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BOOK REVIEWS & SHORT NOTICES

Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain. *Reformed Catholicity: The Promise of Retrieval for Theology and Biblical Interpretation.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015. Pp. viii + 168, including a general index. $19.99.

In the history of Christian theology since the time of the Reformation, the respective roles of Scripture and tradition in the formulation of the doctrines of the faith have received considerable attention. On the one hand, the Roman Catholic Church—and the Eastern Orthodox Churches as well—has articulated an understanding of tradition as an organism, consisting of written (Bible) and unwritten tradition. In this view, the church as the body of Christ, indwelt and guided by the Holy Spirit, has the power to define authoritatively what the faithful must believe. The magisterium or teaching office of the church is regarded as the infallible source and judge of all matters to be believed and practiced (*credenda et agenda*) by the faithful. On the other hand, Protestantism, especially in its modern evangelical expressions, has diminished the role of tradition in order to privilege the exclusive, supreme authority of the Word of God in Scripture. Under the banner of *sola Scriptura,* many evangelical theologians have relegated the church's traditional reading of Scripture, including the codification of that reading in creeds and confessions, to a subordinate, even insignificant, role. The slogans, "no creed but Christ," "no book but the Bible," have become shorthand for an approach to theology that is biblicistic and a-historical. Individual theologians, upon the basis of their exegetical engagement with the Scriptural texts, are free to articulate their understanding of the Christian faith in a way that is untethered from the rich inheritances of the church throughout history. Creeds and confessions, traditional forms of liturgical practice, the history of biblical exegesis recorded in commentaries, the writings of the church fathers in the early history of the church—none of these are granted any privileged status in the ongoing task of formulating new, contemporary expressions of Scriptural teaching.

As the title and subtitle of Michael Allen (associate professor of systematic and historical theology at Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando, Florida) and Scott Swain's (associate professor of systematic theology and academic dean at Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando, Florida) book intimates, their aim is to offer a "manifesto" for

an approach to Christian theology that overcomes the impasse between the Roman Catholic tendency to diminish the unique authority of Scripture and the modern evangelical tendency to diminish the appropriate, albeit subordinate, authority of the church's tradition. In their estimation, Reformed theology needs to retrieve its original commitment to "Reformed catholicity," a balanced understanding of the unique and supreme authority of Scripture for theological formulation (*sola Scriptura*) and the complementary authority of the church's long history of engagement with Scripture. Reformed catholicity represents an approach to theology that appreciates the churchly context for the reading of Scripture, and recognizes that Christ's authority in the church, though principally exercised by the Spirit of Christ who speaks in and with the Scriptures, also includes the ministerial authority of the church as it comes to expression in a variety of forms (preaching, confessing, teaching, worshipping). Reformed catholicity does not understand the principle of "Scripture alone" (*sola Scriptura*) as though it meant "only Scripture" (*solo Scriptura*).

In an introductory chapter, Allen and Swain identify the question they wish to address throughout: "Can Christians and churches be catholic and Reformed? Can they commit themselves not only to the ultimate authority of apostolic Scripture but also to receiving this Bible within the context of the apostolic church?" (1). The occasion for raising this question is the tendency in more recent Reformed theology to forget its catholic past, and the original understanding of the proper role of tradition in the period of the Reformation and early Reformed orthodoxy. In contrast to this tendency, Allen and Swain identify a number of "recent trends in faith and practice" that "coalesce … in the judgment that modern theology, in more conservative and progressive forms, has exhausted itself as a mode of theological inquiry and that the path toward theological renewal lies in retrieving resources from the Christian tradition" (4). Viewed from within the context of these trends, Allen and Swain offer their manifesto for such retrieval, not as "a full-blown theological methodology," but as a "volley in an ongoing discussion" (12). At the end of this introductory chapter, they offer the following account of their thesis: "we do believe that classical Reformed thought, both in the era of the Reformation and beyond in the era of Reformed Orthodoxy, provide numerous *examples* of thoughtful appropriation of the catholic tradition and, moreover, that the *principles* of classical Reformed orthodox prolegomena, as well as the principles of classical Reformed ecclesiology, provide a salutary framework within which a Reformed dogmatics of retrieval might be developed" (13).

After identifying the question they wish to address, Allen and Swain develop their thesis in five chapters.

In Chapter 1 ("Learning Theology in the School of Christ: *The Principles of Theology and the Promise of Retrieval*"), Allen and Swain

deal with the "deepest warrants for retrieval," which are "trinitarian and christological in nature" (18). In a book that is replete with rather densely written passages, this chapter is especially dense and requires careful reading as it is pivotal to the authors' argument. Reformed catholicity calls for a retrieval of a proper sense of theological tradition upon the basis of an awareness that the church is a community gathered by Christ and indwelt by the Spirit. Without compromising the finality and sufficiency of Scripture, it is necessary to recognize that the Spirit of Christ, who is the "Spirit of truth," works through the Word in the history of the church, enabling the church to "hear" and "receive" the Word, to enter into its riches, and to harvest its fruit. This is the meaning of what Reformed orthodoxy termed the "internal cognitive principle of the church's theology" (*principium cognoscendi internum*) and the "the elicitive mind" of the church (*principium elicitivum* or the "renewed mind of the church") (32, 36-37). The task of theology properly belongs to and within the church. As the people of God, and in particular the church's teachers or doctors, read the Word of God throughout history, they do so as a common community whose life, including its theological inquiry and progress, depends upon the church-gathering work of Christ by his Spirit and Word. A proper appreciation for the work of Christ by his Spirit and Word warrants the conviction that "the processes and products" by which the church receives and transmits apostolic teaching are to be viewed as genuine "fruits of the Spirit" (45). While these fruits of the Spirit may not be identified *simpliciter* with the truth taught by the Spirit (making Christian tradition infallible and irreformable, not liable to Scriptural testing and critical judgment), they should be received with honor and respect.

