

BOOK REVIEWS & SHORT NOTICES

Kevin DeYoung. *Grace Defined and Defended: What a 400-Year-Old Confession Teaches Us about Sin, Salvation, and the Sovereignty of God*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019. Pp. 141. \$19.99 (hardcover).

W. Robert Godfrey. *Saving the Reformation: the Pastoral Theology of the Canons of Dort*. Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2019. Pp. xiv + 265. \$19.00 (hardcover).

Daniel R. Hyde. *Grace Worth Fighting For: Recapturing the Vision of God's Grace in the Canons of Dort*. Lincoln, NE: The Davenant Press, 2019. Pp. x + 421. \$24.95 (paperback).

Not surprisingly, given the 400th anniversary of the Synod of Dort (1618-19), a number of new books—all commentaries on the Canons or the five main points of doctrine that came to exposition at that synod—have been published in celebration of that event.

The three books here reviewed are diverse in scope—i.e., given the number of pages devoted to the Canons—as they also differ somewhat in their target audience. DeYoung's book, *Grace Defined and Defended*, presents (of the three books) the most popular-level exposition of the Canons, which makes it quite accessible to a lay readership. His short volume is devoted principally to an explanation of the main articles under each head of doctrine. The rejection of errors, which are attached to the end of each Head (or Main Point) of doctrine, do not receive an exposition in this book. In fact, these errors are printed separately as an addendum, forming Appendix 1 (97-114). The same is true of the Conclusion to the Canons, that is, the "Conclusion: Rejection of False Accusations," is printed as Appendix 2, without commentary (115-117). What is more, DeYoung does not offer an exposition of each article contained within each Head of doctrine. Instead, he groups articles together under thematic subheadings (supplied by him), and expounds these articles in a general way. For example, under the first head of doctrine, DeYoung groups articles 1-5 together under the subheading "Framing the Debate" (29). The five articles are then listed (printed), followed by (in this case) little more than a page of commentary. It should be noted, of the sixty-eight pages that form an exposition of the Canons in this volume, approximately thirty-five percent of those pages reproduce the articles, while about sixty-five percent are devoted to an explanation of the articles. Of this one-hundred-forty-one page book, then, another thirty-one pages are given to reprinting the Rejection of Errors and the Conclusion to the Canons. This is only to say that DeYoung's book is not a comprehensive or deep exposition of the Canons of Dort. His work is designed as an introduction to the Canons of Dort, which makes it better suited for those who have little familiarity with this seventeenth-century Reformed

document. It is more a book for laity, to be used for personal study or small group doctrine classes. Nonetheless, DeYoung's failure to expound the Rejection of Errors and the Conclusion is a glaring weakness of this work.

DeYoung's book commences with an interesting fifteen page introduction (11-25). DeYoung is a lively writer, with good instincts to communicate in an effective manner. The introduction orients readers to the need for a technical document like the Canons of Dort, what TULIP means and doesn't mean, what occasioned the controversy that led to the formulation of the Canons, including some brief biography on Jacob Arminius and some other key players at the Synod of Dort, along with a succinct presentation of what the Arminians taught in their Remonstrance, and the ensuing international synod that met in the Dutch town of Dordrecht from November 13, 1618, until May 29, 1619. DeYoung's book also includes an Appendix 3, which reproduces "The Opinions of the Remonstrants (1618)" (119-128) and Appendix 4, which is a collation of Scripture texts, gathered from the Rejection of Errors (129-30).

W. Robert Godfrey's volume, *Saving the Reformation*, is a meatier book than DeYoung's on several levels. The book is composed of three parts. Part one is called Historical and Theological Background; part two consists of Godfrey's own (new) translation of the Canons of Dort; and part three forms the exposition of the Canons. In this last part the author expounds upon the articles with the aim of lucid brevity, including comments (likewise brief) on each of the Rejection of Errors. About one-hundred pages of this book are given to explaining the Canons, both the articles and the rejection of errors, and the conclusion. In contrast to DeYoung's book, Godfrey's commentary is more extended. Also to be noted is that Godfrey, unlike many earlier published books on the Canons, does not juggle the rejection of errors to fit with specific articles, nor does he attempt a commentary on the errors in expounding the articles. This book takes up the articles under each Head of doctrine and the Rejection of Errors in the order as produced by the Synod of Dort itself.

A particular strength of Godfrey's volume has less to do with his exposition of the articles of the Canons (which is well executed) and more to do with his introductory materials and the appended essay entitled "Arminius: A New Look," wherein Godfrey chiefly assesses the more recent work on Arminius by Carl Bangs. In doing that, Godfrey also interacts well with recent works of Richard Muller and Keith Stanglin, and also the newer work on Arminius co-authored by Keith Stanglin and Tom McCall. Godfrey contests Bangs's attempt to positively portray Arminius as being part of "an older, Erasmian Reformed current in the church," for "such a current did not exist" (225). This fulsome essay forms Appendix 1 to this handsome volume. Indeed, a strength of Godfrey's book is the usefulness of each of the appendices. Appendix 2 treats the "General Pattern in Each Head of Doctrine." Appendix 3 offers "An Outline of the Canons of Dort." The fourth of the five appendices is entitled "Relation of the Positive Articles of the Canons to the Rejection of Errors," which well describes what the reader finds there, namely handy tables that link articles to rejection of errors and vice-versa. Appendix 5 presents "A New Translation of the Doctrine of the Sabbath by the Synod of Dort." Inasmuch as the synod took up that question after the international delegations had left, Dort sets forth six propositions or statements to guide the churches for observing the Lord's Day.

Of the approximately two-hundred-forty pages of this book, one-hundred pages are devoted to expositing the Canons themselves—about eighty percent of which is the author’s commentary. Godfrey’s book demonstrates his confident familiarity with the Canons, and his explanation is accessible to most readers. Readers likewise should not miss Godfrey’s chapter “The Form of the Canons,” where he shows the deliberate format of presentation that the fathers of Dort chose in order to address the doctrines in dispute.

The third book here reviewed is by Daniel R. Hyde, *Grace Worth Fighting For*. This volume stands apart from the other two books both for the depth of its commentary and the manner in which it situates the Canons within the Christian tradition. With a lengthy introductory chapter, which answers the question why grace was (*and still is*) worth fighting for, Hyde presents some extended historical background that led to the need for the Synod of Dort (1-40). It is also worth noting that this chapter is sprinkled with interesting reproductions of portraits and woodcuts of principal personages (theologians and political figures). An additional handy feature of Hyde’s volume, like Godfrey’s, is that the author presents his own outline of the Canons (41-43). These outlines are interesting to compare with one another (for there are small differences), but they do not deviate from one another in any significant way.

As for Hyde’s exposition of the Canons, this large volume unfolds in four parts (following the four main points of doctrine as established by the Canons themselves): The Grace of Predestination (Head I) (45-142); the Grace of Satisfaction (Head II) (143-213); the Grace of Regeneration (Heads III & IV) (215-96); and the Grace of Preservation (Head V) (297-378). Since the structure of the Canons is divided between the positive articles (with little if any polemics), followed by the Rejection of Errors (which are specifically and deliberately polemical), and since the opening articles under each Head (or Main Point) of doctrine begins by affirming what are common Christian commitments (for this see Godfrey’s book under Appendix 2, and chapter eight), Hyde thoughtfully seeks to expound these sorts of articles with an appeal to the wider Christian heritage, tracing ideas expressed in such articles back to the Church fathers, medieval thinkers, and various codifications of Reformed writers. Hyde also makes use of older sources that expounded upon the Canons of Dort (or particular Heads of doctrine), such as David Pareus’s *Epitome of Arminianisme* (1645) and John Owen’s *The Death of Death* (1647), as well as the exposition of theology, indirectly referring to Dort, *The Synopsis Purioris Theologiae*—that is, *The Synopsis of a Purer* [not tainted with Arminian ideas] *Theology* (1620-24).

Hyde’s exposition spans over three-hundred-thirty pages. His book, like the others, reproduces the text of Dort. And like Godfrey’s volume, Hyde expounds upon each of the articles under each Main Point of doctrine, and each of the Rejection of Errors—and that is done in the order of presentation set forth by the Canons themselves. This is a genuine strength of this book; and given that Hyde attempts a more thorough analysis of the Canons than many previously published works, his book stands apart for depth of presentation, especially relative to exposing readers to a wider Christian heritage of materials.

Hyde's book, like the others, has appendices, specifically two: Appendix 1 reproduces "The Remonstrance of 1610"; and Appendix 2 reprints for readers "The Opinions of the Remonstrants (1619)." Hyde's work features an extensive bibliography but lacks a Scripture or general index, which the volumes of DeYoung and Godfrey both include.

So how do these volumes compare as commentaries on particular articles of the Canons? It would take us too far afield to select and expound at random how each author treats a given article. Instead, I offer these general observations. DeYoung, though his commentary is succinct, focuses on central issues. He cannot help but treat the articles somewhat topically versus a close exposition of the many words and phrases as formulated by Dort (which make up the Canons). This is not to suggest that DeYoung is superficial, as such; rather, he looks for the salient features that are most to the point, and expounds those prominent issues.

By contrast, Godfrey, since he examines each article in succession, along with the rejection of errors in the order they come, can spend more time with certain phrases or themes as presented in the Canons. His commentary is not over long, and, like DeYoung, he is aware of pastoral issues that lurk nearby as well as when the Canons directly address such issues. Concretely this means, for example, that in article 16 under Head I, which treats how persons should respond to reprobation (or finding assurance in light of reprobation), DeYoung mostly passes over this article, while Godfrey expounds, if only briefly, on the diverse types of persons that ponder this doctrine. Hyde, likewise, is sensitive to this question, and since his methodology is to stick more closely to Dort's agenda and formulations, he gives due attention to that question. Hyde's book, arguably, does the most with Scripture—that is, it seeks to present biblical texts that demonstrate or support what is articulated in the Canons. Each author goes to the Bible, to be sure; but given that Hyde's book is much larger than the other two, he devotes more space to supporting scriptural materials. Hyde's work is marked by its occasional appeals to and accompanying exposition of the Canons in light of the other two forms of the Three Forms of Unity, namely the Heidelberg Catechism and the Belgic Confession.

As earlier observed, DeYoung does not comment on the Rejection of Errors, whereas both Godfrey and Hyde give commentary on these materials. Godfrey shows himself adept at exposing the nub of error in the Rejection of Errors. As for criticisms of each title, however small, I wish Godfrey's commentary was a bit longer, given his expertise in the Canons of Dort. I would prefer if DeYoung's entire exposition were double the size—especially since he is a gifted writer. As for Hyde's book, occasionally the reader might feel a bit overwhelmed with the number of authors Hyde cites (sometimes rather unfamiliar authors) and what might be perceived as a cluttered presentation. However, this assortment of presentation, and the many primary and secondary sources that Hyde quotes and references will delight other readers.

