaluated and appreciated within its own context and ecclesiastical circumstances. Moreover, this handbook of theology is a synopsis, not an expansive work aimed at beating down every opponent or presenting at length all that can be said on a given theological topic. Rather, it bears the marks of a textbook, and as such functions as

a foundational text, rendered in the genre of one kind of theological literature of that era.

Perhaps, for modern readers, a curious feature of the Leiden Synopsis is the absence of a formal disputation under the heading of "the covenant," inasmuch as Reformed federalism came to characterize so much of Reformed theology later in the seventeenth century. Actually, the topic is not neglected altogether, but treated in connection with the discussion on the Old and New Testament. An extended and fulsome presentation of that topic was still on the way.

This work of post-Dortian theology, along with the scholars who have placed this classic text in our hands, receives the warmest commendations. For students of the history of Reformed thought, an important resource is now available in a most usable format. The third (and last) volume of this work is scheduled for publication in 2018.

—J. Mark Beach

James Traub, *John Quincy Adams: Militant Spirit.* New York: Basic Books, 2016. Pp. xviii + 620. $35.00 (hardcover).

James Traub has given us a detailed, well-written, and always gripping account of perhaps our most brilliant and complex American president. His presidency witnessed the end of what political scientists call the First Party System and the rise of the Second. Adams was the last of the Federalists (though a decidedly independent-minded one), whose party had not prevailed since 1800 with the victory of the Democrat-Republicans, Jefferson and Madison. The especially bitter-fought election of 1824, in which Adams became president, was even odder than the most recent American presidential election to take place in our country. Not only did the popular vote not decide that election, neither did the Electoral College, which could not agree upon a winner, throwing the election into the U.S. House of Representatives, where Adams's opponent, Andrew Jackson, accused the Speaker, Henry Clay, of making a "corrupt bargain" with Adams (Clay became Adams's Secretary of State) in exchange for votes in the House.

That Adams came to the presidency in such tumultuous circumstances seems par for the course for his life, certainly as he saw it. Traub gives us significant psychological insight into Adams. Like his father John, John Quincy was a fighter and could be quite petulant and unforgiving. His father, however, had a relationship with his wife, Abigail, that John Quincy never had with his wife, Louisa (whom he may have married to spite his mother), and John Quincy had a more dour and depressive personality than did his father. Also like his father John, John Quincy had a rocky relationship with his children, perhaps even more so, especially with his oldest son George, who committed suicide. Only his youngest son, Charles Francis, proved in any sense worthy of the Adams name, a tall order that scarcely anyone seemed able to live up to and that even John Quincy spent much of his life seeming to resent.

John Quincy had an enormous sense of personal rectitude and nothing was ever his fault. He seemed to always be nursing hurts due to what he took as personal affronts, and often languished in self-pity. He did indeed endure many trials and was often not sufficiently appreciated for his genius. No one seemed to feel that more than him. In that way he is a cautionary tale: it is common for highly gifted persons to feel that they are not given their due. This is a bad mindset to hold, for a number of reasons. Adams's religiosity did not help him here, for it was neither orthodox (with respect to the Trinity and Incarnation, for instance) nor experiential, but largely merely moral and formal.

The most striking thing about Adams's life is what he did before and after the Presidency. Before it, he had an impressive career in the diplomatic service, most notably to France, Russia, and England, culminating with service as Secretary of State under James Monroe, and becoming the chief drafter of the Monroe Doctrine, which set the plate for American foreign policy, with its insistence that Europe maintain a "hands-off-this-hemisphere" policy. He did all this before the Presidency, which Adams neither enjoyed nor counted a success (though historians have generally looked more favorably upon it than did Adams himself). He did make "internal improvements" (canals, roads, and other infrastructure) as part of his expansive view of the proper powers of the federal government and set the stage for the rise of the Whig party under Clay in opposition to the populist Democrat Jackson, the election of whom was the beginning of the Second Party System. The election of 1828 was remarkable for its vitriol and Adams was so bitter against his successful opponent Jackson that he refused to attend the inaugural.

After the presidency, however, the true glory of the man manifested itself. He was elected from Massachusetts to serve nine terms (17 years) in the U.S. House of Representatives until his death in 1848. Unsurprisingly he came to chair the Foreign Affairs Committee, for which he had so much knowledge and skill, as well as other committees (like Indian Affairs). His greatest contribution *non pareil*, however, was to the greatest question of the day: slavery. Adams was an unrelenting opponent of the institution and though Southerners, tired of his (as they saw it) harangues on the subject, successfully passed a "gag rule" in 1836, in which petitions to abolish slavery would be set aside and never discussed. Adams however, managed to debate it anyway, despite the mechanism of a motion to censure him that he incited for the sole purpose of condemning slavery.

He was a brilliant man, perhaps the most ever to serve as President, who as a Representative, would not be deterred and would not shut up about slavery. He delighted in being known as its greatest elected opponent and he opposed the annexation of Texas in 1845 and of the Mexican War in the two years to follow as a capitulation to the "slave power" and the desire of the South to extend slavery into those regions.

Whatever faults Adams may have had, and he had a fairly impressive number of them, lack of conviction was not among them. Adams had the courage to express and stick by his convictions with an utter disregard to what all those around him may be doing. When he believed himself to be right, nothing could dissuade him otherwise, and whenever he advocated a particular position, no greater champion

could be conceived. Thus we were blest to have him oppose slavery, because he was right and no one did it, or likely could have done it, better.

—Alan D. Strange

Carl. R. Trueman, *Reformation: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. Bridgend, Wales: Bryntirion Press, 2000. Repr., Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2011. Pp. 127. $10.99 (paperback).

Though this fine book by Carl Trueman had its beginnings as a series of lectures at the Evangelical Theological College in Wales in 1999, Christian Focus Publications wisely decided to reprint it in view of the commemoration this year of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. Trueman writes as a recognized historian of the Reformation, and as an insightful analyst of theological trends within the evangelical and Reformed churches. As the title indicates, he writes this book, not simply out of an antiquarian interest in past events, but to point the church, now and in the future, in a direction that expresses the best of the Reformation's heritage.