Since Allen and Swain aim to offer a brief for "Reformed" catholicity, they are obliged to address the question of the relative value of the church's theological tradition and the primacy and supremacy of Scriptural authority. This is the preoccupation of the next two chapters of their book. In Chapter 2 ("Retrieving *Sola Scriptura,* Part One: The Catholic Context of *Sola Scriptura*") and Chapter 3 ("Retrieving *Sola Scriptura,* Part Two: Biblical Traditioning"), they present an argument for a carefully-circumscribed understanding of the Reformed principle of "Scripture alone." According to the authors, the principle of Scripture alone must not be confused with modern individualism, as though theologians are authorized to read the Scriptures alone and without an obligation to enter into a conversation with the Word of God that has a long history and many participants. Nor may this principle be confused with a "deistic" assumption that, once God by the Spirit and through the instrumentality of human authors provided the church with the canonical Scriptures, he abandoned the church to its own devices in respect to the reading and interpreting of them. In the early history of the Reformed tradition, they argue, the magisterial Reformers (e.g. Bucer, Bullinger, etc.) expressly opposed

an approach to theology that was individualistic or wedded to a "minimalist account of divine agency" (58). For them, "Scripture is the final source and authority for knowing God, but there is a catholic shape and context that involves the fullness of the church's life as the matrix within which the Scriptures are read and received" (59). Reformed theology recognized the appropriate authority exercised in the church by Christ's ministers and teachers of theology. They also embraced the ancient creeds of the church as their own, and carefully crafted new, church-sanctioned expressions of the faith in the Reformed confessions.

Allen and Swain conclude their case for Reformed catholicity by treating the subjects of the role of the church's confessions in theology (Chapter 4: "A Ruled Reading Reformed: The Role of the Church's Confession in Biblical Interpretation") and the permissibility of a disciplined, responsible practice of "proof-texting" in the formulation of the doctrines of Scripture (Chapter 5: "In Defense of Proof Texting"). Regarding the role of the church's confessions, they argue that "we should receive the rule of faith [*regula fidei*] as part of the Spirit's rich bounty for the church, grateful that he has provided for us, in Holy Scripture, not only a supreme and authoritative fountain for our faith, but that he has also provided for us a confessional standpoint toward Scripture from which we may profitably draw upon Scripture's 'pure spring of living water' " (116). While recognizing that proof-texting has often involved a misuse of the Scriptural texts cited (wresting them out of their canonical context, ignoring the diversity of biblical genre and forms, etc.), Allen and Swain offer a cogent case for the citation of biblical texts in support of doctrinal affirmations and formulations. Such citation of biblical "proofs" (*dicta probanta*) must take place within an approach to theology that is engaged by the history of exegesis, as well as new and direct exegetical treatments of the biblical writings. Rather than pitting biblical theology over against systematic or dogmatic theology, there should be a complementary relation between these distinct, yet legitimate, disciplines in their use of the Scriptures.

I hope this brief overview of Allen and Swain's book offers an accurate account of their thesis, with its supporting arguments, to justify my assessment of it in this review. While I have a couple of quibbles to offer regarding the book, my primary response is one of positive endorsement. As the person responsible to teach a course in "Theological Foundations" at Mid-America Reformed Seminary, I am always looking for a book that could serve well as a textbook. Upon reading this book, I immediately had something of a "eureka" moment—I have found just the book needed! Here is a book that offers a balanced account of the respective roles played in the discipline of theology by the Scriptures, the confessions, and the study of the history of Scriptural interpretation and theology throughout the history of the church. While affirming the finality and supremacy of the

Scriptures as the source and norm for Christian doctrine, the authors rightly emphasize the churchly context of the entire enterprise and value the way Christ by his Spirit has carried the church along throughout the history of its engagement with the Scriptures. I fully concur with the authors' desire to defend Reformed catholicity in the discipline of theology, which avoids the pitfalls of a traditionalism that diminishes Scriptural authority and of an individualistic Biblicism that diminishes the catholic tradition of the church. For this reason, I heartily recommend this book to any reader who is interested in the question of how theology needs to honor Scriptural authority and at the same time respect the inheritances of the church's reading of Scripture as genuine "fruits" of the Spirit's presence.

My two quibbles regarding the book are these. First, as one of the endorsements on the back cover of the book notes, the book is "densely argued" at times. Though this is a matter of judgment, I believe at some points the book could have profited from an editor with a keen eye for making the text more easily accessible to a broader audience of theological students. And second, on the specific question of the nature of subscription to the church's confessions, the authors mention briefly ongoing "debates about confessional subscription" in Reformed and Presbyterian churches. But they do not offer any elaboration of the nature of these debates, or what they would regard as a proper resolution of them. Given the importance of this topic to their general case for Reformed catholicity, I find this gloss of the question to be an unhappy omission from an otherwise outstanding case.

Cornelis P. Venema

Jordan J. Ballor, David S. Sytsma and Jason Zuidema, eds. *Church and School in Early Modern Protestantism: Studies in the Honor of Richard A. Muller on the Maturation of a Theological Tradition*. Leiden: Brill, 2013. Pp. xxx + 800, including index. $259.00.

Context is king. This adage holds true not only for exegetical studies, but for historical ones as well. For the past few decades, Richard A. Muller (P.J. Zondervan Professor of Historical Theology Emeritus at Calvin Theological Seminary) has challenged reductionistic methodologies of historical studies, which have abstracted theological principles from their historic context, with methodologically nuanced and historically accurate work in the Reformation and post-Reformation eras. This high-caliber historical methodology of Muller is well-presented in the first chapter of his book *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition: On the Work of Christ and the Order of Salvation* (which is itself a valuable resource to consult for those who may be unfamiliar with his method). Carl Trueman captures Muller's methodological

burden in his fine introduction to this *festschrift*: "It is only as one casts one's evidential and methodological net wider, beyond the mere words on the page of the massive doctrinal tomes, and acknowledges that ideas are actions performed in particular contexts as responses to specific circumstances in order to achieve certain intended ends, that one can start to formulate answers of any real adequacy" (xxix-xxx).