We discover, with these three books, that the Canons of Dort is not a dead document; rather, Dort is alive and well. Each author, as a "Dort defender," has sought to preserve for the church the wonder of the gospel, the wonder and joy of God's grace to fallen sinners in Jesus Christ. As the Canons sought, in deference to Scripture, to lead the church of Jesus Christ in the way of the gospel, so, each author, in expounding

on the Canons of Dort, has sought to do the same. Grace will ever need to be defined and defended; and the Reformation, which was about God's gracious salvation, still needs to be saved from those who would subvert that good message. As such, God's grace is always worth fighting for.

—J. Mark Beach

John Fea. *Believe Me: The Evangelical Road to Donald Trump*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018. Pp. x + 238. \$18.99 (paperback).

John Fea, a historian and chair of the department at Messiah College, finds it regrettable that evangelicals have thrown in their lot with Donald Trump. Fea, a colonial American specialist, has most notably written on the complicated question of whether America was founded as a Christian nation. Here he writes on the fear, power, and nostalgia that moved 81% of self-identified evangelicals to vote for Donald Trump in 2016, devoting significant chapters to each of these motives. He goes back into colonial times to trace out how fervent religionists have come to embrace a man who has historically been irreligious in several respects. The irony that so many voters of the sort who rejected Bill Clinton for his immorality now find the immorality of Donald Trump acceptable is more than Fea can take. This book is an expression of that exacerbation, much of which is spent pointing out the hypocrisy and inconsistency of evangelical voters.

In Chapter 1, Fea addresses the fear that he believes has actuated so much of evangelical politics in recent years, from real and imagined concerns about President Obama to President Trump's harnessing "fear of the other" better than his Republican opponents (especially Mike Huckabee, Ted Cruz, and Ben Carson) in 2016. He then backtracks historically in successive chapters: in Chapter 2, he examines the origins of what will become "the playbook of the Christian right," of Jerry Falwell and company in the late 1970s and afterwards; and in Chapter 3 he goes back yet farther to Puritan fear of heterodoxy, anti-Catholic nativism of the nineteenth century, and other putative earlier fears that have now come to expression in support of Trump. This reviewer finds Fea's survey of these more distant alleged precursors of Trump supporters less than convincing.

In Chapter 4, Fea addresses the "power" component, chronicling how evangelicals, especially since World War II, have succumbed to the siren song of White House access, from Billy Graham to Cal Thomas to David Kuo, to name some of those who came to regret the way that presidents and other politicians exploited them. Fea refers to those seeking to be close to power as "court evangelicals," seeing them as too often willing to give away the great inheritance of Christianity for the lentil stew of proximity to power. And, finally, in Chapter 5, "Make America Great Again," Fea questions the precise period to which Trump wishes to return, noting that many earlier periods of America history (think slavery and the treatment of women and immigrants) were nothing to which a Christian should wish to hearken back.

At points, Fea adopts a stance, and quotes others in support of it, that one might find akin to the spirituality of the church, the notion that the church as the church must

not have anything to do with partisan politics, even if her members as individuals may. Surely the church is at its best when it remembers its gospel calling and does not seek to ally itself with particular political parties, but encourages the members of the church faithfully to serve Christ in all spheres, civil as well as ecclesiastical. Finally, in his conclusion, Fea exhorts evangelicals to embrace hope, not fear; humility, not power; and history, not nostalgia.

Fea is aware that this volume has taken him “beyond history and into social criticism” (179). Such must be the case when a historian engages a contemporary figure. The discipline of history requires perspective and that requires, at least in part, time. But Fea’s failing in this book is not only that of lacking the time necessary for good historical perspective, but engaging the subject as a partisan who lacks the disinterestedness that all good historical treatment requires. He is critical of evangelicals who have put their religion at the service of one like Trump, who both truly shares their concerns and exploits the support of the Religious Right for his own purposes. This is a fair point. However, Fea never addresses all those on the left who have also employed their religion for the support of their candidates, whether such leftists supported a social gospel or a pro-feminist, pro-gay agenda.

In other words, Fea is keen to challenge evangelicals and their churches for prostituting the faith for political gain. I appreciate that, particularly as respects the spirituality of the church. He does not make such a challenge, however, to liberals who are willing to use the faith to promote a liberal political agenda. One might argue that the similar sins of liberal Christians are not what he’s addressing in this book. But given the penchant of all sides to politicize the faith, couldn’t a paragraph or two recognize such, so that this book would appear balanced and not simply partisan? It should be noted that, whatever Fea’s precise political views are, he does express pro-life and some other traditional Christian sentiments. This reviewer does not regard Fea as a mere partisan “out to get Trump and his supporters,” but he can appear to be such, an appearance unworthy of the competent historian that he is.

In fine, Fea, while recognizing that evangelicals may have legitimate concerns with respect to abortion and same-sex marriage, fails to recognize how revolutionary the secularization of recent years has been. How does support of Trump in 2016 appear so hypocritical given the alternative(s)? I say this as one who did not vote for him, making me part of the 19% to whom Fea dedicated this book. But for the 81% who did vote for Trump, I think that this book captures only some of the reasons that such a large majority voted for him. Most of the people that I know who voted for him did so in spite of many concerns about him. These Trump voters believed that a vote for Hillary Clinton meant an acceleration on an already fast downward course to the abyss. Fea depicts many evangelicals openly and even joyfully embracing Trump. Some did, to be sure, with great gusto, particularly evangelical leaders like Jerry Falwell, Jr.

I know many evangelicals, however, not in leadership positions, who voted for him while holding their noses, lamenting the lack of a better choice, and hoping to at least slow down the vicious secularization of the last few decades. Fea’s book, finally, does not explain what’s happened in the post-World War II culture sufficiently, other than to repeat throughout that whites, especially older white men, are threatened with racial and other advances of recent years. Fea depicts them as wishing to return to a

mythical past in which they were dominant and all was right with the world. I do not discount this factor. I also do not find it a satisfactory explanation for why 81% of evangelicals voted for Trump, as if they were largely actuated by racism, sexism, homophobia, and the like, which is what Fea largely and disappointingly suggests in this volume. Again, I believe those nasty factors were at play among some, but Fea offers no evidence that justifies tarring 81% of the evangelical electorate with this brush.

—Alan D. Strange

John S. Feinberg. *Light in a Dark Place: The Doctrine of Scripture*. Foundations of Evangelical Theology. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018. Pp. 799. \$50.00 (cloth).

The author of this comprehensive treatment of the doctrine of Scripture is well-suited to the task. Feinberg, who serves as the department chair and professor of biblical and systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, is the general editor of the fine series, *Foundations of Evangelical Theology*, whose seven volumes now include two of his books. Like his earlier contribution to the series, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God*, Feinberg's latest contribution provides a thorough analysis of the doctrine of Scripture within the context of contemporary evangelical and Christian theology. Consistent with the aim of the series as a whole, Feinberg seeks to offer a fresh account of the doctrine of Scripture that engages directly the issues under discussion in recent theological literature. Given Feinberg's well-deserved reputation as a premier evangelical theologian, as well as the obvious importance of the doctrine of Scripture, this study will likely prove to be a particularly important contribution to the series.

In the introduction to the book, Feinberg acknowledges that he writes "unapologetically from a firmly embraced evangelical stance" (26). He also states concisely what he wants to argue throughout the book: "I contend that Scripture claims to be the inspired, inerrant, and powerful revealed word of God. Moreover, Scripture also affirms that its basic message of how to establish and grow a positive relationship with God is understandable, and that the Holy Spirit stands ever ready to move and enable each person to apply Scripture's teachings to his or her life so as to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (26). In order to accomplish this task, Feinberg presents his case in four parts: first, the way in which Scripture came into existence; second, the various attributes or characteristics that Scripture possesses, especially the inerrancy and authority of Scripture; third, the boundaries of Scripture or its canonicity, including the criteria of canonicity; and fourth, the usefulness of Scripture or its clarity, power and sufficiency. Each of these four parts of his study include several chapters in which Feinberg identifies the Scriptural warrant for the position he espouses and engages viewpoints with which he differs or opposes as inadequate.

In the first part of the book, Feinberg begins with the doctrine of revelation and defends the traditional distinction between general and special revelation. The precondition for Scripture is God's determination to make himself known through all of

his works and words. Contrary to the modern notion of revelation, which often reduces revelation to human insight or an “ever-increasing discovery of God on the part of man,” Feinberg concurs with Louis Berkhof’s insistence that divine revelation is “a supernatural act of self-communication, a purposeful act on the part of the Living God” (33). While he acknowledges that such revelation involves an “accommodation” on God’s part in order to make himself known by his finite creatures, Feinberg insists that such accommodation does not diminish the truth or reliability of what he reveals concerning himself. While he affirms the authority and importance of general revelation, Feinberg rightly emphasizes that Scripture provides a more fulsome and clear revelation of God, and that it especially makes known God’s redemptive purposes in Jesus Christ.

After discussing the diversity of modes of special revelation, including God’s self-disclosure through his incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, Feinberg focuses considerable attention upon Scripture as God’s written Word and its divine inspiration. While he does not rule out altogether the possibility of continuing revelation beyond what is given in Scripture, he cautions against confusing the inspiration of Scripture with the work of the Holy Spirit in illumination. The bulk of Feinberg’s discussion of the way Scripture came into existence focuses upon the Scripture’s witness to its own inspiration. In this discussion, Feinberg offers a detailed account of the Scriptural testimony to its inspiration, including an extensive exposition of key passages like 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:19-21. Though Feinberg does not use the language of “organic inspiration,” he offers eight theses that support and articulate the way in which Scripture is simultaneously the Word of God and the words of its human authors. Readers will find Feinberg’s defense of the traditional doctrine of the verbal, plenary inspiration of Scripture to be among the most robust and thorough in recent discussion. This defense includes an excellent discussion of the limited usefulness of the incarnational analogy for our doctrine of Scripture, especially when the analogy is used to undermine the truthfulness of Scripture.

The second part of Feinberg’s study, which addresses the inerrancy, infallibility and authority of Scripture, is clearly the heart of the book. As a long-time participant in evangelical discussions of the reliability of Scripture, Feinberg provides an extensive defense of the inerrancy of Scripture and painstakingly engages the most significant objections to the doctrine. Interestingly, in his introduction to the topic, Feinberg signals that he wants to use and defend the language of Scripture’s “inerrancy,” but finds the language of “infallibility” to be less desirable because it is “clouded in ambiguity” (232). Before seeking to define inerrancy, Feinberg argues that a distinction needs to be drawn between the term and the concept of inerrancy. The term “inerrancy,” when applied to Scripture, means obviously to affirm its reliability or truthfulness. However, the term itself does not provide an answer to the question as to the kind of things truth or error are. According to Feinberg, the concept of truth that best applies to Scripture is “propositional truth,” not “truth of a person” or “personal truth” (235). When we speak of the inerrancy of Scripture, we are saying that the propositions taught or affirmed in Scripture are true. Furthermore, since not all the sentences or passages in Scripture deal with propositional truth (e.g. many are commands, questions, or interjections that say nothing about reality or do not mean to

refer to a true state of affair), it doesn't make sense to call them inerrant. Though they are not untrue, errant, or deficient, they are not properly described as inerrant. Feinberg further argues that propositions are true when they correspond to reality and are not inconsistent with other propositions that are known to be true. With these distinctions and definitions in view, Feinberg defines the inerrancy of Scripture to mean that all the affirmations, propositions, or teachings of the Scripture are true to reality. None of them are untrue or unreliable. In his estimation, the best definition of inerrancy, and the one he wishes to defend, is that provided by Paul Feinberg: "Inerrancy means that when all facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything that they affirm, whether that has to do with doctrine or morality or with the social, physical, or life sciences" (237).