Trueman opens his study with an extended reflection on the "relevance" of the Reformation today. Recognizing the reluctance of many modern people to give much attention to what occurred in the past, he offers an apologia for revisiting the Reformation. Although he rejects the approach of those who view the Reformation as the gold standard for defining what is true and good for the church of Jesus Christ today, he does argue that the key theological contributions of the Reformation remain of abiding significance for the church today. According to Trueman, we need to approach the Reformers with an appreciative but critical spirit, appreciative in acknowledging their insights into the Bible's teaching and critical in remembering that, like us, they were mere sinful mortals capable of disastrous mistakes as well as marvelous achievements" (37).

After offering an account of the way he wishes to approach the Reformation, Trueman identifies what might be called three of the core issues of the Reformation: the centrality of Christ in the church's life and theology (Chapter 2: "Meeting the Man of Sorrows"); the Spirit working with and through the Word (Chapter 3: "The Oracles of God"); and the blessed assurance that is given to believers who trust alone in Christ (Chapter 4: "Blessed Assurance"). Trueman's handling of these issues, as the language he employs in the chapter headings illustrate, is never pedantic or plodding, but often insightful and challenging. Throughout his exposition of these themes, Trueman seeks to discern where the Reformation's insights have continuing application to the life and ministry of the church today. For example, in his chapter on the centrality of Christ, Trueman devotes much of his attention to Luther's distinction between a "theology of the cross" and a "theology of glory." Upon the basis of his reflections on Christ and his cross, Trueman then lists several challenges to the contemporary evangelical church: to embrace the reality of the church's weakness in conformity to Christ, to welcome in Christ's name the weak and powerless, to resist the temptation to devise techniques that rely on worldly wisdom

and power, and to reintroduce a realistic view of suffering into the church's preaching, worship, and hymnody. Similarly, in his treatment of the principle, *sola Scriptura*, Trueman stresses the living voice of Christ that comes to the church through the exposition and application of Scripture in the power of the Holy Spirit.

For those who want a historically-informed, challenging, and insightful treatment of the Reformation and its importance for the church in the present, Trueman's book will prove satisfying. Rather than simply informing the reader about the Reformation, Trueman leaves the reader asking how the church today can continue to be reforming.

—Cornelis P. Venema

Theodorus VanderGroe, *The Christian's Only Comfort in Life and Death: An Exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism*, 2 vols. Translated by Bartel Elshout. Edited by Joel R. Beeke. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2016. Pp. liv + 556 and vi + 562. $45.00 (hardcover).

In the volumes under review, the Dutch Reformed Translation Society has significantly furthered their ongoing effort to make the riches of Dutch Reformed theology and piety accessible to the English-speaking church. This sermonic exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism provides a valuable window into doctrinal teaching and inculcation of piety from the pulpit, as this was carried out by means of Catechism preaching during the Dutch Further Reformation (I:vii).

Theodorus VanderGroe (1705–1784) ministered towards the end of the *Nadere Reformatie*, and his work thus reflects a mature stage in that particular tradition. The present handsome volumes arose from records made on the spot of his catechism preaching, although irrelevant indications of this fact have mercifully been edited out (I:xii). The treatment of the catechism questions and answers tends to be thorough and somewhat expansive. Thus VanderGroe never combines two Lord's Days into one treatment, but on multiple occasions has more than one chapter per Lord's Day. His writing reveals a minister who was full of good material, with apt texts from all parts of Scripture, in readiness for all points of the catechism.

For instance, in the first major division of the Catechism concerning sin, VanderGroe approaches Lord's Day 3 by making reference to the story of Absalom's rebellion (I:29). He draws out a number of parallels between Absalom and Adam, which are perhaps rather more devotionally stimulating than exegetically exact (I:30–31). However, this is just the introduction, as VanderGroe proceeds to explain both the origin and the greatness of man's misery on the basis of the statements of the Catechism itself (I:31–41), though with continual reference to supporting Scriptures drawn from many places.

He proceeds by a logical analysis of what the Catechism says, showing first that God is not the author of man's misery, but that on the contrary it is due to the Fall of man (I:32). This summary of the doctrine is encapsulated in the text chosen to headline the sermon, Ecclesiastes 7:29 (I:33). As the sermon advances, VanderGroe gives quite compact and rich teaching about the nature of God (I:33–34, including

a verbal allusion to the Belgic Confession Art. 1), what the image of God implies (I:34–35), the original state of man (I:35–36), the Fall and its consequences (I:35–38), the transmission of guilt and pollution (I:38–39), and fallen man's utter lack of spiritual goodness and consequent need of regeneration by the Spirit (I:39–42). In all of this, the statements of the Catechism are fully if briefly explained. VanderGroe provides a rich and stimulating doctrinal feast, and what application there is enters primarily by way of brief asides (e.g., against excusing sin on the basis of human nature, I:33).

In the second main division of the Catechism, dealing with salvation, VanderGroe devotes four chapters to Lord's Day 12. In the last of those four chapters, as he comes to explain the kingly office of the Christian (I:252–264, from Q.32), he draws evocatively on the crowns worn by the 24 elders in Revelation to introduce the topic. He first demonstrates that true Christians are spiritual kings, drawing the application that the dignity of a Christian is far beyond any merely worldly or political rank. In striking language, he asserts that "Believers are holy and spiritual kings in like fashion as they are prophets and priests, namely, by their internal state of grace" (I:256). He elaborates the superiority of these spiritual kings over earthly sovereigns through a series of five contrasts suitable for ministering strong comfort to believers: he establishes the glories of their descent (I:256–257), character (I:258–259), luster (I:259–260), wealth (I:260–261), and warfare (I:261-64). In his conclusion he points out that for true Christianity, one must have not merely the name, but the reality of participation with Christ which truly makes the believer a spiritual prophet, priest, and king (I:264).