The stated purpose of the volume is "to broaden our understanding of how and why clergy were educated to serve the church," which serves as the unifying theme of the many essays presented, though some of the articles seem to go beyond this focus (back cover). Furthermore, this work is appropriately divided chronologically into five parts that extend from the Reformation through the era of Reformed Orthodoxy: Part I: First Generation Reformers (ca. 1517-1535); Part II: Second Generation Reformers (ca. 1535-1565); Part III: Early Orthodoxy (ca. 1565-1640); Part IV: High Orthodoxy (ca. 1640-1725); and Part V: Late Orthodoxy (ca. 1725-1790). There are an impressive fifty-two essays presented by scholars of varying institutional affiliations, reflecting the extensive reach of Muller's influence. Included also is an Introduction by Carl Trueman and a helpful bibliography of the works of Muller compiled by Paul W. Fields and Andrew M. McGinnis. Due to the sheer size of this volume this review will highlight a few noteworthy essays in each part with no intention of being exhaustive.

Part I contains six essays that center around Luther, his theological influence and the German context of the early Reformation. These articles analyze the reception of Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone by early Anglicans, Melanchthon's reform of the theological curriculum at the University of Wittenberg, the Reuchlin Affair and its influence on the controversy that ensued following the publication of Luther's 95 Theses, the various influences in Luther's Reforms that led to his breakthrough regarding the righteousness of God, the legacy of the Wittenberg ideals for preparing students for service to church and society, and François Lambert d'Avignon's open embrace of the doctrines of Reform and his subsequent work at the University of Marburg.

The second part contains an insightful essay by J. Mark Beach on the idea of general (or common) grace in the theologies of Heinrich Bullinger, Wolfgang Musculus and Peter Martyr Vermigli. He aptly demonstrates that each of these theologians were aware of and even employ either the terminology or the concept of a divine *generalis gratia*. Cornelis P. Venema contributed an article that responsibly looks at the peculiar organization of Calvin's *Institutes*, specifically his ordering of the dual benefits of union with Christ: sanctification and justification. He shows that Calvin had didactic, apologetic, and even rhetorical purposes for his ordering, arguing for their inseparability and simultaneity. Also contained in Part I are four essays on the Ital-

ian Reformer, Peter Martyr Vermigli. First, Frank A. James III, a leading expert on Vermigli, contributes an article on his importance to the doctrine of predestination. He quotes Muller as saying, "[It was not Calvin's but Vermigli's conception of predestination that] would eventually be enunciated as the confessional norm of Reformed theology" (165). In expounding Vermigli's doctrine of predestination he shows that while it was informed by Thomas Aquinas, he was influenced more by St. Paul, Augustine, and Gregory of Rimini. Second, Mark J. Larson argues that in Vermigli's treatise *Of War* "he not only reflected the methodological style of medieval scholastic theology, but he also made a deliberate attempt to reproduce the actual substance of Aquinas' teaching on the just war" (185). Third, Sebastian Rehnman analyzes Vermigli "to explicate the relation between moral philosophy and moral theology in Reformed orthodoxy" (199). Fourth, Jason Zuidema takes account of Vermigli's contribution to corporate worship and the Christian life by looking especially at his commentary on 1 Corinthians. Zuidema concludes, "Vermigli was one who was instrumental in shaping both the thought and the piety of the exiles who returned to remodel the Church of England in the reign of Elizabeth" (224).

Part III opens with a paper by Raymond A. Blacketer, which assesses recent historiographical shifts in the study of the early Reformed tradition. After stating five such shifts, he uses the "evolving depiction of Theodore Beza" to illustrate them. While Beza had earlier been caricatured as a villainous scholastic who "transformed Calvin's humanistic, biblical thought into a deductive, rationalistic system," a correct interpretation of Beza actually has him emerging as a practical academic, whose teaching demonstrated a remarkable pastoral sensitivity to the life of piety, especially in his handling of predestination and election. Charles D. Gunnoe Jr. contributed an interesting article that analyzes "the demographic history of the Swiss students and faculty of the University of Heidelberg" (255). He sheds light on the "major catalytic role" Swiss students and faculty had in advancing Heidelberg's renown as a Reformed institution in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (268). Lyle D. Bierma takes up the theology and piety of Zacharias Ursinus displayed in his *Summa Theologiae* by noting its pastoral, personal, experiential, practical and covenantal dimensions. He draws this conclusion: "What we find in the [*Summa Theologiae*] … is a theology of piety that made its way not only into a work by a major Protestant scholastic but also, and more remarkably, into the very arena in which [Ursinus] plied his trade—the classrooms of the highest schools in the land" (305). W. Robert Godfrey looks at the historical context of the Synod of Dort's perspective on covenant and election as expressed in Article 17 of the Canons of Dort. He provides the historical, theological, and biblical foundation for its formulation. "The article," writes Godfrey, "rejected the Arminian claim that the Reformed taught the

damnation of dying infants of Christians, answering a very serious pastoral and theological challenge. It offered a clear example that the Reformed doctrine of election did not undermine the promises of God's covenant, but rather confirmed Christian joy, assurance, and gratitude" (386). Worth pointing out also under Part III are the essays by Todd Rester on the *sensus literalis* and Yuzo Adhinarta on the often overlooked missional thrust of the Reformed confessions.