After offering a definition of Scripture's inerrancy and citing the Scriptural evidence for it, Feinberg devotes two lengthy chapters to a consideration of the most common and important objections to inerrancy. Among the objections he considers, the following are especially significant: 1) the phenomena of Scripture do not support it; 2) the claim that Scripture is inerrant in doctrine and practice only, but not in other areas; 3) the distinction inerrantists make between the autographa and the apographa undermines the reliability of the actual texts we have; 4) the doctrine of accommodation entails the errancy of Scripture; 5) the doctrine of inerrancy does not find support in the history of Christian theology; 6) inerrancy is an unwarranted inference from a select number of Scriptural passages; 7) inerrancy fails to acknowledge God's freedom to use a thoroughly human (and therefore errant) text to accomplish his purposes; 8) the presence of "texts of terror" in the Bible is incompatible with Scripture's inerrancy; and 9) the doctrine of Scripture's "infallibility" adequately preserves the uniqueness and power of Scripture, but without resorting to the untenable idea of inerrancy. In his evaluation of each of these oft-repeated objections, Feinberg begins by identifying the precise nature of the objection, and then offers an argument for retaining a responsible and properly qualified view of the Scripture's truthfulness. Feinberg concludes this second part of his study with a consideration of the Scripture's authority. Because the Bible has God as its ultimate Author and is true in all that it affirms, it deserves to be received with reverence and wholehearted submission by all who read it.

The third part of Feinberg's book addresses the issue of the boundaries of Scripture. In this part of his study, Feinberg first defines the doctrine of Scripture's canonicity and then offers Scriptural evidence for the doctrine, including evidence for the closure of the canon. He defines the biblical canon as consisting of "all the literary texts which give evidence of having been produced by both a human and a divine author, i.e., the biblical canon refers to all texts that give evidence of divine inspiration" (454). The last two chapters of this part of his study include a review of the history of the recognition of the Old and New Testaments as canonical. In the course of this review, Feinberg evaluates the "criteria of canonicity" (*notae canonicitatis*) that were often identified as necessary conditions to the recognition of the various books of the canonical Scripture. According to Feinberg, the necessary and ultimate criterion for the canonicity of the Scriptures is divine inspiration.

The fourth part of Feinberg's treatment of Scripture addresses the topic of the "usefulness of Scripture." According to Feinberg's nomenclature, the inerrancy and authority of Scripture belong broadly to the topic of the "characteristics" of Scripture. However, in this section of his study, Feinberg chooses to describe the usefulness of Scripture in five distinct ways: 1) the doctrine of the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit, who enables the recipient of Scripture to receive and understand the light of Scriptural revelation; 2) the doctrine of the perspicuity or clarity of Scripture; 3) the animation of Scripture as the powerful and living Word of God; 4) the sufficiency of Scripture to provide all the light that is needed for salvation through faith in Christ and for Christian practice; and 5) the preservation of Scripture as the abiding and enduring light of God. The burden of Feinberg's treatment of these topics is to demonstrate how the Scriptures are able to make those who receive them in faith wise unto salvation through faith in Christ. The doctrine of Scripture does not simply consist in an affirmation of their inspiration, inerrancy, and authority. Nor does it terminate with a determination of what books properly belong to the canon of Scripture. In the final analysis, the doctrine of Scripture serves to encourage the reading and study of Scripture. Only in this way will the light of God's truth, and the way of salvation through faith in Christ, penetrate the darkness of unbelief and ignorance of the truth.

I offer this overview of Feinberg's study to illustrate the breadth and the depth of his treatment of the doctrine of Scripture. Readers of this volume will discover an evangelical theologian who is an enthusiastic defender of the inspiration, authority, and truthfulness of Scripture. They will also find a defender of Scripture who addresses respectfully and carefully the arguments of others who may not agree with him, or whose doctrine of Scripture falls short of what is needed.

I would be remiss, however, if I were not to register my reservation with a few of Feinberg's positions. For illustrative purposes, I will call attention to three of these positions.

First, I do not believe Feinberg's preference for the term "inerrancy" in contrast with the term "infallibility" to be that persuasive. While he correctly observes how the language of "infallibility" has often been used in an ambiguous way, the same could as easily be said of the term "inerrancy." Feinberg's own painstaking and extensive exposition of what he means by inerrancy illustrates the point. In the history of theology and the historic confessions of the Christian church, the most common way to refer to the Scripture's reliability and trustworthiness is by the use of the term "infallible." Feinberg acknowledges this, and properly argues that the term infallible is one whose semantic range of meaning includes "being inerrant" or "without error." He also admits that the term "inerrant" is properly applicable to the affirmations or teachings of Scripture, but not as applicable to non-propositional portions of Scripture. For this reason, I continue to believe that the term "infallible" is a richer and more inclusive term for Scripture. The infallibility of Scripture includes not only the idea of being "without error," but also includes the idea of Scripture's unfailing truthfulness in all the ways it reveals God's Word to us. Ironically, many of the themes that Feinberg rightly emphasizes in his extensive discussion of the "usefulness" of Scripture are better able to be captured by the language of infallibility than by that of inerrancy.

Second, in his discussion of the Spirit's work in illumination, Feinberg acknowledges the doctrine of the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit but dismisses it as a doctrine that lacks Scriptural warrant (582-83). Elsewhere, he mentions briefly the *autopistia* or the "self-authenticating" quality of the biblical canon and observes that this quality is traditionally associated with the Spirit's role in bringing believers to receive Scripture as canonical (433). According to Feinberg, advocates of Scripture's *autopistia* seem to be offering a criterion for canonicity, when they are actually speaking of a subjective or internal work of the Holy Spirit that accompanies Scripture and leads believers to read it as God's Word (556-57). In my estimation, Feinberg's treatment of this important topic is much too brief and betrays a misunderstanding of the historic Reformed view. The point of the doctrine of Scripture's *autopistia* is that only God himself is able to authenticate his own Word to us, and he does so by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The testimony of the Holy Spirit is not an addendum to the Word of God, but a ministry of the Spirit "by and with the Word" whereby believers are brought to acknowledge the Scripture *for what it truly is, the abiding and authoritative Word of God*. Interestingly, Feinberg's chapter on the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit offers considerable evidence that supports the historic Reformation view on the self-attesting authority of the Holy Spirit speaking in and through the Scriptures. As he acknowledges, those who "embrace the light" that is given in Scripture do so on account of the ministry of the Holy Spirit who opens eyes to see and ears to hear what God says in Scripture.

And third, in his extensive and generally helpful treatment of the topic of the canonicity of Scripture, Feinberg's handling of the question of "criteria of canonicity" is not altogether satisfactory. In this section of his book, Feinberg correctly identifies several criteria that played a role in the church's *recognition* of the canon. Among these criteria, inspiration, apostolic authorship, antiquity, and public lection were among the most important considerations that supported the church's acknowledgment of the canon of Scripture. However, in his discussion of these criteria, Feinberg does not adequately distinguish the church's historic recognition of the canon and the *ultimate ground* or basis for the canon, especially for its closure. He treats these criteria as though they provide a basis for authenticating the canon, and specifically for determining which books should be included and which books should be excluded. The problem with this approach is that these criteria, even were they taken to describe what is necessary to a book's inclusion in the canon, do not provide a *sufficient criterion* for explaining why the church rightly included the books it did while excluding others. Furthermore, though Feinberg properly recognizes that these criteria could allow the church to add further books to the canon (e.g. a long-lost, but now newly discovered epistle to the churches by one of the apostles), he declares this scenario to be "totally hypothetical" (561). But then he goes on to add that, "If it should happen, then we would have to reconsider our criteria for canonicity (and likely also whatever we would say about the doctrine of Scripture's preservation), and decide how to proceed from there" (561). Feinberg's language at this point suggests that the canonicity of the 66 books of the Bible depends ultimately upon the church's judgment and is, at least hypothetically, subject to change under certain historical circumstances. By making this suggestion, Feinberg confirms my worry about his rejection of the

self-authenticating authority of the canon of Scripture. What he neglects to recognize is that the self-authentication of Scripture is a way of acknowledging that the determination of the boundaries of Scripture is ultimately a work of God to which the church is subject, rather than a constitutive judgment of the church that makes it so.

I do not mean to diminish my appreciation for Feinberg's book by mentioning these points where his treatment of the doctrine of Scripture leaves some questions. Among more recent books on the doctrine of Scripture, none is as comprehensive and encyclopedic as Feinberg's. Students and teachers of theology alike will find it to be a rich and stimulating resource, one of the few books on its topic that may not be ignored.

—Cornelis P. Venema

John M. Frame. *Nature's Case for God: A Brief Biblical Argument*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018. Pp. 124. \$11.99 (paperback).

It has been alleged that Cornelius Van Til either denied or downplayed natural law in his apologetics. Some critics have painted Van Til as insisting that special revelation as found in the Bible is the necessary starting point in the apologetic encounter. John Frame rightly insists in this little volume that a proper presuppositional approach to apologetics may start with general revelation (of which natural law is a part) or special revelation (as contained in the Scriptures). Recent volumes have not only dealt with natural law and Van Til (David Van Druenen being especially noteworthy here) but also with apologetical method. Respecting the latter, one thinks of the recent volume by John Fesko in which he openly critiques a presuppositional approach to apologetics as being, among other things, unappreciative of natural law, and as failing to appropriate (but instead rejecting) common notions, etc. (See J.V. Fesko, *Reforming Apologetics: Retrieving the Classic Reformed Approach to Defending the Faith* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019].)

To be sure, humans need Scripture after the Fall rightly to interpret general revelation (to furnish the glasses needed to read the Bible, as Calvin put it). But general revelation and natural law, whether as an external witness in creation or as an internal witness in conscience, testifies to the same truth that Scripture does: there is a holy God who is our judge and we are without excuse in rejecting him propositionally and personally. We need the Bible, however, to tell us about God's remedy for our sin in Christ. Let's back up a bit and see what Frame sets before us in his short biblical treatment of natural law (a defense that stands at odds with more recent theology, e.g., Barth, Bonhoeffer, et al.).