In the third major division of the Catechism, dealing with the life of grateful service, VanderGroe devotes considerable attention to the law of God, including seven chapters introducing God's law and expounding its preamble (II:123–220). In treating the commandments themselves, he moves along briskly, making clear the requirements of God's law as well as the language of the Catechism (e.g., the explanation regarding the Fifth Commandment of who falls under the heading of "fathers and mothers" and the five duties implied by the command to "honor" them, II:302–311). As might be expected, this portion is rather heavy on application in comparison to the preceding sections.

VanderGroe's work will not replace that of Zacharias Ursinus for understanding the original intent of the Heidelberg Catechism (*The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954]). Neither can it substitute for the often electrifying if erratic theological exposition of Herman Hoeksema (*The Triple Knowledge: An Exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism*, 3 vols [Grand Rapids: Free Reformed Publishing Association, 1971]). The careful research, detailed information, and clear elucidations of Fred Klooster likewise remain indispensable (*Our Only Comfort: A Comprehensive Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*, 2 vols [Grand Rapids: CRC Publications, 2001]). But the present work will nonetheless provide substantial help, and students of Dutch historical theology and piety will find much illuminating material here. The reader seeking spiritual profit and encouragement will find a rich doctrinal feast, often vividly expressed. The pastor desiring help

with presenting the Heidelberg Catechism in a form suitable for the pulpit will find his teaching sharpened, and will be challenged to an intelligent and wide-ranging deployment of Scripture. He will also most likely find that VanderGroe's exegetical and homiletical method cannot be imitated successfully. Nevertheless, this work offers a great deal of beautiful material that can be adapted to contribute greater doctrinal depth, textual variety, and penetrating application in preaching the Catechism.

—Ruben Zartman

Chad Van Dixhoorn, *God's Ambassadors: The Westminster Assembly and the Reformation of the English Pulpit, 1643-1653*. Studies on the Westminster Assembly. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017. Pp. xxiv + 215. $40.00 (hardcover).

Dr. Van Dixhoorn, as has been noted more than once in this journal, is one of our foremost experts on the Westminster Assembly and particularly on the details of its workings. As he continues to publish books about the Westminster Assembly, it is a boon not only for scholarship in this area, but also practically for those who subscribe these standards and hold them dear as the doctrinal expression of faith. The latter consideration is especially true for a volume like this, which has in its view the great contribution of the Assembly to the matter of preaching.

The first two sections of his book deal with the Assembly's identifying and dealing with scandalous ministers—both those who were unsound in life or doctrine and those who could or would not preach—and in examining and securing good ministers, treating, in this last part, the Directory for Ordination (as part of the Directory for Church Government, 1644) and the Subdirectory for Preaching (as part of the Directory for Public Worship, 1645). Both of these important directories are reproduced in Appendices 1 and 2.

While the first two sections may be of greatest interest to historians and those interested in the workings of the Assembly, the third section should prove of particular interest to preachers and all those who care about good preaching. This third and final section addresses both what makes for godly preachers and godly preaching. For the broader church, these latter chapters are worth the price of the volume alone, as Van Dixhoorn addresses the Word of God as ordinary means of grace, its relation to the sacraments, Christ-centered sermons and exegesis, and the role of the Spirit in preaching. There is so much here that I could discuss and heartily commend but I think that I shall simply counsel all readers to read, discuss, and profit from these outstanding, and particularly edifying, closing chapters. This is history and theology as doxology.

Readers here will know that much time is spent, and rightly so, reviewing books that address the centrality of preaching or trumpeting its importance. Indeed, the Reformed tradition readily admits that preaching is the means of grace that God is pleased ordinarily to use, above all, in the gathering and perfecting of the saints. It

is the case that not only does the Second Helvetic Confession (1567) recognize that "the [faithful] preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God" (not directly but derivatively), but so also does the Westminster Standards, with the Westminster Larger Catechism 160 arguing that preaching of the Word of God is to be received as to its truth as the Word of God, citing 1 Thessalonians 2:13 as proof. We live in a time when many regard preaching as passé. It was how the church was Reformed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and it remains now, and until Jesus comes again, what the church continues, above all, to need: Christ, proclaimed by qualified ambassadors, in all his glory, for the evangelizing and discipling of a needy, dying world. Van Dixhoorn's book is an outstanding addition to the literature on the importance and indispensability of preaching.

—Alan D. Strange

Eric Brian Watkins, *The Drama of Preaching: Participating with God in the History of Redemption*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2017. Pp. xviii + 255. $33.00 (paperback).

In 1998, Kevin Vanhoozer published what has now become a classic hermeneutics text: *Is There a Meaning in this Text? The Bible, The Reader, and The Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998). Though he had already made significant contributions to hermeneutics and theology since publishing his dissertation on Paul Ricoeur in 1990, *Is There a Meaning in this Text?* became a flagship work for Vanhoozer that would lead to sustained engagement with biblical hermeneutics and postmodernity via the metaphor of drama. Appropriating a term introduced by Hans Urs von Balthasar, Vanhoozer has encouraged readers to see the Bible – indeed the gospel itself – as a *theodrama*: "a series of divine entrances and exits, especially as these pertain to what God has done in Jesus Christ" (Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005], 31). While the volume just cited pushed Vanhoozer into the waters of Redemptive-Historical (hereafter RH) hermeneutics (wherefrom he would continue to publish in this same vein), simultaneously, another writer was engaging with narrative theology and postmodern hermeneutics, but from an explicitly confessional Reformed RH perspective.

Michael S. Horton's *Covenant and Eschatology: The Divine Drama* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), covered similar ground as Vanhoozer, albeit three years earlier, but did so with sustained utilization of a set of names not often cited in narrative theological circles. Geerhardus Vos, Herman Ridderbos, Meredith Kline, and Richard Gaffin, suddenly took up roles in the notes and indices alongside Jacques Derrida, Hans Frei, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Paul Ricoeur. Indeed, John Calvin featured regularly in the pages of *Covenant and Eschatology* and citation of Vanhoozer demonstrated the similarity of his approach to Horton's own. But this very utilization of the doyens of Reformed, biblical

theology heralded a new appropriation of an older hermeneutical model for postmodern times.