The fourth part includes an essay by Henry M. Knapp that reviews exegetical method in the seventeenth century. While such interpretation has traditionally been heavily critiqued and even viewed as a regress in biblical studies, Knapp reassesses these claims and through careful historical investigation shows the opposite to in fact be the case. He writes, "In Puritan theological writings, and throughout their examination of the scriptural text, the picture emerges of a biblical commentator thoroughly absorbed in, and shaped by, (1) precritical exegetical assumptions about the biblical text, (2) scholastic techniques which stretch back to the centuries prior to the Reformation, and (3) methods reflecting the humanistic advances of the Reformation and post-Reformation era" (549). Far from regressive, the exegetical method of the seventeenth century bears the healthy fruit of the Renaissance. Brian J. Lee supplied an article that looks at Johannes Cocceius and his polemical concerns, which were driven "by a deep commitment to the church's evangelistic calling" (567). Lee argues well that Cocceius "developed a complex, even scholastic, federal system for the most practical of churchly purposes—the conversion of Jews and other errant faiths" (568). Part IV also contains a worthwhile essay by Jordan J. Ballor on the soteriological debate between the "high" Calvinist George Kendall and the supposed mediating theologian, Richard Baxter, which centered on their differing understanding of the conditionality or unconditionality of the covenant and the instrumentality of faith. Ballor argues that it is irresponsible to sift Baxter through "a simple historiographical scheme absolutely identifying high Calvinism with Reformed orthodoxy and any dissenting theological positions with Arminian heterodoxy" (678). While you may come to disagree with some of Ballor's assessment of Baxter's theology, his essay still helps to illumine Baxter's historical context to allow for a more nuanced interpretation of his work.

The final section of the volume, Part V, contains an essay by Martin I. Klauber on Francis and Jean-Alphonse Turretin's views of the uniqueness of Christ. While the father, Francis Turretin, put forth a classic defense of the uniqueness of Christ in his *Institutio* against Arminianism, Salmurianism and Roman Catholicism, the son, Jean-Alphonse, came to starkly different conclusions on the same topic in his battle against Atheism and Deism. Both theologians thought in different historical milieus. For Jean-Alphonse, "[T]he old patterns of overly specific creeds such as the Formula Consensus were no longer useful in defending Reformed thought [as it was for his father]. The

next generation of theologians at Geneva … would develop a new system of enlightened orthodoxy that would emphasize a more practical faith, which was far removed from the old, tightly defended system" (705). This essay is fascinating in that it demonstrates the significance historical factors and context may have in the formulation of one's theology and even the errors these theologians fall into. Two other essays are worth pointing out: Adriaan C. Neele analyzes Jonathan Edwards' understanding of the nature of theology and Herman Selderhuis argues that "if Calvinism is not identified with Calvin, then the term can be used extremely well as a synonym, or better still, as a replacement, for the term 'Reformed Protestantism'" (735).

The above survey of just a small sampling of the articles in *Church and School* reflects the diversity and breadth needed in historical theological studies. Surprisingly in a work with so many contributors, a major strength is the clarity most of the essays exhibit. For the most part, the author lays out his thesis in the introduction with a tightly constructed sentence and then offers a concise concluding observation, which makes for enjoyable reading. Since the articles tend to be fairly narrow in their scope (which can either be a strength or weakness, depending on what someone is looking for) and the book falls on the expensive side, it may be best to peruse the table of contents for specific articles of interest and read them at the nearest library that carries this volume. However, working through the many essays and immersing yourself in responsible historical work will pay dividends in your own ability to do historical studies (especially within the Reformation and post-Reformation eras). Scholars, pastors, seminary students, and even educated laypeople generally spend more time reading the works of those theologians of the past who are much removed from their own contemporary context. This makes the ability to read historical works responsibly and non-reductionistically, that is, without abstracting principles from their unique historical context, very important. For this we are thankful for the work of Muller and the many contributors to this *festschrift* who help seat us upon the shoulders of the giants who have gone before us and help us develop and fine-tune our own ability to connect with the catholic church and be responsible members thereof.

Daniel J. Ragusa

J. H. Bavinck. *Between the Beginning and the End: A Radical Kingdom Vision.* Trans. Bert Hielema. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. Pp. x + 146. $20.00.

Though J. H. Bavinck is a lesser-known figure than his uncle, Herman Bavinck, he is rightly described on the back cover of this translation of his essays on the kingdom of God as "the premier twentieth-century missiologist in the Dutch Calvinist tradition." J. H. Bavinck is best known for his book, *An Introduction to the Science of Missions*, which has served for several generations as a basic textbook in Reformed missiology. However, as the essays in this book illustrate, J. H. Bavinck was also the author of a wide variety of books that exhibit a keen mind and a bracing vision for the calling of the church in the world.

As the subtitle of this English translation of his *De Mensch in zijn Wereld* (lit.: "Man in His World") suggests, Bavinck focuses upon the large question of the nature of the kingdom of God and the calling of human beings to live out of its reality. In the first chapter ("The Eternal in History"), Bavinck sets forth a comprehensive vision of what it means to be a human being, created in the image of God and given the task to care for God's creation. This vision includes a profound awareness of the movement of history under God's sovereign, all-inclusive lordship, from the original state that obtained before the fall of man into sin, to the state subsequent to the fall of being restored to favor with God and on the way to the eschatological glory of God's kingdom in its fullness.

Bavinck describes accurately the focus of his book, when he says, "I would like to reflect on how the Bible sees us as human beings, seeking to understand how the Bible views us and what the Bible tells us about ourselves. One thing has already become clear: the Bible regards us both as being in history and standing before the face of God" (4). In the biblical worldview, history has a beginning point and an eschatological goal, and the calling of human beings is to live before God in this time-between-the-times, looking forward to and being enlisted by God in service to the coming of his kingdom. Within the context of the human fall into sin through the disobedience of Adam, we must view history as the "record of that single person, of *adam* in all his or her wanderings and experiences, in all his or her struggles and hopes, in all victories and defeats, in creativity and thinking—it is the life story of *adam*" (13).