God has revealed himself so that we can know him, Frame argues, not exhaustively or comprehensively (as he alone knows himself), but sufficiently and savingly. He has savingly revealed himself in special revelation, particularly as that is inscripturated in the Bible, God's Word. Such a saving revelation becomes necessary after the fall of mankind, in which Adam goes from being holy and happy, in a sinless (albeit provisional, Adam being able to sin) relationship with God to one that was sinful and miserable. Jesus Christ came as the one mediator between God and man, to

bring man back to God through Jesus' active and passive obedience. The record of this is contained in the Bible, which is necessary for salvation and sufficient for doctrine and life.

This special revelation is not all contained in the Bible but includes all of God's speaking to human beings, and otherwise revealing himself, as in dreams, at the burning bush, on Mt. Sinai, and the like. Special revelation occurred before the fall of our first parents since God communicated directly to them regarding the terms of continued successful living in Eden and, presumably, in his regular communion with them (in the Garden, in the cool of the day). But this is not the only revelation of God to humanity. There is also what we call general revelation, which is two-fold: in nature and in conscience. The former is the external witness that all creation bears to its Creator, testifying through a variety of means that the hand that made it is divine (Psalm 19; Romans 1). This is true of humans especially, the crown of creation, made as they are in the image and likeness of God. The latter witness to the God who is there is an internal one, human's conscience, which speaks to them (excusing or accusing) with respect to God's law, the works of which are written on the heart (Romans 2). Thus the heart of general revelation is natural law, with its dual witness in nature and human nature, testifying in those ways to the same thing that the moral law, contained in the Bible, teaches. In other words, the content of natural law and God's moral law (summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments) is essentially identical, though natural law is not a word-revelation as is the content of Holy Scriptures.

Obviously, general revelation, as well as special, has always been operative. Humanity, in its fallen state, however, suppresses the truth contained in general revelation in unrighteousness (Romans 1). Apart from a work of the Holy Spirit, humans in their fallen unregenerate state are ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth, which they continue to hold down (suppress). General revelation, then, is not sufficient for doctrine and life; even as it is not sufficient to show us the way of salvation—we need special revelation, the Bible, for that. General revelation is sufficient, however, to reveal the holy God who is there and to accuse us in our consciences. General revelation, in other words, is sufficient to bring a witness to God and our need of him and thus to leave us without excuse.

Frame sets forth the witness of created things to God in part 1 of his book and the witness of the human conscience in part 2. Frame summarizes, bringing in considerations from his earlier works: "Scripture presents God's revelation from a normative perspective, telling us in so many terms what we ought to believe and do. Nature presents a situational perspective, the environment in which we hear God's commands and in which we should apply them. And conscience presents the existential perspective, God's Word aimed at our inmost subjectivity" (107). Frame says that each form of revelation presupposes and depends on the other in a harmonious working together when approached believably.

He says that it doesn't matter which forms the initial meeting with God, as long as it directs to the other two, leading to "a full and rich experience of God that finds him everywhere" (108). Key in all of this is coming to know Christ as Lord and Savior, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge and through whom alone, by the Holy Spirit, we can engage in right reason, making sense of the Creator

and his creation. This little gem proves both instructive and spiritually refreshing for Christians personally and as they seek to bear God's witness to His glory and the good of their hearers.

—Alan D. Strange

Earl Wm. Kennedy. *A Commentary on the Minutes of the Classis of Holland, 1848-1876: A Detailed Record of Persons and Issues, Civil and Religious, in the Dutch Colony of Holland, Michigan*. Holland, MI: Van Raalte Press, 2018. 3 vols. Pp. lxxix + 2088. \$119.95 (cloth).

Students of the history of the Reformed Church in America (RCA) and the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) know well the importance of the history of the Classis of Holland from 1848-1876. During the formative period of these two sister denominations, Classis Holland was the place “where the action was” so far as the determination of the respective character of these two closely related, but for most of their history sharply divided, denominations. They also know how their respective histories were profoundly shaped by the background story of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands. The formation of Classis Holland in 1848, the reception of this classis into the RCA in 1850, and the subsequent separation in 1957 of some ministers and churches, which gave birth to the CRCNA, are moments in the history of these two denominations that were of decisive and far-reaching significance. No student of their respective histories can afford to be ignorant of the Minutes of Classis Holland, which tell the story from the perspective of the official minutes that record the actions of the parties involved.

Though titles of books do not always convey accurately their content, the title of Kennedy's book is apt. In three large volumes, totaling more than 2000 pages, readers will find an encyclopedic commentary on the official record of the actions of Classis Holland during this vital period. In his Foreword, Donald J. Bruggink, the general editor of the series in which these volumes are included, offers an helpful description of Kennedy's three volumes. As he observes, they should be “regarded not as books but as archives disguised as books” (xi). In these volumes, the fruit of seventeen years of painstaking and meticulous research, Kennedy provides the reader with a translation of Classis Holland's official minutes, which relies upon the work of earlier translations, including an officially-commissioned translation by a joint committee of the two denominations (published in 1943). However, this translation constitutes only a small part of Kennedy's contribution. Like a good biblical commentator, Kennedy provides biographical information regarding the names of classical delegates, explains the meaning of particular words in their historical setting, and locates the classical actions within their immediate and more distant context. His aim is to offer his readers a contextualized account of the minutes, one that is richly informed by an acquaintance with the circumstances within which the actions of Classis Holland were taken. For example, if the action relates to a question of church polity or order, Kennedy provides information regarding the history and understanding of the Church Order of Dort, which serves as a kind of template for the polity of the Dutch Reformed Churches. Or

if he comments on an action of Classis that concerns the interpretation of a Scriptural passage, he gives his reader background regarding the way it was understood or applied among the family of Dutch Reformed Churches since the time of the Reformation.

The usefulness of Kennedy's commentary is enhanced by his citation of and reference to a variety of sources. In the case of particular names in the minutes, Kennedy provides biographical information on the basis of genealogical sources whether in print or online. Archival collections of materials that support his commentary or provide further information on names, events, or topics, are often referenced in the footnotes. In this way, students of the history of the RCA and CRCNA are directed to a rich mine of helps to further study and research in areas of particular interest. Furthermore, Kennedy displays a keen awareness of the divergent interpretations of these minutes that often surfaced in the older polemics between RCA and CRCNA partisans. Whereas these partisans often read the Minutes of Classis Holland with an eye to evidence that would justify or condemn the formation of the CRCNA in 1957 and thereafter, Kennedy generally provides a balanced and cautious interpretation. Though his sympathy for the RCA side of these debates comes through at times, Kennedy offers a fair and genial account of the actions on both sides of the controversy between those who chose to remain in the RCA and those who left to form the CRCNA. Even though Kennedy and his wife, Nella (whose contribution to these volumes is considerable and noteworthy), are members of the RCA, Kennedy's background in the Presbyterian Church in America gives him the edge of an "outsider" who enjoys a bit of distance from the quarrels of the past.

No doubt these three volumes will likely not be read by many word-for-word. But they must be read, at least in areas of special interest or importance, by serious students of the history of the RCA and CRCNA. For such students, these volumes will be a gold-mine of information and helpful sources for their own research and study of the history of these two denominations. They will not fail to be impressed and grateful for the indefatigable efforts of the author to ascertain the meaning and significance of the Minutes of Classis Holland during the pivotal period, 1848-1886.

—Cornelis P. Venema

Jonathan King. *The Beauty of the Lord: Theology as Aesthetics*. Studies in Historical and Systematic Theology. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018. Pp. xvii + 400. \$24.99 (paperback).

Jonathan King makes the strong claim that aesthetics and its realm of concerns has long been maligned or dismissed by protestant Christian theology—to theology's detriment. He therefore offers this book as an effort to expand current theological discourse and as an extended reflection on what a distinctly christological theological aesthetics might entail.

King begins by clarifying the nature of his project: it is neither a natural theology of beauty, a theology of the arts, a religious aesthetics, nor a strictly philosophical

aesthetics, but rather an exploration of aesthetics as a prime dimension of theological reflection. That is, he contends that beauty is the proper object of aesthetic study, and is integral to theological doctrine and systematics, not just to subsidiary views of the arts. Beauty, for King, is both objectively real and fundamentally characteristic of who God is and reveals Himself to be. “Beauty” therefore follows the classicist definition as a transcendental property of “fittingness” (proportion, harmony, unity, etc.). In the context of his discussion, such aesthetic fittingness bears witness to the glorifying and compelling perfection of the Trinity, and “is expressed and perceivable *as a quality of* the glory of God inherent in his work of creation, redemption, and consummation” (51).

Thomas Aquinas and Hans Urs von Balthasar—in particular Aquinas’ extensive reflections on glory (as well as Umberto Eco’s expositions of Aquinas with regard to aesthetics) and von Balthasar’s volumes on *The Glory of the Lord* and *Theo-Drama*—are readily recognizable as King’s influences in this book. Aquinas’ definition of beauty as a transcendental property of God alongside goodness and truth provides King with his definition of beauty. Likewise, von Balthasar’s understanding of theodrama as creation, incarnation/redemption, and consummation; and his particular reflections on the person and work of Christ as the most poignant revelation of God’s glory together provide the main context and overall structure for King’s arguments. In addition to an ongoing engagement with these main influences, each chapter of King’s book is also organized around a close engagement with figures like Anselm, Herman Bavinck, and Karl Barth on divine triune beauty, Irenaeus on the image of God seen through creation, and Jonathan Edwards on the eternal fullness of the eschaton.

The aesthetic dimension to scripture, in King’s view, is the unity, perfection, and fitting proportionality of God’s divine plan at all of the aforementioned points. A stronger theological aesthetics, then, would advocate for a trained attention to how God’s glory manifests at each point, and how the variety with which this glory appears both challenges and guides our understandings of what is truly beautiful. This conviction leads King to exegete Christ’s “form of a slave” in Philippians 2:6-7 and the Servant’s lack of form, majesty, and beauty in Isaiah 53 as examples of how a theological aesthetic would challenge too-easy or surface level notions of what beauty is.

King’s thematic focus throughout his work is clear and consistent, but it is sometimes difficult to discern what *aesthetics* contributes to his discussion—to the point that his conclusions counter the force of his intent in some ways. For example, he concludes that the theological aesthetics he outlines simply affirms the theological positions that already exist in other terms within traditional orthodoxy and the kind of fittingness that he calls aesthetic is already operative as a general notion of fittingness in systematic theology. King’s ready adoption of the classicist definition of beauty might therefore benefit from pushing further into the broader array of Biblically-committed aesthetic reflections from thinkers like Jeremy Begbie and Nicholas Wolterstorff, both of whom King cites. In addition to their works which King references, Begbie’s older *Voicing Creation’s Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts* (1991) and Wolterstorff’s more recent *Art Rethought: The Social Practices of Art* (2015) offer deep engagements with theological and aesthetic questions at their

various crossroads: in the context of Biblical exegesis and theological frameworks, everyday life, and art-making.