I introduce my review of Eric B. Watkins's *The Drama of Preaching: Participating with God in the History of Redemption* in this way because Watkins's work mirrors the journey of many who, steeped in the RH tradition of Reformed hermeneutics and homiletics, found Horton's and Vanhoozer's utilization of the drama metaphor stimulating and beneficial, but struggled to articulate why a debate in the 1930s in the Netherlands, the work of a Princeton professor of biblical theology (Vos), and debates surrounding postmodern literary criticism seemed to intersect so closely. These readers recognized that *story* figures prominently in the writings of everyone concerned, but knew that more work needed to be done, first to note wherein the true points of continuity between all these figures lay, and second, to show the relevance of these newer approaches to traditional RH preaching. In *The Drama of Preaching*, Watkins not only crystalizes the points of contact between Horton and Vanhoozer and the RH biblical-theologians that preceded them, but musters their "dramatic model" for arbitrating some of the points of debate in the 1930s. For those who feel that the RH school and the exemplaristic school tended toward hard-lined polarized stances, primarily in terms of whether and how "application" in preaching should be done, Watkins provides a fascinating and compelling synthesis.

In chapter 1, Watkins surveys the 1930s debate, noting that nearly every English language source discussing this debate is dependent on the published dissertation of Sidney Greidanus, *Sola Scriptura: Problems and Principles in Preaching Historical Texts* [Wedge Publishing Foundation, 1970; repr. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001]. Watkins's own summary draws upon a host of newer sources, including many newer Dutch language sources, making it a very important contribution for understanding the contours of the debate itself. From here, Watkins discusses the interest in RH preaching that exists outside the Netherlands itself. Indeed, he suggests: "[I]t is a small irony that the current climate of interest in RH hermeneutics and preaching is arguably stronger outside the Netherlands than within it" (8). Watkins traces much of this interest to Vos's influence, especially as it as mediated to English (in particular North American) audiences, via people like Cornelius Van Til and Edmund Clowney.

In chapter 2, Watkins introduces readers to the drama model as depicted by Horton and Vanhoozer. Not only does this chapter serve as a fine introduction to this model as a whole (something some find challenging to understand due to the continental flavor of Horton's and Vanhoozer's writings), it also discusses the RH contours of Scripture, both showing its exegetical underpinnings and summarizing secondary literature on the topic. Returning to the drama metaphor, Watkins points out several theological appropriations of the metaphor (especially that of Balthasar and Dorothy Sayers) before "connecting the dots between the DH [drama-of-redemption] paradigm presented thus far and RH preaching" (55). This is no simplistic harmonization, but a critical appraisal of points of both contact and disagreement, and one that notes a significant omission from the RH paradigm that

provides a ready interface with DH formulations: the doctrine of the church, in particular "where the church *fits in* to the sermon" (57).

Chapters 3 and 4 consist of a sustained expositional engagement with Hebrews 11. Though not a complete exegesis of the whole of the chapter, it does contain a translation and detailed exegesis of several key verses (11:1-2 and with less detail, even 12:1-2), in addition to discussion of the history of exegesis. Watkins suggests: "The emphasis of Hebrews 11:2 thus appears to be that God was not simply commending, but witnessing to the Old Testament saints through various means (1:1), granting them revelation of the things to come, which they received by faith (11:2)…. In this way, they were 'witnessed to' by God himself concerning the promises of the covenant. As those who were witnessed to by God, they also become witnesses to us of the same realities" (76-77). Chapter 3 comprises more of the exegesis proper, whereas chapter 4 applies the interpretive suggestions derived from 11:1-2 to several of the figures from the "cloud of witnesses." The later was particularly interesting and edifying, modeling a robust RH hermeneutic that can be profitably emulated by others.

Chapters 5 and 6 move to the specific question of "application" in preaching. There are no lack of books on application, many by solid Reformed writers, and yet it is difficult to find a treatment of the subject that feels meaningfully rooted in RH hermeneutics, such that it presents the question of application in both concrete and consistent ways. Not only does Watkins *define* application ("authoritative commands or imperatival language that is exegetically derived from the text for the purpose of instructing hearers in their proper response to the redemptive message indicated by the text" [115]), but also articulates the *importance* of application, arguing this not only from the history of homiletics, but also from a theological interpretation of several key passages of Scripture. In the DH model, the Bible plays the role of "performance-directing script" in the theodrama; i.e., it "guides the church not only into a right knowledge of God, but also of a rightly practiced performance of the text of Scripture itself" (149). Because of this "scripting" role, there is firm ground for providing concrete instruction for how to practice a fitting response (yes, even a behavioral response) to the message of what God had done in history.

Watkins pays close attention to the centrality of "imitation" in Scripture and spells out quite helpfully how this gives both warrant for application in preaching and also a guard against "biographical preaching" that emphasizes "attitudes and actions of biblical characters which the hearers should either imitate of avoid" (140, n.18), at least when these do not "fairly represent the theological and pastoral intentions" of the text (140). This chapter provides a very useful summary of the issues in play and is a must-read for pastors seeking to apply the text concretely while remaining consistent with the text's RH shape and intent.

Chapter 7 with its focus on preaching in a postmodern context might feel a bit disjointed from the previous 6 chapters, yet it serves as a fitting conclusion to the Horton and Vanhoozer inspired thesis, and as a significant guide for pastors seeking to know how to best minister in the current, post-modern milieu. While many confessional Reformed readers might think this is limited only to evangelism efforts,

Watkins explains that "postmodernism is not simply a field of thought outside the church, but one that has influenced the thinking of those inside the church in one fashion or another" (153). While much of this influence is bad, a good amount of it is not. After all, in many places, postmodernity has identified fundamental cracks in the project of modernity, cracks that those with a revelational, Scriptural epistemology have also noted. Watkins discusses postmodern approaches to history, authorial intention, and morality, and then argues that "a homiletic synthesis of the RH and DR ideas may indeed help address some of the critical challenges for preaching raised by postmodernism" (154).