At first glance, Bavinck's description of history—and the calling of human beings as image-bearers of God to work within the framework of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation—might seem to ascribe too much significance to the contribution of human beings to the coming of God's kingdom. However, in the remaining chapters of the book, Bavinck develops the theme of God's kingdom (past, present, and future) in terms of the biblical story of the coming of Christ

and his work of redemption in restoring his people to fellowship with God and life within the contours of his coming kingdom. In these chapters, Bavinck demonstrates a remarkable ability to follow the thread of the biblical story of redemption, centered in Jesus Christ and aimed at the coming new world of God's eternal kingdom.

The remaining ten chapters following the first can be divided into two categories: 1) Chapters 2 and 3 describe the biblical themes of the temple and the kingdom of God; and 2) Chapters 4-11 describe the person and work of Christ as the true Adam, the man of God's choosing, through whom the people of God are renewed in communion with God and furnished for their calling or office as "partakers of Christ's anointing" by the Holy Spirit. In his exposition of these themes, Bavinck offers a splendid *tour de force* of the gospel of God's restoration of a new humanity in Christ that is destined for life in the new heavens and earth. For the purpose of this review, I will focus only upon Bavinck's handling of the themes of the temple and the kingdom of God. Bavinck's exposition of these themes is illustrative of his keen insight into the biblical story of God's mission to renew his people for service within the world and in view of his coming kingdom.

The theme of the temple of God is developed by Bavinck in Chapter 2 ("The Language of the Old Testament Symbols"). In this chapter, Bavinck demonstrates the close and intimate connection between the temple and the original Garden of Eden or paradise. The temple symbolizes the reality of God's dwelling in the midst of his people, and his people living before the face of God. But this motif of a communion or fellowship of life between God and man, his image-bearer, is not isolated from the world God created or the priestly-kingly calling of man in tending the garden of creation to God's glory. As Bavinck describes it, "The Holy Place is indeed the church's domain: the church has her place there; she lives out her priestly function there; her light shines there; and she dedicates her life to God there. But the Holy Place could not be there if the altar were not in the outer court of the Temple and if the cross were not planted in the world. Because of that, the church now breathes in the pure atmosphere of the Holy Place. She is no longer in the world, but she is not yet in paradise [regained]. She is in between these two, and she longs for the moment when the entire world will be paradise and she may appear before God's face" (26). What Bavinck wants to impress upon his readers is that the Old Testament Temple and the New Testament church represent the particular place where God has restored his people, the new humanity, to their proper dwelling place in his presence. But the Temple and the church are not ends in themselves; they are the centerpiece of a new world, which will be in the proper sense of the term, a "creation-temple" whose every inhabitant and square inch will be stamped "holy unto the Lord." In this creation-temple of God's gracious making, there will be no remainder of sin or

the curse, of the brokenness of human life under God's judgment and the deleterious effects of disobedience to God's holy law.

After treating the biblical theme of the temple, Bavinck turns to the theme of the kingdom of God in Chapter 3. In his development of this theme, Bavinck begins with a basic definition of the kingdom as an expression of God's sovereign rule over the entire cosmos. The meaning of creation itself is integrally linked to God's kingdom reign over all things. The kingdom includes the ideas of God's sovereign rule, the creation in its entirety as the realm of his kingdom, and of man as the image-bearer of God, uniquely qualified and commissioned to exercise dominion over the world throughout history on God's behalf. What we often term the "cultural mandate" is the office assigned to man to tend the garden of God's creation and bring forth its potential, offering himself and his labor to God as a spiritual service. Describing the task of man as God's image-bearer, Bavinck argues that humans "are simultaneously *subjects* and to some extent *co-rulers*, viceroys over certain regions. … [T]he earth and its plants and animals have been assigned to us, given for us to rule over and to use for God's service, to fathom and understand creation's hidden powers, and so to bring to full development the innate possibilities of creation" (29). Against the background of the original state of God's creation-kingdom, the fall of Adam represented the introduction of a counter-kingdom which, in its opposition to the kingdom of God, has had disastrous implications for the flourishing of human life in service to God. Accordingly, the biblical story of redemption in Christ is the story of restoration and renewal: the restoration of human life in fellowship with God and the renewal of human life in subjection to Jesus Christ.

For this reason, Christ is the central focus of Scripture, the one through whom God's kingdom comes and is ultimately realized in its fullness. Describing the work of Christ in relation to the kingdom, Bavinck says: "He stands in the place between the breakup of the kingdom through sin and the healing of the kingdom at the end of time. There he stands, dead center, at the very place where God restores the kingdom through him and in him. There he gathers all the world's nations under his authority; there he makes the entire cosmos in all her strata subject to him, and, once he has accomplished this—when the world is once again in total harmony—he will place it at the feet of God the Father" (42).

While my sketch of these chapters provides only a sampling of Bavinck's understanding of the biblical story of redemption, I hope it is sufficient to encourage the desire to read his book firsthand. Whether or not you agree with all of his conclusions regarding the biblical vision of the kingdom of God, Bavinck's work offers a stimulating and rich re-telling of the biblical account of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. The translation from the Dutch by Bert Hielema is indeed "outstanding—readable, fluid, clear, forceful,

and compelling" (book jacket). Within the context of contemporary debates about the kingdom of God, Bavinck's work, which is representative of the best of the "neo-Calvinist" revival in the Netherlands in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, makes an important contribution. Not the least part of this contribution is the way Bavinck grounds his understanding of the coming of God's kingdom entirely in the work of Jesus Christ, the true man from heaven in whom the destiny of human life in fellowship with God is graciously given to us. Contrary to a common complaint against neo-Calvinism, Bavinck views the kingdom of God as, from first to last, a marvelous display of God's gracious purposes in Jesus Christ for his people and for his world.