Nonetheless, King's work commends itself on a number of fronts. He openly recognizes the importance of theological aesthetics among broader Christian traditions, and his treatment of their contributions to the topics of the wealth of God's glory and Christ's particular manifestation of that glory is both fair and compelling. King also makes a number of suggestive and thought-provoking observations in his closing chapter and conclusion regarding the implications of a "surplus of gloriousness" and the "aesthetic asymmetry" of consummation glory (332).

King's work contributes to contemporary discussions of theology and aesthetics by raising awareness of some of the key crossover points between the disciplines, helpfully pointing in his use of secondary literature to anthologies of philosophical aesthetics, to other established and compelling thinkers in the realm of contemporary theological and Christian aesthetics, and to the variety of ways in which Christians can approach the questions of aesthetics. For those with eyes to see and ears to hear, this book offers an opportunity to reflect more deeply on the aesthetic dimension of scripture and, thereby, its place in the fabric of broader Christian living.

— Danielle Yett

Danny E. Olinger. *Geerhardus Vos: Reformed Biblical Theologian, Confessional Presbyterian*. Philadelphia: Reformed Forum, 2018. Pp. viii + 317. \$29.99 (cloth).

In the music world, an artist sometime emerges who is equally adept in different genres. The great trumpeter Wynton Marsalis comes to mind, the only musician ever to win a Grammy in the same year in both the classical and jazz categories. In his own way, Geerhardus Vos (1862-1949) appears as such a "crossover" biblical and theological scholar. He bridges a number of worlds, including that of the continental (especially Dutch) Reformed and Scottish/American Presbyterian, teaching at both Calvin and Princeton (the latter for almost forty years). He also brought together sound exegesis, faithful biblical theology, and orthodox systematic theology, disciplines often at odds with each other, especially biblical theology, which in liberal hands presented an atomized view of the Bible over against the more unified (and rationalistic, in its poorer examples) approach of systematics.

Danny Olinger, in this biography of Vos, vividly paints a picture of a man who has become so important in Reformed confessional circles, though little celebrated in his own day. Vos brought together the often disparate biblical and theological strands in a beautiful tapestry that gave witness both to the particulars of the Bible as well as its unified testimony to the God of all grace.

What is so striking about Vos's rescue of biblical theology from the hands of the liberals and making it something both scholarly and glorious is his redemptive-historical understanding that all of Scripture presents, either anticipatorily or reflectively, the gospel of Jesus Christ. Note not just the person of Christ, but the work of Christ, both of which are necessary for the gospel, the good news that though we

are sinners a Savior has come to redeem us and to bring us to glory. A true approach to Scripture, following Vos, locates the Bible passage in its proper place in this unfolding of the greatest story ever told.

Olinger's deft use of primary archival materials, along with a mastery of Vos's writings, and a judicious use of excellent secondary sources, yields a most satisfying volume. This is an intellectual biography that gives generous treatment to both Vos's life and his thought. As for his life, it was outwardly dull, being that of the academic, not overly involved in the courts of the church, but quite involved in the modernist debates of the day in accord with his staunch defense of confessional orthodoxy. Vos was an admirer and supporter of J. Gresham Machen in his attempts to recover and defend classic Reformed Christianity, though he never left Princeton to come to Westminster, retiring in 1932; nor did he join the OPC when it formed in 1936. But his influence on both Westminster Theological Seminary and the OPC was enormous, impacting not only Machen, who had great respect for Vos as a teacher and colleague, but also Cornelius Van Til, who regarded the recondite biblical scholar his finest teacher.

Olinger begins his treatment with a survey of Vos's family in the old country and the move to the States, chronicling Vos's American and European education, including his teaching stint at Calvin before coming back to teach at Princeton, where he had obtained his ministerial degree. Throughout the volume, weaving together Vos's life against the background of the looming crisis in "the broadening church" that the PCUSA proved to be (especially after the 1869 reunion of Old and New Schools), Olinger presents an able and insightful summary of Vos's main writings, from his early contributions to the foundations of Reformed Biblical Theology (and later development) to works on the *Kingdom of God and the Church*, *Pauline Eschatology*, and even his sermons (*Grace and Glory*).

Olinger's exposition of all these works, whether discussing the development of a more rigorous and consistent covenantal approach to the Bible and theology or the glories of the coming age and its breaking into this age, is first-rate and would well serve someone coming into a denomination like the Orthodox Presbyterian Church or the United Reformed Churches or coming to a Reformed seminary (like Mid-America Reformed Seminary and others) that features Vos so prominently in the curriculum and instruction. Vos has proved formative for many in confessionally Reformed circles, including someone like Richard B. Gaffin of Westminster, from whom many learned biblical theology and a redemptive historical approach to Scriptures and preaching.

This is a book, then, that every ministerial student and pastor serving in the NAPARC and churches of related faith and practice should read. Certainly to learn about Vos's life, which is not adequately addressed elsewhere, and his times, which is widely addressed elsewhere. The chief reason, however, to read this fine work is the unparalleled treatment of and engagement with Vos's thought as developed over the course of his life and career. Olinger brings this all together into a beautiful pastiche that illumines the brilliance of Vos's thought like the jeweler's case light illumines the brilliance of the diamond. The theological riches to be enjoyed in Vos's work

outweigh mere earthly valuables, as Olinger holds forth Vos's incomparable heavenly vision.

—Alan D. Strange

G. Suijin Pak. *The Reformation of Prophecy: Early Modern Interpretations of the Prophet and Old Testament Prophecy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. xii + 376. \$99.00 (hardcover).

The Protestant Reformers have long been known for their call for biblical exegesis as the foundation for the church's doctrine and practice, but they have been particularly noted for their exegesis of Paul's epistles. G. Suijin Pak, however, has explored the Reformers' exegesis of the Prophets. This book examines how early Protestants identified the prophetic role, how they understood what the prophetic books mean regarding the interpretation of history, and how they applied that understanding of history in order to see Christ in the prophetic texts. This volume is extensive both in scope and depth, as it covers several diverging traditions in the early modern period – Lutheran, Swiss Reformed, and Calvinist Reformed – across multiple generations. The use of primary sources is immense, drawing well from books in multiple languages, and secondary literature is fruitfully engaged.

Pak first considers how the Reformers identified a prophet. Most patristic and medieval thinkers focused on how the prophet proclaimed God's Word and predicted the future, but the Reformers adjusted that to focus more on the aspect of proclaiming the Word. Aligning with Protestant concerns to emphasize the laity's right to access the Bible, first interpretations of the prophetic role, drawing on the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, argued that all Christians in some way take part in the prophetic task by interpreting the Bible. It became quickly clear, however, as Pak demonstrated, that this line of argument opened the door to radicalism, as the Anabaptists especially took this understanding to its most radical conclusions and emphasized new revelations from God over the interpretation of Scripture. The Reformers, therefore, reexamined their understanding of the prophetic role, now using the role of the prophet as the herald of God's Word to underscore the authority of the minister's role to understand and announce the Scripture. As the Reformers continued to exegete the Prophets, they increasingly moved away from ecstatic notions of prophecy towards the clear declaration of Scripture, and eventually some argued that the prophetic role was a temporary role for the foundational era of the church.

Pak then examines early modern understandings of sacred history, specifically how the prophets inform our understanding of God's providential involvement in the world's unfolding events. Whereas Pak highlights some minor differences between Lutheran, Swiss Reformed, and Calvinist Reformed regarding the identity of the prophet, concerning sacred history she indicates some significant variance between these trajectories. She argues that Lutherans viewed the prophetic books as containing two histories, one concerning the history of the times of the Prophets themselves, and the other concerning literal prophecies about Christ scattered within the prophetic books. On the other hand, the Swiss Reformed, whom Pak identifies primarily with

Zwingli, Bullinger, and Bucer, emphasized that the Prophets told the history of God's one ongoing covenant. They tended to highlight the way that the Prophets addressed the broader society's godlessness. Then the Calvinist Reformed, namely those in Geneva or most directly linked to John Calvin such as Lambert Daneau and David Paraeus, saw the Prophets as speaking of the church across the ages. Lutherans, therefore, used a most directly literal hermeneutic where they searched for prophecies that were explicitly about the doctrines of justification by faith or Christ's incarnation. The Reformed, of all types, by contrast, paid closer attention to linguistic and historical factors of the text, noting that in many cases there must be multiple layers of fulfillment.

Pak lastly looks at how the varying understandings of sacred history produced differing interpretations of Christ in the prophetic books. Lutherans saw direct prophecies about Christ, but the Reformed emphasized the way prophetic metaphors applied to the biblical times, to Christ himself, and to the church throughout the ages. These observations indicate the growing confessional differences between these trajectories of Protestantism. Pak may overstate the differences between various Reformed thinkers, namely by implying that there were firmly distinct camps, but still indicates important aspects of diversity within the Reformed tradition.

This work is useful on multiple fronts. Historians will appreciate the insights that the Reformers focused on exegesis of the whole Bible, as well as the varying emphases among Protestants. Theologians will appreciate the nuances between Lutheran and Reformed trajectories in biblical interpretation. Pastors will profit from the discussions about various approaches to hermeneutics. Biblical scholars should especially appreciate how this work shows that the Reformers had a more sophisticated understanding of biblical theology than has at times been acknowledged. Pak demonstrates that their hermeneutics were not haphazard or shallow, but were consistent with reading Scripture according to their confessional commitments and were well thought out according to varying exegetical principles.

—Harrison Perkins

Shao Kai Tseng. *G.W.F. Hegel. Great Thinkers*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2018. Pp. 174. \$14.99 (paperback).

Gustav Mahler said that the symphony "is a world," and perhaps he best illustrated that with his massive Third Symphony. The philosophy of Georg W. F. Hegel is like Mahler's Third: he attempts to do in thought something similar to what Mahler did in sound, to present a world, a sort of intellectual "theory of everything," not dissimilar to what Stephen Hawking and others have attempted in physics. Love him or hate him—he has produced few neutral toward him. Hegel painted a grand narrative of the world that all philosophers since him have either celebrated or rejected. More have rejected Hegel and his all-embracing rationalism, with Nietzsche, arguably, developing what became post-modernism in response to Hegel's all-encompassing approach. Shao Kai Tseng, philosophy professor at a Chinese university (having

degrees from Princeton Theological Seminary and Oxford University, with an expertise in Karl Barth) has endeavored to capture this elusive philosopher and to give expression to his system in the space of relatively few pages.

Hegel often complained of being misunderstood, so much so that a facetious deathbed account has his last words as “Only one man ever understood me, and even he didn’t really understand me.” Much ink has been spilled arguing about Hegel, and while such a brief work can scarcely hope to do much, Tseng does succeed in giving us some understanding of Hegel’s approach and, as do all the volumes in this series, in bringing a Reformed (particularly Van Tilian) analysis to bear on it. The first part addresses “Why Hegel Matters Today,” detailing how Hegel set the plate for all philosophy to follow. The second part attempts the especially daunting task of furnishing “A Summary of Hegel’s Thought.” Tseng addresses in this section “Hegel’s Thought in Context,” his speculative and dialectical methods, and “Hegel’s Philosophy of Religion.”