Watkins is to be commended for this excellent piece of scholarship. While it is academic in tone (it is after all, his published PhD dissertation from the Theological University in Kampen [Broederweg]), it is still accessible to pastors, seminarians, and advanced lay people. Watkins's familiarity with the secondary literature, especially in the Dutch language, is outstanding and his analysis and use of these sources is erudite. *The Drama of Preaching* is a welcome addition to the growing corpus of RH homiletical material, especially as it furthers our understanding of how to engage in fitting sermonic application from a committed RH perspective. Indeed, the contents of this book even inform application from Scripture in the context of counseling.

—R. Andrew Compton

John D. Wilsey, *American Exceptionalism and Civil Religion: Reassessing the History of an Idea.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015. Pp. 262. $25.00 (paperback).

John Wilsey has written a book detailing America's sense of being specially favored of God from settlement to the present day and the religious sensibilities accompanying such. He argues that such has fostered a kind of hubris that plays right into a "my nation, right or wrong" mentality. Later in the book, Wilsey even treats three leading home schooling curricula on the question, finding them woefully misguided in their jingoism. Wilsey ends with a call for a sort of exceptionalism (he calls it "open" as opposed to "closed") that properly engages civically rather than giving way to the idolatry of civil religion. What he argues against in this book, is closed exceptionalism, which lies at the root of manifest destiny and the justification of every sort of imperialistic action as part of God's blessed providence for America, which many believed enjoys a kind of divine "most favored nation" status.

In truth, the last time that God chose a nation as His own, God chose Israel in the Old Testament. Israel was largely an ethnically-defined people. To be sure, Gentiles could be associated with the Israelites, not only as God-fearers, but also as covenantal members if they submitted fully to the conversion process; this was the exception in Old Testament times, however, rather than the rule. Sadly, God's choice of Israel commonly puffed her up so that she considered herself superior to the nations about her, instead of humbling her that God should choose such a people

as his own. One might rightly connect this prideful attitude to contemporary America, where there is also a sense of being God's chosen nation. Israel was the chosen people descended from the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, consisting of the twelve tribes derived from Jacob's sons. Through this lineage, particularly through the tribe of Judah, Jesus the Messiah came. And he came not only as Israel's Savior, but as the Savior of all men everywhere who call upon him in truth. He was the gift of the Father's love for the salvation of those from every tribe and language and people and nation (Rev. 5:9; 7:9).

Now, those that God blesses in a special way are not those bearing a particular ethnic identity—as was true of Israel of old—but those who comprise his people from all the nations. The Great Commission is to take this gospel to all the ethnic groups of the world so that God might have a church not composed of one people but of all people groups. This means now that the blessing of God does not locate itself to a particular ethnic group but to all peoples everywhere who make up God's elect. Israel as a nation is no longer God's elect. Rather, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is the Israel of God and is that body that he now blesses.

No one particular country in the world, as a nation, has that blessing of God that applies only to his chosen people, the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is not to say that a nation acting righteously, say in defense of another nation under attack, may not be blessed of the Lord for such defense. But in such a case that nation would be blessed for that righteous action, not because her people have been chosen of God as was Israel of old or as the church of the New Covenant is now.

Many in the United States of America have seen themselves, as a nation, specially chosen of and blessed by God. Others have been skeptical of this claim from a variety of viewpoints, ranging from disbelief in God altogether to those of us who would maintain that in the New Covenant era God does not bless any particular ethnic group as he did formerly but gathers and perfects a church from every nation on the face of the earth (Matt. 28:18-20). Abraham Lincoln was well aware of this claim and wryly tweaked it by once calling Americans "an almost chosen people."

Wilsey commends "open exceptionalism" of the sort expressed in Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, in which God does bring providential blessing to those "acting in accordance with God's moral laws" (89), even as hard providences might obtain in the opposite case (God bringing judgment on a people regardless of who they are because of manifest wickedness). I have argued in my dissertation on *The Doctrine of the Spirituality of the Church in the Ecclesiology of Charles Hodge* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017), that Hodge and company's doctrine of spirituality was in a measure compromised by their view of American exceptionalism, not precisely the closed sort that Wilsey condemns, but a sort that sees the preservation of the American union as necessary for the blessing of the world.

Consider the following from my published dissertation: "Why was such a premium placed on saving the American union by so many of the parties in these debates? Because Hodge, Thornwell, and almost all those in nineteenth-century America shared certain convictions about American exceptionalism—namely, that

God had brought America into existence to bring to the whole world both spiritual and political freedom. All the parties to this dispute saw the American venture as divinely ordained and worth saving at all costs, even if that meant bearing with the continuation of slavery that Hodge and the 1818 General Assembly said should end.

"This commitment to the American experiment, though cast in spiritual terms, was a political commitment, and abolitionism in particular threatened the continuation of the holy 'errand into the wilderness' that Hodge and others saw the American nation to be. Hence, even if slavery was undesirable, as Hodge thought it was, and thus he advocated gradual emancipation, slavery was not horrible enough to warrant its abolition, certainly not at the price of the dissolution of the nation.

"Thus for Hodge, Thornwell, and most Presbyterians, Old and New School, the survival of the nation transcended all other concerns and was itself conceived as not merely a political conviction but rose to the level of a spiritual truism since the continued existence of the nation was the precondition of the continued existence and thriving of the American Presbyterian Church, at least as Hodge and company assumed at the time. All of the parties to this were so enmeshed in their political commitments to the U.S. Constitution and the American nation that such was sacrosanct and beyond question. For Hodge and his fellows, nothing rose to the moral level of supporting the survival of the nation. The continuation of the Union became paramount to every other consideration.

"There was then a kind of 'spiritualized' manifest destiny that arguably ran quite counter to any vigorous notion of the spirituality of the church. Hodge, Thornwell, and all the rest, New or Old School, looked for the blessings that had come to the American nation to come to the world through America, and thus the American nation had to spread and be preserved at all costs for the good of the propagation of the Christian faith everywhere. They were in effect identifying America with the church as the means of worldwide blessing" (337-338).