Cornelis P. Venema

Philip Walker Butin. *Revelation, Redemption, and Response: Calvin's Trinitarian Understanding of the Divine-Human Relationship*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. Pp. vii + 232. $120.00 (cloth).

In this revision of his Duke doctoral dissertation, Philip Walker Butin, formerly the President of San Francisco Theological Seminary, argues that John Calvin constructed his understanding of the divine-human relationship according to a comprehensively applied Trinitarian model. Contending that this interpretation has been largely ignored in Calvin scholarship, Butin's study aims to encourage within the contemporary church a renewed appreciation for historical Trinitarian formulations, as well as an imaginative appropriation of these truths for Christian doctrine, worship, and praxis (7).

Butin's three-part study begins historically and systematically by locating his Trinitarian model in the history of Calvin scholarship, much of which has ascribed a central place to the divine-human relationship. In contrast to prevailing "dialectical" constructions of Calvin's thought, which have emphasized the Creator-creature divide *simpliciter*, Butin finds it more historically accurate to read Calvin's extensive Trinitarian paradigm for grasping the divine-human relationship within the economy of redemption. Calvin's use of the doctrine of the Trinity to elucidate "the basis, pattern, and dynamic" of God's reconciliatory relationship with sinful humanity is best described as *economic-trinitarian* (21). Following his analysis of these themes in the 1536 *Institutes* and in the Trinitarian controversies of Calvin's ministry, the author finally uncovers Calvin's proclivity to borrow from both "Eastern" and "Western" exegetical traditions, which, Butin argues, caused Calvin to articulate the eternal interpenetration or *perichoresis* of the distinct Trinitarian *hypostaseis* (Butin's favored term, corresponding to Calvin's use of *persona*) in the economic work of God *ad extra* (a relatively "Eastern" idea) while

still maintaining the relational emphasis on the "distinction of properties" (more akin to "Western" Trinitarianism). Addressing the wider purpose of Butin's investigation, these latter considerations demonstrate Calvin's commitment to follow Patristic and pro-Nicene precedent in his defense of the Trinity as a paradigm for grasping the divine-human relationship in its redemptive context.

Part Two expounds the threefold shape of Calvin's economic-trinitarian paradigm. Here, Butin develops his notion of the Trinitarian "basis, pattern, and dynamic" of the divine-human relationship by expositing Calvin's understanding of the integrated operations *ad extra* of the Trinitarian *hypostaseis*. Not surprisingly, it is the Trinitarian creedal structure of Books I-III of Calvin's 1559 *Institutes* that informs the author's case in this section. Calvin identified God the Father as the effective principle of divine action and as the source and object of divine revelation whereby sinful humanity's knowledge of God is restored. Similarly, the Son, as the *logos* or Word, acts as "the wisdom, counsel, and ordered arrangement" of the divine operation, embodying God's redemptive purposes in his own work of mediation (51). And Calvin ascribes to the Holy Spirit power and efficacy for restoring sinners to God and for enabling their willing and obedient response to the divine call. Thus, with respect to the perichoretically-unified work of the three Trinitarian *hypostaseis*, the Father conveys the Trinitarian *basis*, the Son the Trinitarian *pattern*, and the Spirit the Trinitarian *dynamic* of the divine-human relationship.

Butin's final section looks to Book IV of the 1559 *Institutes* as evidence that Calvin's economic-trinitarian paradigm was applied even to his discussion of practical means of grace, which he also interpreted "in terms of the perichoretically variegated yet unified action of the triune God" (97). Calvin believed that God's restorative Trinitarian relationship with human beings comes to expression through various experiential means. The church, for example, is the visible institution in which, through Word and sacrament, believers receive the promises and benefits of divine grace. Likewise, baptism and its corresponding catechesis indicate the outworking of God's Trinitarian grace in the believer's life as belief and praxis progressively intertwine. Finally, in Eucharistic communion, believers visibly and effectually experience the Father's bestowal of divine grace, which they receive on account of union with Christ, by the bond of the Holy Spirit.

Well-researched, closely argued, and coherent, Butin's stimulating, yet dense study ably highlights the importance of Calvin's Trinitarian understanding of the divine-human relationship for his broader theology and practice. Thoroughly grounded in Calvin's major systematic, exegetical, and polemical writings, the work pays scant attention to Calvin's sermons—a curious omission, considering Butin's appeal to the importance of Calvin's economic-trinitarian paradigm for Christian belief, worship, and praxis. While the study offers a considerable challenge to scholarship that would isolate Calvin's var-

ious doctrinal *loci* from his pervasive Trinitarian affirmations, this reader is wary of its persistent claim that Calvin's notions of the economic-soteriological and perichoretically-unified operations of the Trinitarian *hypostaseis* constitute the supposed "frame" of his overall theology. Butin charges Calvin at various points with inconsistency for failing to "integrate" his doctrine (say) of *election* with his broad "perichoretically trinitarian paradigm" (66, 168, 189). The striking lack of explicit and pervasive perichoretic terminology in Calvin's works intimates, however, that Butin's book, even despite its awareness of the problems inherent in "central dogma" approaches to Calvin's theology, has not ultimately avoided superimposing a broad organizational pattern that Calvin did not definitively claim for his own work. Nevertheless, this study remains a constructive contribution to Calvin scholarship.

Timothy R. Scheuers

J.V. Fesko. *The Theology of the Westminster Standards: Historical Context and Theological Insights*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2014. Pp. 448. $28.00.

John Fesko, a professor of systematic and historical theology at Westminster Seminary California, has produced a helpful volume illumining the historical and theological substratum that underlay the Westminster Standards (meaning both the Larger and Shorter Catechisms in addition to the Confession of Faith). This is a different sort of volume than the one by Chad Van Dixhoorn on the Confession of Faith, also reviewed in this issue. Not only is it different because it covers the Standards as a whole, but also because it is not a detailed exposition of them; rather, it is an exploration of the history and theology that informs the Westminster Standards and should prove useful to those interested in such.