One particularly useful approach to this book is to take that second part on Hegel’s thought and combine it with a feature at the end of the book, Tseng’s “Recommended Reading” section (which follows a most helpful twenty page glossary, quite necessary for Hegel study). What Tseng does here is lay out a modest, yet insightful, approach to reading Hegel for oneself, recommending starting with the preface and introduction to his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. One should then read the first volume of his *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, which “spells out the basic method described in the preface to the *Phenomenology* in clear and systematic details” (150). Tseng then recommends reading several posthumously published lectures that will basically complete the big picture of Hegel’s thought. He then makes recommendations from what he finds to be the best and most helpful “Introductory and Secondary Literature.” One can differ with Tseng here—hardly anyone’s completely agrees when it comes to Hegel!—but I think that his approach is especially useful to someone seeking to have a fuller grasp of Hegel.

One of the hallmarks of Hegel is his method, which is said to be identical with the content of his philosophy. His method is dialectical, seeking to “uncover the truth through a process of debate between opposing voices” (135). Though the supposed “thesis/antithesis/synthesis” of this dialectic is not really what Hegel taught, there is a second moment in which “sublation” occurs, as a negation of the first positive moment, leading to the elevation of a final (for the moment) positive. The content of his philosophy may be called “Absolute idealism” in which, over against Kant’s “Transcendental Idealism,” the noumenal does not remain separated from the phenomenal but is brought down into it (the Absolute is made immanent), not wholly unlike Aristotle bringing Plato’s forms down into the world of matter.

This “incarnational” approach expresses itself as the *Weltgeist* (World Spirit) progressively unfolds itself in the dialectic of history. Hegel sees Christianity, as he conceives it, as a grand and subordinate metaphor or illustration of which his system is the philosophical manifestation. He sees this unfolding as actualization, in which the irrational gives way to the rational and the contingent becomes real. So for Hegel the rational is the real and he equates the truly actual (in its fully developed moment)

with God. There is a certain attraction to his system, insofar as it assumes that one can make sense of it all, perhaps similar to the temptation to our first parents in Eden.

In his third section, Tseng gives us a “Reformed Assessment of Hegel’s Thought” in which he finds both the contradictions in, and failures of, Hegel’s system, and also finds insights. He ends with something better than any of that, a conclusion entitled, “A Christian Answer to Hegel,” in which he gives a distinctly Christian response to many issues raised by Hegel’s approach. There are those who have appropriated formal aspects of Hegelian thought without adopting its substantive content. For example, Herman Bavinck (from his mentor) and Cornelius Van Til (from his studies in idealism) did so and remained “immune to Hegel’s panentheistic monism,” largely because these thinkers maintained and developed the Augustinian/Calvinist creator/creature distinction. Augustine himself, due to his Platonism, though positing the distinction, did not fully maintain it, suggesting that the forms overflowed from the inward nature of God; Aquinas, depending on Aristotle too much, also did not sufficiently attend to the complete ontological gulf between God and his creation. Tseng writes that Aquinas’s understanding of the analogy of being, “when all its logical loose ends are tied, ultimately leads into a Hegelian type of monistic idealism” (123).

It is not until Calvin, Tseng argues, that the ontological continuum between God and his creation was severed and the implications of a proper Creator-creature distinction teased out. Calvin expressed this distinction especially in his elucidating primary and secondary causes, making clear the difference between the “remote” and “hidden” first cause (as an expression of God’s sovereign will) and secondary causes, which are causations within the natural order of God’s creation. Calvin thus distinguished sharply the Creator and his creation. For Bavinck and Van Til, who did not necessarily conceive of God’s freedom in Calvin’s arguably voluntaristic terms, the correspondence between God’s being and his creation defines archetype-ectype relations and “reflects the most intimate relationship between God and his creation while safeguarding the strictest ontological distinction between the Creator and his creatures” (125).

Hegel does not make this distinction. For Hegel, “the universe *is* what God is.” For Reformed theology, the “finite universe is an *ad extra* expression of what God is.” Since the finite is incapable of comprehending the infinite, divine incomprehensibility obtains and all is “intelligible to the human mind if and only if it is a work of God’s voluntary act of revelation” (125). Thus the necessity of revelation if man is, in any measure, to know God and the world that he’s made. God remains incomprehensible, knowing himself and his creation exhaustively as he only can, but, by revelation (both general and special), allowing man to know him and to think his thoughts after him. Not only can man know God, but, because this revelation comes in nature (not only externally, as in Romans 1, but internally, in conscience, as in Romans 2), as well as Scripture, every person does know God, though unbelievers suppress the truth of that knowledge in unrighteousness. To know God truly we must have the inward illumination of the Spirit in which we recognize and submit to God in his Word.

This last little section, that I will not further reproduce except summarily, is excellent in its contrast with the true rational thought of Christianity, made possible

by God's general and special revelation, and the irrationality of Hegel's thought, which, lacking a concrete universal and God's self-disclosure, cannot account for "the possibility of predication in any field whatsoever" (128). The "doctrine of divine incomprehensibility, which presupposes both God's transcendence and his self-revelation, is there to safeguard the very rationality of the human mind and the possibility of human knowledge of God and of the universe. God has spoken, and this means that what Hegel sought and failed to achieve can actually be accomplished, as long as we listen to God, repeat his words and think his thoughts after him" (128). Good things may indeed come in small packages: this brief treatment of Hegel engages the depth of his teaching and brings to bear real biblical insight on the work of the renowned German idealist. This is a modest purchase that will pay rich dividends to those who wish to plumb the depths of Western philosophic thought.

—Alan D. Strange

Petrus van Mastricht. *Theoretical-Practical Theology, vol. 1: Prolegomena & vol. 2: Faith in the Triune God*. Translated by Todd M. Rester. Edited by Joel R. Beeke. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018 & 2019. Pp. lxiii + 238; and xxxv + 660. \$50.00 per volume (cloth).

The Dutch Reformed Translation Society continues to do first-rate work, as two volumes (out of seven total) of Petrus van Mastricht's (1630–1706) enormous *Theologia Theoretica-practica* have now appeared in English translation. The translator, Todd M. Rester (assisted in the second volume by Michael T. Spangler), is to be commended for a translation that reads quite easily, so much so that I comfortably read the bulk of the first volume while in the waiting area at a car dealership. The ease of reading is maintained by the fact that footnotes are generally brief and used mainly for bibliographic references or to identify some special feature in the text, like the use of a Greek or Hebrew word.

This work represented the culmination of van Mastricht's thought and experience as a pastor and teacher of theology. It brings before the reader a thoughtful and mature expression of orthodox Reformed dogmatics. Yet readers may wonder if there is a real need for still another systematic theology text. What could earn van Mastricht a place on shelves that already have multiple other complete bodies of doctrine?

Part of the answer to that question is in the name, *Theoretical-Practical Theology* (cited hereafter as *TPT*). This is theology brought to bear on Christian thinking, worshiping, and living. As van Mastricht works through the usual subjects for a systematic theology, he deploys a very clear and consistent outline. Each chapter contains an exegetical part, where one special text provides the Biblical basis for what van Mastricht will discuss. For instance, van Mastricht begins discussing the truthfulness and faithfulness of God by providing an exegesis of Romans 3:3–4 (*TPT* II:279–281). These analyses of particular texts demonstrate the relevance of each passage to the topic under discussion, along with the specifics of what that text teaches on the subject.

The exegetical part is followed by a dogmatic part, in which the given doctrine is clearly stated and proved by additional references to Scripture and by rational arguments. This is where the doctrinal discussion and answers to questions appear. As an example, when dealing with saving faith, the dogmatic part contains not only a definition of saving faith, but also an exploration of what kind of an act it is, what is its proper object, its ends, degrees, and cause (*TPT* II:5–14).

An elenctic part comes next, where van Mastricht explains who has denied the doctrine, on what basis, and how they may be answered. A great deal of value can be found in these elenctic or polemical portions. Relatively few denials of false doctrine are absolutely new, and it is helpful to see how old enemies have been answered before. But the review and rejection of mistaken approaches also serves to clarify and cement true doctrine in the reader's own mind. The consideration of alternatives goes some way to ensure that our assent to a given doctrine isn't merely because of a temporary enthusiasm or ignorance of options, but is the settled result of a deliberated judgment.

In his answers to objectors, van Mastricht at times provides pointers to other resources, rather than handling matters extensively himself. This was inevitable, and is not necessarily a disadvantage. The alternative would have been a much longer work. For instance, with regard to alleged "absurdities, contradictions, and falsehoods" in Scripture, instead of listing and discussing them, he points the reader to Junius, Maimonides, ben Israel, Spanheim, and Walther (*TPT* I:137). The translation and editing team have done magnificent work in tracking down all the works van Mastricht cites, and providing as detailed bibliographic information as possible. These references, of course, are likely to be more useful to scholars than to general readers.

Part of the special value of *Theoretical-Practical Theology* is that a discussion of the application of each doctrine to the Christian life follows its statement and clarification in the dogmatic and elenctic portions. The commitment to ask and answer the question "so what" at each point along the way distinguishes this work from many others.

Perhaps a comparison will be of service. Both van Mastricht and Francis Turretin deal with the doctrine that God is simple. In what they affirm about the doctrine, and in how they rebut objections to it, they are clearly on the same page. This is evident from a comparison of *TPT* II:142–148 with Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, Topic III.Q.VII.i-xvii.

Both authors point to the Socinians as deniers of simplicity, and reference the same sources. Both mention the Arminian theologian Simon Episcopius. Both defend and clarify the doctrine of simplicity with similar language, and answer concerns about simplicity and God's decree, creation, and the Trinity. Their treatments are not identical; from each one, it is possible to learn something not found in the other. To provide an example, van Mastricht speaks of God's "omnimodal simplicity" (*TPT* II:146), and Turretin does not use that language. Yet Turretin is certainly not replaced by van Mastricht, since it is distinctively in the *Institutes* that we find answers to objections raised from such passages as Romans 11:36 or Hebrews 12:9.

However, when van Mastricht draws out five practical applications from the doctrine of God's simplicity, there is nothing analogous in Turretin. And this section is likely the most helpful to the pastor wondering how to preach about Exodus 3:14, 1 John 1:5, John 4:24, or other passages where the simplicity of God legitimately comes up for consideration. What can one say to a congregation that shows any relevance for this doctrine?

According to van Mastricht, there are five applications for the doctrine of simplicity: (1) that God is the foundation of every perfection and every imperfection is founded in creatures; (2) that we rest upon God alone; (3) that we should worship with a simple heart; (4) that we should be sincere in our manner of life; 5) that we should be contented (*TPT* II: 148–152). Thus van Mastricht helps the preacher use this attribute of God (or any other) to motivate congregations to worship God for who he is, and also to live in harmony with his revealed character.