This is sobering. Wilsey neither denies God's blessings upon the United States (but surely He has blessed others as well), nor believes that such blessings should be taken as a badge of honor but as an opportunity to use such blessings as the occasion for service. Much of the service that Wilsey wishes to see engaged in appears to be quite similar to certain liberal political agendas (societal care of the dispossessed, environmental care, concern about income inequality, etc.). Wilsey manifests an unusual combination of ideas, seeing not only Martin Luther King, Jr. and W.E.B. DuBois as models, but also Ronald Reagan, a troika rarely depicted or thought of together.

Even here, though, in the embrace of open exceptionalism, we cannot say biblically that America is any sense a chosen nation. Some, and one can almost hear this in Wilsey, might say that this open exceptionalism is a better exceptionalism and is the kind that should characterize the American nation. Au contraire. Better to reserve exceptionalism of any kind for the church alone. God's blessing on people groups now outside the church is incidental, coinciding with righteous actions on their part and not because they are in any way, as a nation, specially chosen of God, whether viewed as closed or open exceptionalism. Many nations have been blessed in a variety of ways. No nation is now chosen in the way that only the church is.

Yes, America was peopled originally with many, especially in New England, who were a God-fearing (yet quite vulnerable to sin) folk. He blessed many of them as He blessed many other nations. Things were pioneered here with respect to freedoms (one might think of those enshrined in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution) and we could say that this makes us exceptional in a political sense, but not in a religious sense. This is because other confessionally-Reformed Christians would not only argue against the disestablishment of the church, but even against freedom of speech, of the press, of right to petition, etc. These are not particularly biblical values, though Americans act as if they are. Those on the political right especially often demand that politicians affirm exceptionalism as part of our civil religion. Surely the American nation, though now secularized in many respects, is not going to reject exceptionalism. One would think that with the disenchantment of life that few would cling to exceptionalism and its accompanying civil religion. But many Americans refuse to let such go. Perhaps it is at least time in our confessional churches that we do.

—Alan D. Strange

N.T. Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began: Reconsidering the Meaning of Jesus's Crucifixion*. San Francisco: Harper One, 2016. Pp. 448. $28.99 (hardcover).

N.T. Wright maintains that when the disciples looked back on the significance of the cross, they concluded that it started a revolution. The world was different because of what Jesus did on the cross, and the world could never be the same again; a revolution had been unleashed (39). Many Christians believe this revolution centers on salvation from sin and entrance into heaven, but Wright insists that is not quite the revolution the early Christians were talking about—there is something "bigger, dangerous, and more explosive" (4). In this book, Wright aims both to address how the church has misunderstood the true revolutionary character of the cross and to reveal the true nature of the revolutionary work of Christ in the crucifixion.

Wright asserts that the Reformers got things wrong by paganizing soteriology. The Reformers allegedly echoed a question medieval theologians were probing: How can one be saved from God's wrath? The Roman Catholic Church answered that question primarily through the development of the doctrine of purgatory and the practice of indulgences. While the Reformers tried to answer this question via biblical examination, Wright proposes that they were asking the same wrong questions the medieval church was asking (32). Consequently, the theological conclusion was that salvation was reduced to entrance into heaven, appeasement of God's wrath, and living a moral life. As a result, Wright suggests that the Reformers, as well as many modern-day evangelicals, have missed the true revolutionary nature of the cross. This is akin to Greek paganism, says Wright, because it echoes Platonic philosophy more than what the Bible reveals about the cross. The following quote encapsulates Wright's position: "We have *Platonized* our eschatology (substituting

'souls going to heaven' for the promised new creation) and have therefore *moralized* our anthropology (substituting a qualifying examination of moral performance for the Biblical notion of human vocation), with the result that we have *paganized* our soteriology, our understanding of 'salvation' (substituting the idea of 'God killing Jesus to satisfy his wrath' for the genuinely biblical notions we are about to explore)" (147).

To be fair, it is worth mentioning that Wright does not only criticize the Reformers, although he seems to focus on them as being main culprits to leading the church down a path where the revolutionary nature of the cross is misunderstood. Wright sweeps across the history of the church trying to show how almost everyone (even though many raised good questions and issues) misunderstands the revolutionary nature of the cross. Wright concludes: "a quick tour of two thousand years of church history leaves us somewhat confused about the meaning of the cross…"(37), and Wright purposes to provide the reader with the true meaning of the cross.

What the true revolution of the cross centered on, which apparently the Reformers and modern day evangelicals have missed, was "an operation through which redeemed humans would play once more the role for which they were designed. It was the hope of a renewed world in which justice and mercy would reign forever" (146). Wright unpacks this idea of revolution with the concepts of vocation, forgiveness of sins, and Passover.

For Wright, the idea of "vocation" stands in contrast to the "works contract." The idea of a works contract, based on the Westminster Confession, functions like this according to Wright: "God told humans to keep the moral code…failure would incur the punishment of death…humans were therefore heading to hell rather than heaven. Finally, however, Jesus obeyed the moral law perfectly and his death paid the penalty on behalf of the rest of the human race" (75). The works contract view, however, does not get to the true problem of humanity. In contrast, God created humans to have a vocation on earth, a vocation that was lost in the fall. The real problem of humanity is that "humans have turned their vocation upside down, giving worship and allegiance to forces and powers within creation itself…we have…handed our power and authority to non-divine and non-human forces, which then run rampant, spoiling human lives, ravaging the beautiful creation, and doing their best to turn God's world into a hell" (77). The revolution unleashed by the cross, therefore, restores humanity to its proper vocation where we give our allegiance to God.

For Wright, the cross also accomplished the "forgiveness of sins," which is taken to mean the "end of exile," where Israel would finally be free of the powers that oppress them (113). Israel sinned by not living up to their God-given vocation, so they were sent into exile which, consequently, prevented them from living out their vocation. Even after the return from exile, Israel did not view their exile as complete. They longed for a day where the exile would end, which would mean their renewed vocation in the world. Forgiveness of sins leads to a restoration to vocation with worldwide implications.