This book is not appropriate for youth in the same way G.I. Williamson's has been, or Van Dixhoorn's may become. Rather, this is a book for the college or seminary class, the pastor's study, or intelligent laymen who are interested and wish to learn about these things. Dr. Fesko does an excellent job exposing the theological underpinnings of what is given expression in the Standards. To compare this with Van Dixhoorn's work below on the same point, Dr. Fesko *does*, for example, have a discussion about the theological construct of republicationism—the contention that the covenant of works in some sense is republished in the Sinaitic covenant—in his treatment of Chapters 7 (on the covenants) and 19 (on the law of God). Van Dixhoorn, as noted below, does not deal with this because his work has a different purpose. It seems appropriate that republication be

treated here in Fesko's work (whether one agrees with his position on this or not—elsewhere I have said that I regard at least some forms of republicationism as extra-confessional not contra-confessional) because this has historically been an important part of the theological interplay in these chapters.

Mention of the republication discussion calls to mind the theological diversity that existed at the Westminster Assembly. Many of us have rightly rejected the "Calvin vs. the Calvinists" dichotomy of earlier years and have affirmed, particularly in light of the scholarship of Richard Muller, that such is false. That there was an essential harmony between Calvin and the Calvinists, however, does not mean that Reformed theology was monolithic in the 16th and 17th centuries. No, there was significant theological development from the 16th to the 17th century. Witness, for example, the development of federal theology in these years, impacting topics like republication and the imputation of the active obedience of Christ in justification. It's just that such development tended to be on the same trajectory and not a rejection of earlier theological insights. Similarly, there was much diversity within Reformed bounds (which is to say, within a proper unity) that was clearly reflected at the Westminster Assembly of Divines. Fesko does a good job of exposing the legitimate and dynamic theological diversity that existed within the unity (within the doctrinal boundaries) of the Westminster Standards. Such is seen in the republication question, matters of church and state, and in a number of other areas.

With respect to the church and state question, Fesko is quick to adduce the two-kingdom view, certainly some form of which was held by a number of those at the Assembly, especially the Scottish commissioners (they were non-voting delegates, it should be noted). Fesko perhaps should be a bit more careful here to note that all two-kingdom supporters in the 17th century tended to be partisans of both an established church and Christian commonwealth, with the Scottish men supporting the National Covenant (and the whole Assembly, in fact, the Solemn League and Covenant). Such a commitment casts two-kingdom theory in a wholly different light than our current situation does. So for those who affirm, "Gillespie had a two-kingdom theory and so do I," they must recognize that it is not the same two-kingdom theory as Gillespie held, if the modern holder of it believes, as most do, in a disestablished church and in the secularization of the state.

If a secular state is not permissible, and such would not have been permissible or desirable either to the Scots or the English, two-kingdom theory assumes a totally different complexion for them than it does for us. They would, in other words, have had a way of relating the two kingdoms so that they are complementary in a way that we do not in a disestablished church and a secularized state. One is not at all certain, then, that the Westminster divines would have promul-

gated their two-kingdom thesis as they did had such secularized conditions then prevailed. This is not the only instance in Fesko's work of what appears to be some willingness to martial history in support of current debates in ways that may seem de-historicized. We have to be very careful in this regard not to decontextualize history and recontextualize it in the support of our particular theories in the fashion of a Procrustean bed. History is indeed a trip to a foreign country and we must always recognize the differences that may obtain between our debates of today and those back then, and not simply import debates of yesteryear into our current disputes as if all the terms of the debate have remained the same across the centuries.

Having said all that, I find this to be a careful and most useful work. Fesko has read well in the theology and history of the time and is generally thoughtful and judicious in his use of it. He has plumbed the depths of scholarship, much of it recent, with respect to matters such as God's decrees, the imputation of the active obedience of Christ in justification, the church and sacraments, etc., making use of the latest research and many 17th century sources not easily available earlier but now made accessible through the digital revolution. That Dr. Fesko has put his work in all these primary and secondary sources treating the Standards at our disposal puts us in his debt and we are grateful for what he has given us in this fine volume.

Alan D. Strange

Simon Gathercole. *Defending Substitution: An Essay on Atonement in Paul*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015. Pp. 128, including bibliography, Subjects, Authors, and Scripture and Other Ancient Sources indexes. $19.99.

In recent theological treatments of the atoning work of Jesus Christ, considerable debate has taken place regarding the substitutionary nature of Christ's death upon the cross. A common argument among many biblical and systematic theologians is that Christ's death was "representative" but not "substitutionary" in the traditional sense of the term. In their view, it is permissible to say that believers are identified with and participate in the death of Christ. This identity with and participation in Christ's death is possible by virtue of the fact that Christ represented us. As Paul says in Romans 6:8, "We have *died with* Christ." However, the death of Christ was not substitutionary in the sense that Christ died *in our place* and on our behalf so that we are no longer subject to the kind of death he suffered. For these theologians, the death of Christ is not, strictly speaking, substitutionary in such a way that believers no longer need to suffer and die in the way Christ suffered and died for us.

Due to the importance of this question for the doctrine of the atonement, it is gratifying that Simon Gathercole has written this defense of the substitutionary nature of Christ's work. Gathercole, who is senior lecturer in New Testament studies in the Faculty of Divinity of the University of Cambridge, is eminently qualified for the task. As the title of his book indicates, Gathercole aims to provide a defense of the substitutionary nature of the death of Christ, and to do so on the basis of a careful study of the New Testament epistles of the apostle Paul.