Use of these volumes as a help in preaching was no small part of what van Mastricht had in mind (cf. *TPT* I:46). It is quite fitting, then, that his valuable essay on “The Best Method of Preaching” is included in the first volume (*TPT* I:3–31).

To be sure, there are other dogmatic texts that include application. One can think of Wilhelmus à Brakel's *The Christian's Reasonable Service* or Thomas Watson's *A Body of Divinity*. It is not at all that van Mastricht is unique among the Reformed in thinking that doctrine must be practical. However, the frequency and consistency of his sections on application set him apart; and the clarity of his overall outline makes it very easy to use him as a reference work.

As noted, van Mastricht is not a wholly adequate substitute for the remarkable work of Turretin in clarifying Reformed doctrine over against deviations from it. But van Mastricht does have a distinctive value. He provides a clear, sound, Scripturally-based, dogmatically informed, and polemically tested theology that is then suggestively applied to real issues of living the Christian life. There is significant value in consistently having all those kinds of information in one place.

These volumes (and the ones forthcoming) are heartily commended especially for the pastor who desires to be properly doctrinal and practical in his preaching. Here is a readable text, with topical discussions of manageable length, which demonstrates how Reformed doctrine arises from God's word, vindicates it from misrepresentation or distortion, and shows what difference it makes.

—Ruben Zartman

Cornelis P. Venema. *Chosen in Christ: Revisiting the Contours of Predestination*. Reformed Exegetical and Doctrinal Studies. Fearn, Ross-Shire: Mentor, 2019. Pp. 403. \$20.00 (paperback).

In *Chosen in Christ*, Dr. Cornelis Venema offers a penetrating study of the doctrine of predestination in Scripture and historical theology, along with engaging certain erroneous views and offering answers to pastoral questions concerning, or practical objections to, the doctrine.

The introduction contains an *apologia* for the existence of the book, and provides some helpful orienting considerations, particularly with regard to the relationship between the concepts of election and predestination. Predestination properly belongs to the wider categories of God's decree and special providence, and election is one of the most significant elements of predestination as it relates to salvation (19). The glossary at the conclusion of the volume (379–385) may prove especially helpful for readers who are new to the specialized theological vocabulary in this area (e.g., “creationism” in the context of predestination does not mean the same thing that it does in discussions of how the world came to be what it is).

As might be expected from the series to which it belongs, the first major section of the book explores the Bible's own teaching about election, with separate chapters for the Old Testament (25–52), the bulk of the New Testament (53–89), and then Paul's letters (91–130). While not exhaustively interpreting every relevant text in detail, these pages represent a substantial engagement with Scripture's direct teaching about election. The tour of biblical material is intrinsically useful, and also serves to situate the reader for the historical discussion which follows.

The historical section begins with Augustine's seminal role in formulating the doctrine of election, in no small measure over against the Pelagian denials of it (131–170). Although not the last word, “subsequent attempts to articulate the doctrine of election may not ignore Augustine's powerful polemic against any teaching that denies the sheer graciousness of God's saving work in Christ” (132). This contention is briefly illustrated in the concluding section of this chapter, with reference to some of the many medieval theologians who were influenced by Augustine in their own approach to predestination (170–173).

The following chapter, on predestination and election in Reformation theology (175–212) is particularly rich. It contains concise treatments of Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Bullinger, Zwingli, and Vermigli, in addition to the Reformed confessions, and a quick glance at certain later developments or emphases in post-Reformation articulations of predestination. In Reformed approaches to election and predestination, there was a consistent emphasis on glorifying God and comforting believers (211–212). That attitude is certainly one worthy of imitation by contemporary theologians in approaching these doctrines, or any others (as Venema observes a little later, 333).

Naturally the Arminian approach to election, and the controversy that led to the Synod of Dort receive extensive consideration (213–252). With reference to the matter of election, the precise point at issue is susceptible of clear and succinct statement: is election conditional or unconditional? Therein lies the difference between the Augustinian and the semi-Pelagian positions, and that alternative contains the dichotomy between a monergistic and synergistic approach to election (250–251, and cf. 20). This chapter also provides a substantive refutation of the Arminian doctrine of election along three lines: the mishandling of Romans 9; criticism of the semi-Pelagian doctrine of a consequent will; and an exhibition of the futile category of middle knowledge.

The next chapter tackles Karl Barth's approach to the doctrine of election, giving first a fairly extensive overview of Barth's thought (254–271), which is then followed by a critical assessment (272–296). This is a careful discussion that engages with Barth

directly as well as with various interpreters of his thought. The conclusion that Barth's doctrine contains ambiguity, incoherent elements, and does not adequately account for the biblical data about the election of individuals (296) is reached only after a significant attempt to understand Barth clearly and interpret him charitably. Such weighty criticisms deserve to be taken seriously.

Turning next to more contemporary reconsiderations of election, Venema explains and criticizes also the approach of free-will or open theism (297–334). Ultimately, “*open theism has no true doctrine of election*” (327–328, italics original). Because the doctrine of God is rewritten to accommodate assumptions about the libertarian nature of human freedom, Scripture's witness to God's eternal purpose is effectively muted. The section on the incoherence of libertarian human freedom (314–322) is perhaps especially devastating.

This volume is rounded off by a chapter of theological and pastoral reflections, where seven common questions about election or predestination are asked and answered (335–363). Here an assortment of possible misunderstandings, abuses, or mischaracterizations of the doctrine of election are addressed. Several of the questions relate to one degree or another to the preaching of the Gospel. The relatively brief answers are helpful, but many of the questions and answers could have received separate treatment in a full length chapter of their own. For instance, which “defenders of the biblical doctrine of election have unnecessarily burdened the biblical teaching with the presumption that, in the final analysis, the number of the elect will be relatively few” (342)? What lines of argument have they used in support of that position, and how may they be shown to be wrong? An adroit sketch of a very sensible Reformed position on this overall topic is provided, but no extended engagement was possible within the confines of a single chapter. Again, with regard to the “well-meant Gospel offer” (350–354), this is treated as synonymous with the “free offer” (350) and the space allotted for discussion allowed for no distinction of positions or rejoinders to documented objections. Of course, whenever a reader complains that a book is too brief, it means that the author was offering something worth having. In this case, that something is much valuable information in a lucid and engaging presentation.

In conclusion, this book is a mature and well-digested overview of predestination, which is able to address its Biblical sources, its historical development, and its dogmatic importance. Yet it is by no means difficult to read or inaccessible. I asked an elder from the church I serve to read *Chosen in Christ* and share his impressions. He pronounced it enjoyable to read and profitable, and found that the historical section and engagement with Barth particularly gave him helpful information he had not encountered in other treatments.

—Ruben Zartman

Christopher Watkin, *Michel Foucault*. Great Thinkers. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2018. Pp. xvi + 179. \$14.99 (paperback).

Christopher Watkin, who earlier published the book on Jacques Derrida in this Great Thinker series (reviewed in the 2018 issue of the MAJT), and which I feel compelled

to describe as a stunning achievement, now writes on the renowned French post-modernist, post-structuralist thinker, Michel Foucault (though Foucault disdained both of those descriptors). Foucault died of AIDS at the age of 57, in 1984. Due to this, and his related sexual commitments and political stances, Foucault has become something of a cause célèbre to Jordan Peterson and his allies involved in a cultural war with practitioners of present-day identity politics, which is part of the reason that he remains such an important figure.

For proponents of cultural Marxism and intersectionality, power is suspect, as it is assumed always to be used to oppress those viewed as disadvantaged in some way. This major theme of current society and discussions owes much of its existence to Foucault. One never gets to queer theory, gender politics or the like without Foucault's doctrines. Part 1 of Watkin's book sets forth the dimensions of Foucault's thought, addressing in successive chapters, "History and Truth," "Power and Knowledge," "Ethics and Identity," finally situating him among the theologians.

Foucault frequently addresses "power," typically pairing it with other adjectives (sovereign, pastoral, etc.), defining it at one point as "action upon the action of others" (157). Marx reduced everything to economic power, seeing all of history as a class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in his time. Nietzsche also saw the *ressentiment* of the weak as a power play against the strong. Though great differences obtained between Marx and Nietzsche, they both posited a godless world in which it is unsurprising that power is all there is. Foucault taps into that and sees everything as a sort of power struggle in which the name of the game is to come out on top, especially when the formerly dispossessed can turn the tables on their oppressors. This postmodern cynicism thus reduces everything to a political power play and results in the sort of pervasive politicization that we witness all about us.

Part 2 engages in a Christian, biblical analysis of this thought, particularly from the standpoint of Christ's self-giving (Phil. 2: 5-11) and God's "weakness and folly" manifested in and at the cross (1 Cor. 1:18-31). As other reviewers have noticed, Watkin seeks to dialogue critically with Foucault, addressing his insights about the propensity of fallen human beings to abuse power. However, Watkin arguably does so without sufficiently challenging Foucault at the root of his thought, failing to press the antithesis as vigorously as he might. In both this volume and the one on Derrida, Watkin engages the thought of the Frenchmen with a method that he calls "diagnolization," in which he subjects the ideas of the two great postmodernists to biblical analysis. I judge that in the former case (Derrida), Watkin was more successful than in the present one (Foucault).

Having said that, this book is decidedly worth the read, with Watkin providing not only a concise and accurate treatment of Foucault, a feat worth the price of the book, but also other helps in approaching the thought of this formidable and influential figure. Watkin provides two helpful appendices on Foucault's writings and process of periodization, as well as an excellent glossary and a select annotated bibliography of works by and about Foucault. If one thinks that Foucault is over and done, one need only meander into almost any university classroom, political debate, or variety of programs on MSNBC, CNN, etc. and see that Foucault and his offspring are alive and well.

Watkin's volume is a great introduction to where it all came from and what continues to shape our current culture. Foucault is clearly not wrong both to expose systemic power abuses and to assert that self-interest tends to infect the pursuit of truth with the political pursuit of power, leaving truth marginalized and replaced by power. This is helpful. What is not helpful is the mere perspectivalism of postmodernism that cynically marginalizes truth, minimizes or rejects evidence, and leaves us only with politicized approaches to all of life. Foucault helps us, in other words, see the problems with modernism. However, as a quintessential postmodernist, he has no real positive ontological or epistemological offerings. Once again, he shows that when you reject God as maker of all, and his revelation (the only proper answer to what is real and how we know it), you are left with "sound and fury, signifying nothing." The postmodernists deconstruct modernism and then themselves, reminding us that if we reject the God who is there, we cannot properly make ultimate sense of anything. Watkin offers a good introduction to the thought of Foucault and suggests how we might be to deal with such from a biblical viewpoint.

—Alan D. Strange

Jon D. Wood. *Reforming Priesthood in Reformation Zurich: Heinrich Bullinger's End-Times Agenda*. Reformed Historical Theology 54. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019. Pp. 150. \$63.00 (cloth).