Another important idea that factors into this work is the Passover. Jesus sees the significance of the cross as something tied to the meaning of Passover. For the Jews, Passover meant liberation from Egypt. But when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, it was as if Jesus was saying a new Passover is coming, where there will be freedom from evil powers and the "forgiveness of sins and the end of the 'exile'" (186).

Wright explains how the cross is able to grant the "forgiveness of sins" and "end of "exile" and renew covenant vocation: "Jesus's suffering and death are indeed the means through which God is becoming king, through which all authority is being given to Jesus himself. This will set the pattern for a new kind of behavior or lifestyle through which the saving rule of God will be brought to bear upon the entire world. And it will come through Jesus's unique vocation, through his taking upon himself the scorn, malevolence, and hatred of the world … a new sort of power is unleashed on the world: self-giving love, a revolution" (219-222). Wright also explains how Jesus had to be our substitute in order to unleash this revolution: "Paul does not say that God punished Jesus. He declares that God punished sin in the flesh of Jesus … the death of Jesus, seen in this light, is certainly penal. It has to do with the punishment on sin, not to say it again, on Jesus—but its punishment nonetheless. Equally, it is substitutionary: God condemned sin (in the flesh of the Messiah), and therefore sinners who are "in the Messiah" are not condemned…. Humans are rescued in order to be 'glorified', that is so that we may resume genuine human existence, bearing the divine image, reflecting God's wisdom and love in the world" (287-288).

To summarize, Wright maintains that the revolutionary nature of the cross has to do with being a new creation right now in the present where justice and mercy will reign supreme. Wright says that the hope of Israel, "was not for a rescue operation that would snatch Israel *from* the world, but for a rescue operation that would be *for* the world" (146). For Wright, by the evening of Good Friday the world had changed because through the crucifixion, Jesus had fulfilled this hope for the new creation.

I agree with Wright that the revolutionary nature of the cross is not simply to get people into heaven, and Wright skillfully demonstrates how the cross can destroy idols, restore true worship, and help us live our vocation before God. However, Wright emphasizes a Christus Victor soteriological model, so much so, that going to heaven and having sins forgiven in the moral sense before an almighty God who is full of wrath is left out of the picture. Wright also emphasizes restoration to our vocation, so the believer can fulfill it on earth, but there is no emphasis of how a perfect restoration of vocation will not happen until Christ returns. I was left wondering if Wright blends the new heaven and new earth that is experienced when Christ returns with what we experience in being born-again. Wright seems to limit atonement to what it can do for us on earth right now, and there is little mentioned beyond the life we have now. Even though Wright mentions that he is trying to keep all that is good in the "old way" in this "new way" (147), I fear the "old way" has been destroyed in Wright's scheme.

It is important to note that Penal Substitution is not a factor in Wright's system. Throughout the book, it seems like Wright criticizes Penal Substitution, redefining it as in the quote above. Even with this redefinition I fail to see how important it is in making the revolution happen because Wright focuses exclusively on moral example and Christus Victor while leaving out the necessity of Penal Substitution. Contrary to Isaiah 53:4-5 which states that Jesus was smitten by God and afflicted and pierced for our transgressions, Wright adamantly says that God unleashes punishment on sin, not on Jesus. Wright attempts to redefine what substitution is, but in the end, we are left without any substitution that matters.

Wright also misunderstands the Reformers and the Westminster Confession by attacking a watered-down pietistic version of atonement, and lumping the Reformers into it. In this regard, his main opponent seems to be a straw man. Wright does not have many citations of those who believe that the cross is only meant to get us into heaven.

Finally, Wright spends the last two chapters of the book explaining how the revolution of the crucifixion works its way into our lives. There is a lot of good material in these final chapters, including a section on suffering. However, to get to this material, Wright arguably did not need to spend an entire book attempting to redefine atonement. All Wright had to do was draw from the Reformers and apply Penal Substitution.

—Steve Van Noort

J. Stephen Yuille, ed., *The Works of William Perkins,* vol. 1. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014. Pp. xxxviii + 783. $25.00 (hardcover). Paul M. Smalley, ed., *The Works of William Perkins,* vol. 2. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2015. Pp. xxviii + 629. $38.00 (hardcover).

William Perkins (1558–1602) left behind an extensive and significant body of written work. Reformation Heritage Books has undertaken to publish his works in ten volumes, of which the first five are currently available. The first four volumes of this series present Perkins as an expositor of Scripture, whereas following volumes contain doctrinal, polemical, and practical writings. Of course, this division is largely formal and generic: those familiar with Perkins or other Puritans will be aware that matters of doctrine and practice are frequently found in exegetical writings, while explanations of Scripture appear throughout writings about systematic and practical theology.

Volume 1 contains three substantial works. The first, *A Digest or Harmony of the Books of the Old and New Testament*, presents Perkins as a technical student of the Bible, digging particularly into the question of chronology. This contains some unexpected notions, such as the birth of Abel in year 1 (1:21), Saul of Tarsus being converted within 2 years of Christ's death (1:66), or 1 Timothy being written prior to Corinthians and Romans (1:68).

The second work, *The Combat Between Christ and the Devil Displayed:* or, *A Commentary upon the Temptations of Christ*, displays the highly analytic and

didactic method of Scriptural exposition, characteristic of Perkins and many other Puritans. For instance, in coming to speak of the combat itself, Perkins divides it into three conflicts. Taking just the first conflict as an illustration of Perkins' approach, he highlights Satan's preparation, the temptation itself, and Christ's response. Under the heading of Satan's preparation, Perkins finds four topics to discuss, the first three of which also have uses attached (1:104–108).

This pattern of breaking the text down into smaller pieces and expounding each one sequentially will reappear again and again. As he subdivides his way through the text, Perkins conveys a great deal of information, e.g., about what kinds of visions the devil can cause (1:140). He is also reliably applicatory, whether by extended discussion or brief remark. An example of the former is the long "use" about the worship of God (1:153–157), whereas the latter appears in phrases like "...unto every assault the devil prepares himself afresh, which should teach us to labor to furnish our hearts every day afresh to be able to repulse his new assaults" (1:138). Perkins was drawn to treat this subject in part due to his earlier work on conscience (1:87), which in the present series is slated to appear in volume 8.