There have been several studies on Heinrich Bullinger and the prophetic office in recent years. The idea of the priesthood in early Reformed theology is an overlapping idea, at least as Bullinger framed it. This book shows how early Reformed thought in Zurich transitioned from the idea of a priestly clergy, to a prophetic one, and partly back again, creating a useful bridge between these two overlapping areas of research. One issue that connects these two areas of study in Bullinger's thought was the instituted ministry and eschatology. Jon Wood pulls these themes effectively together, testing his thesis in light of Bullinger's views of church-state relationships and the doctrines of covenant theology and justification. He ably combines social/political history with the history of ideas to present a three-dimensional picture of the development of Bullinger's views of the Christian ministry and their trajectory within Swiss Reformed theology.

While the issue of the priesthood is a matter of ecclesiology, it grew out of Bullinger's eschatology, which is Wood's primary focus. The author outlines his theme in five chapters. After situating the Zurich school on eschatology in the context of the broader Christian tradition, he treats the effects of confessionalization on the clergy, the eschatological vision of the interrelationship between doctrine and life, the recovery of a priestly idea in the Christian ministry as it affected social order, and where the doctrine of justification fit into this overarching narrative. This book is ultimately a study of the transformation of clerical identity in sixteenth-century Zurich in light of eschatology (32). The author draws particularly from Bullinger's previously unpublished manuscripts to move towards a larger picture of the reformer's views, particularly from Bullinger's *Sermones Synodales*, which constituted his notes for nearly 81 synods in Zurich (38-39). He argues, contra Irena Backus' notable

scholarship, that eschatology and politics went hand-in-hand for Bullinger (39). The basic argument of the book is that eschatology heightened Bullinger's sense of urgency in promoting a godly ministry that pressed both doctrine and life among ministers and lay people alike. In the process, he shows that, contra Zwingli, Bullinger reintegrated Old Testament priestly texts into his depiction of the Christian ministry. This was a reformation rather than a return to the Roman Catholic sacerdotal and sacramental view of the priesthood. Illustrating Bullinger's view of the "priestly" character of the New Testament ministry of the Word shows the expansion and development of early Reformed thought on this subject.

Wood notes Bullinger's reintroduction of priestly language to the Christian ministry in light of his appeals to God's covenant with Levi in Malachi 2 (94-95). However, this seeming reversal of Zwingli's earlier rejection of priestly language would appear to be less shocking if Wood had demonstrated Bullinger's reasoning more fully. His idea was that Old Testament priests were the ordinary teachers of the Word and the Malachi passage cited refers to this duty alone. This explains why Bullinger used such priestly texts, while denuding Christian ministry of the sacramental character that marked Roman Catholic polity. While Wood hints at this line of reasoning (96), he does not fully demonstrate how Bullinger gradually treated the prophet as the extraordinary minister of the Word in the OT and the priest as the ordinary minister of the Word. This move enabled Bullinger to retain the teaching function of the priesthood in the NT ministry while rejecting its sacerdotal character. Filling out these details would have made Wood's case clearer.

This book may be a bit off the beaten path for many students of historical theology. Wood blends theological and political history more thoroughly than some scholars may be used to. This feature makes his work even more valuable because it expands our historical horizons by tracing the interrelationship between theological and political ideas and influences. This is precisely the kind of research that scholars need to learn from and interact with to understand post-Reformation Europe more accurately. This book is dense and closely argued and accomplishes many things in a short space.

—Ryan M. McGraw

Daniel Y. Wu. *Honor, Shame, and Guilt: Social-Scientific Approaches to the Book of Ezekiel*. Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplements 14. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016. Pp. xix + 219. \$47.50 (hardcover).

In describing the "cultural blinders" that readers of Scripture sometimes bring to the text, foreign missionaries tell stories of Bible studies wherein attendees, particularly in non-western cultures, identified the wrong individual as the "good guy" or "bad guy" of the story. For example, in the parable of the prodigal son, readers in far- and near-eastern contexts are reported to struggle with viewing the father as a trustworthy character. After all, when the son asks for his share of the inheritance, the father's acquiescence to this request appears to be at best lax, and at worst, intentionally enabling a violation of the fifth commandment: "Honor your father and mother." To

identify the character of the father with God causes significant difficulties for peoples from particular cultural contexts. It is for this reason that rigorous biblical interpretation seeks to understand the value system assumed or promoted by the biblical authors and check their own value systems against it. But there are times when modern questions and assumptions interpreters bring to Scripture make it nearly impossible to rightly understand the value system of the biblical writers themselves. What do we do then? Are we truly in a post-modern hermeneutical vortex from which there is no escape?

In *Honor, Shame, and Guilt: Social-Scientific Approaches to the Book of Ezekiel*, Daniel Wu develops an approach to the study of cultural values and assumptions that address the very kinds of eastern cultural contexts just described. An increasing number of interpreters suggest that the cultural milieu of the Bible is shame-based (vis-à-vis guilt-based or fear-based), and that western interpreters have paid insufficient attention to this reality, leading to any number of exegetical missteps. In arbitrating this, Wu considers the role of honor and shame as identified in non-western cultures by anthropologists and psychologists, but asks how this relates to the role of honor and shame in the biblical texts, specifically the book of Ezekiel. He thus develops a methodological approach with checks and balances designed to avoid both cultural myopia and a hermeneutical vortex.

In chapter one, Wu provides a very brief (three-page) introduction and orientation to the study at hand. Chapter 2 then thoroughly reviews the use of social scientific approach(es) (abbreviated hereafter as SSA) in biblical studies. In the current interpretive milieu which prizes interdisciplinary work, SSAs have become increasingly incorporated into exegetical and textual studies. While some believing interpreters have worried that such an approach is an unwarranted subjugating of Scripture to science (albeit to social, not natural, science), others have noted that one can utilize these approaches without denying the perspicuity and self-authenticating nature of Scripture. (For example, Byron Curtis shows how a comparative modeling approach can be used to understand certain textual features in the book of Zechariah: Byron G. Curtis, *Up the Steep and Stony Road: The Book of Zechariah in Social Location Trajectory Analysis*, SBLABib 25 [Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006]; cf. Bryan D. Estelle, "The Old Testament and the Comparative Method," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 6 [2010]: 145-166.)

There are two features of chapter two that are especially useful. First, readers are introduced to a wide range of SSAs utilized as general theories in interpretation. (Although note that Wu highlights approaches that have been used to specifically study *honor* and *shame* in the Bible.) Stating that an interpreter is utilizing a SSA does not say enough. The question must be asked: *which* SSA is being used and does that particular SSA have utility for the use to which it is being put? (Readers wishing to answer this question will benefit from the assessments given in the following: Russell Heddendorf and Matthew Vos, *Hidden Threads: A Christian Critique of Sociological Theory* [Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010]; Vern Sheridan Poythress, *Redeeming Sociology: A God-Centered Approach* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011].) Second, chapter 2 charts out the model Wu uses in his study of Ezekiel, an approach which utilizes both emic (insider) and etic (outsider) perspectives. This method begins

with identifying a researcher's own perspective (called "emic A"), then approaching the study via that perspective (now relabeled "imposed etic"). From there, the text is studied with an eye to understanding the text "in its own terms" (26; labeled "emic B") which is then used to reevaluate the researcher's own perspective (termed "derived etic"). This perspective is then "carried over" to future iterations of the research process (26; now called emic A1). What this accomplishes is a methodologically controlled and testable exegetical approach that enables interpreters to recognize and utilize SSAs without thereby reducing the text to a wax nose (shaped by the dictates of the SSA model). It also helps readers pay attention to the ways in which the text's *own* assumptions are heard and allowed to shape those of the interpreter.

Chapter three surveys recent approaches to shame and guilt in psychology, anthropology, and biblical studies, analyzing this in more detail than provided in chapter two. In this chapter, Wu articulates his emic A/imposed etic approach. With chapters four through six, Wu moves to emic B, studying honor (chapter four), shame (chapter five), and guilt (chapter six) in Ezekiel. These chapters are lengthy lexical studies that pay careful attention to semantic domains and semantic ranges represented by the words and/or concepts under consideration. Readers will find that Wu approaches these chapters consistently within his method, conversantly with secondary literature, and rigorously via exegetical engagement with the primary text. Especially helpful was Wu's observation that many SSAs break down when studying YHWH himself since YHWH is, after all, not a creature and is not subject to the same limitations and weaknesses as humans.

Chapter seven concludes the study in two helpful ways. First, Wu summarizes his findings as follows: "[H]onor is what YHWH deems of worth, is indicative of right relationship with him, and is defined in accordance with and in appropriate response to his כבוד, which is in turn derived from his own character of חסד ואמת. Shame is what in YHWH's eyes fails/falls short of an appropriate response to his כבוד and thus constitutes a fundamental breach of relationship with him. Guilt is the concrete expression of that failure, the transgression or distortion of the covenant terms that express and enable right relationship with the god of חסד ואמת." [174]

Second, Wu offers a concise description of the implications of this study for using SSAs in biblical and theological studies. Indeed, this reviewer found this study to have considerable merit for this very reason: its illustration of a fruitful methodology.

As an appendix, Wu provides a study on the implications of his approach to social science for studying the atonement theologically. Noting (1) that many theologians have drawn on SSAs in defense of particular theories of the atonement and (2) that some of these theologians have used SSAs on honor and shame in their theologizing, Wu surveys their methods and conclusions in light of the findings of his study. While ultimately affirming the penal-substitutionary view of the atonement, he entertains several questions raised by critics of penal-substitution using SSAs, and seeks to better nuance some aspects and language surrounding penal-substitutionary atonement. For example, he concludes by noting that despite the claims of its critics, penal-substitutionary atonement "is the mechanism by which atonement 'works.' However, it is far from cold, legalistic, or impersonal. It is the very expression of the חסד ואמת of YHWH, and the only means by which love and faithfulness may flow, uninhibited,

between God and humanity” (192). At the same time, Wu critiques the way some critics of penal-substitutionary atonement have utilized SSAs in their formulations. In this way, Wu has provided a useful illustration of a methodology and its implications not simply for biblical studies, but for theological studies in the modern period as well. Though this appendix could have benefitted from citing a wider array of dogmatic-theological literature, it serves well to illustrate the care that must be taken when utilizing SSAs in theological research.

In sum, this reviewer found this to be a very fine work. Pastors and theological students who are interested in biblical backgrounds can benefit from the added range of categories provided by Wu, although this volume will find a more comfortable home on the shelves of academic biblical scholars doing interdisciplinary exegetical work. And yet anyone who opens a commentary that interprets details in the biblical text using modeling (whether from sociology, psychology, or anthropology) should be aware of the merits and liabilities of such modeling. Wu’s *Honor, Shame, and Guilt* will enable all interpreters to engage such proposals with eyes wide open.

—R. Andrew Compton