The bulk of volume 1 is dedicated to *A Godly and Learned Exposition of Christ's Sermon on the Mount*. After dealing with three general points concerning when this sermon was preached, its main point, and whether it is the same as the similar sermon recorded in Luke (1:173–175), Perkins makes note of five circumstances settled in the preface (1:176–178). In the body of the sermon he deals with "twelve heads or places of doctrine" (1:179). These are:

1) concerning true happiness (1:179);
2) the office of apostles and all ministers (1:222);
3) restoring the true meaning of the moral law (1:243);
4) reforming abuses in good works (1:392);
5) reforming hearers of covetousness (1:523);
6) concerning judgment (1:587);
7) discretion in dispensing God's word (1:614);
8) concerning prayer (1:626);
9) concerning equity and justice (1:640);
10) exhortation to earnestness in seeking everlasting life (1:655);
11) concerning discerning and avoiding false prophets (1:671);
12) the need for true godliness (1:693).

He deals fairly quickly with the conclusion of the sermon (1:716–727) and the response to it (1:728–734).

Because of the multitude of Perkins' subdivisions, the subjects of this study flow by quite rapidly. His style is brisk, and there is always a sense of forward motion, even as the discussion of any one verse can be quite extensive. Although the detailed exposition conveys great information, a notable disadvantage of treating the text so minutely is that the overall flow and thrust can easily disappear from view.

No one could read this exposition without learning a great deal. For instance, Perkins adroitly handles the question of prayer and the Trinity (1:429–430), supplies considerable detail about the vision of God (1:206–209), and is unsurprisingly forceful and lucid about God's foreknowledge and decree (1:708–709). Because Perkins takes seriously the implications of words and phrases, there is a wealth of teaching here rarely matched. For example, the reader will find extended discussion of the doctrine of Scripture, including the topic of inerrancy, the question of canon, and the status of the apocryphal writings (1:643–654). Some parts of this discussion strongly anticipate the first chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith. For instance, there is considerable overlap berween Perkins' assertion of Scripture's infallible certainty (I:645–649) and WCF I:4–5.

Turning to the second volume under review, the reader will find the same general approach and in Perkins' commentary on the first five chapters of Galatians. The exposition of the sixth chapter of Galatians, was provided by Ralph Cudworth—not the famous Cambridge Platonist, but his father (2:xvi).

The contrast between these two contributors to the second volume highlights Perkins' style and independence still further. Cudworth's pages tend to move rather slowly and are much more encumbered with references to classical authors and other scholars (e.g., 2:494–495). His analytic method is similar to that of Perkins, and he has quite a passion for completeness, as when he gives a full discussion of the "marks" which the text of Galatians 6:17 does not intend (2:562–564). He complains of hearers who would like preachers to be brief (2:526), but given the convoluted length of his commentary, Cudworth's hearers may have had a point.

Returning to Perkins' portion of the volume, it would be dificult to read without profit. For instance, in expounding Galatians 3:13, Perkins explains what a curse is, how Christ was made a curse for us, that the curse related to both natures, and that Christ experienced only the first degree of both first and second death (2:180–181). These points are handled with a reverent precision, followed by practical application (2:182–184). Particularly striking was the thought that in order for Christ to be made a curse, he took our sins upon him in his baptism (2:180).

Although his major strength is in analyzing texts, Perkins also demonstrates an ability to synthesize. He is more likely to subdivide, but can also categorize. For instance, the 17 works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19–21 are grouped under the four headings of works against chastity, religion, charity, and temperance (2:366).

Contemporary readers will probably not agree with Perkins on all points: e.g., about Mary's perpetual virginity (2:64); witchcraft (2:371–373); or interpreting "elements of the world" in Galatians 4:3 to be the law of Moses (2:244). Although he believes in civil penalties for adultery (2:367) he specifically affirms that "God has left every nation free, though not in respect of punishment, yet in respect of the manner and order thereof" (2:184).

The volumes under review are handsomely bound, with clear print. On the negative side, the placement of marginal notes into the footnotes may prove a bit distracting. Additionally, while likely inevitable, it is somewhat disappointing to discover transcription and formatting errors. For instance, there was a failure in the formatting of the Greek text of John 1:20 (1:640n822), as well as typographical

errors ("sins" instead of "sons" 2:257). Though an effort was made to provide explanatory notes where Perkins' language may seem unclear to a contemporary reader, this was not done universally: few of us use the word "gripple" (in the sense of greedy or grasping) in ordinary conversation (1:641). Furthermore, the editors did not always mark textual divisions through any clear typographical means. For example, Perkins mentions four things to be discussed: the means, nature, direction, and manner of the believer's cry (2:259), but there are no visual clues as to the boundaries of each point in the pages that follow (2:259–263). Yet these formatting matters should not present any serious hindrance to engagement with Perkins' thought.

What value is there in reading these volumes of Perkins? The careful reader can certainly expect a great deal of detailed instruction that is doctrinally precise, devotionally stirring, and applied with great resourcefulness. Indeed, Perkins always seems to have more information to share. When he discusses Christ's fasting (1:100–101), he does not repeat what was said in the more extensive section about fasting drawn from the Sermon on the Mount (1:508–522).

Perkins is challenging in the best sense: he pushes the reader to engage Scripture more carefully and be self-consistent in exposition by his own example. There are places where Perkins is not entirely in line with the consensus even of Reformed Biblical scholars. And it may be at those points that he is particularly valuable. Because even if one winds up disagreeing, his careful interaction with Scripture demands reflection not merely on whether the consensus gives the right answers to questions, but even if the right questions have been asked of the text. Seriously engaging someone like Perkins requires not taking for granted "what everybody knows," but actually putting it to the test.

—Ruben Zartman