The outline and procedure of Gathercole's study is quite simple. After an introductory chapter, which defines the terms of the debate and outlines the way he wishes to address it, Gathercole begins with a summary of the exegetical challenges to substitution (Chapter 1). He then addresses these challenges on the basis of a careful reading of two passages in Paul's epistles, 1 Corinthians 15:3 (Chapter 2) and Romans 5:6-8 (Chapter 3). Upon the basis of his interpretation of these key passages in Paul's writings, Gathercole concludes with an affirmation of the doctrine of substitution as an integral feature of the biblical understanding of Christ's work of atonement.

In the introduction to his study, Gathercole notes that the theme of substitution is an important one for two reasons. First, it is "vital" to our understanding of New Testament teaching about Christ's work. And second, it has important pastoral implications for Christian assurance. If Christ's work was performed in part as a work of substitution, then believers may be assured that what Christ endured is no longer required of them. According to Gathercole, the idea of substitution is that Christ "did something, underwent something, so that we did not and would never have to do so" (15). In the history of Christian theology, a variety of definitions of Christ's work of substitution have been identified. Most commonly, it is viewed as a "penal" substitution, which means that Christ bore the punishment due to those on whose behalf he suffered. It is also often associated with the controversial theme of "propitiation," which means that Christ appeased or satisfied the wrath of God on behalf of his people. Remarkably, Gathercole notes in his introduction that his sole focus will be upon the theme of substitution, and not upon such themes as punishment, propitiation, or satisfaction. As he observes, "The investigation here is to be focused not on these other themes but quite narrowly and specifically on substitution. We will go on to see that atonement in the Bible—at least, specifically in Paul—is to be understood not only in terms of Christ's taking our place as a *representative* but also in Christ's taking our place as a *substitute*" (23).

Since Gathercole limits his study to a biblical defense of the theme of substitution, he begins with a chapter that addresses several "exegetical challenges to substitution." Within the setting of contemporary theology, three such challenges are especially important: 1) the teaching of several Tübingen biblical theologians who empha-

size the representative "place-taking" of Christ, who in a special way "identifies" with us in his work of atonement; 2) Morna Hooker's view that Christ's death involved his "interchange" with us by going to the "place where we are" and taking us from there to salvation; and 3) the "apocalyptic paradigm," which emphasizes Christ's death as the means to defeat the hostile powers, including death itself, that are arrayed against us. While the third of these exegetical challenges has a long pedigree in Christian theology, and is often associated with the "Christus Victor" theme in atonement theology, the first two are more recent developments within the orbit of biblical studies on the atonement. In the concluding section of the opening chapter, Gathercole sets the stage for his argument in Chapters 2 and 3. In Gathercole's estimation, all three of these exegetical challenges to substitution share a common problem: they do not reckon with the way Christ's atoning death addresses the problem of human "sins" or "transgressions" of God's holy law. "Despite the merits of these three [challenges], they each have their own problems as well as a problem in common. This is the downplaying of 'sins.' It is a feature of representative understandings of the atonement that they are more corporate in nature. They are therefore not necessarily particularly well equipped to incorporate reference to that aspect of the human plight that consists of human sins" (53-54).

The heart of Gathercole's study lies in the following chapters. In Chapter 2, Gathercole considers the importance of 1 Corinthians 15:3 for the theme of substitution. Since 1 Corinthians 15:3 offers a comprehensive statement of the gospel that the apostle Paul proclaimed, it is of special significance for ascertaining how central the theme of substitution is to Paul's understanding of Christ's work of atonement. In his treatment of this passage, Gathercole addresses two questions. To what is Paul referring, when he speaks of Christ's death for our sins "according to the Scriptures"? And what is the implication of Paul's language, when he says that Christ died "for our sins"? To the first of these questions, Gathercole answers by arguing that the likeliest background to Paul's understanding of Christ's death in this passage is Isaiah 53. The language Paul uses is reminiscent of Isaiah's prophecy concerning the "suffering servant" who willingly dies in the place and on behalf of those who have transgressed God's law. As to the implications of this for the doctrine of substitution, Gathercole maintains that it is "when this is set in the framework of *one person* doing this for the sins *of others* (*and not for one's own*) that the substitutionary sense is achieved. Moreover, when it is *Christ* who dies for our sins, the sense is not only that Christ died *in consequence of* our sins but that because of this he also thereby deals with them once and for all" (74).

The second passage Gathercole treats is Romans 5:6-8. In this passage, Paul speaks of Christ's death in terms that require the idea of a vicarious act in which he takes the place of the "ungodly." Paul

says, "For although we were still weak, yet at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly [*huper asebōn*]. For scarcely will anyone die for a righteous person [*huper dikaiou*], though for a good person [*huper tou agathou*] someone might perhaps even dare [*tolmāi*] to die. But God demonstrates his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us [*huper hēmōn*]." In his consideration of this passage, Gathercole argues that Paul is alluding to the motif of vicarious deaths in the classical Greek tradition. Remarkably, Paul simultaneously alludes to and subverts this tradition by speaking of Christ's substitutionary death in the place of persons who are unworthy sinners. The sheer graciousness of Christ's act of substitution is accented by the unlikely persons for whom Christ demonstrates the willingness to die. As Gathercole summarizes it, "The theme of vicarious death overall, however, is radically subverted by Paul. In the examples from classical literature, there is first the relationship, and this relationship provides the context that makes the vicarious death at least understandable, even if it is still heroic. In the case of Christ, however, his death does not conform to any existing philosophical norm. In Romans 5, Christ's death creates a friendship where there had been enmity" (105-6).

Upon the basis of these two passages in Paul, Gathercole concludes that the theme of substitution is an important, integral one in the New Testament's understanding of Christ's work of atonement. There are other themes and motifs, of course, in the New Testament that provide complementary accounts of Christ's atonement (e.g., his victory over the powers of darkness, the representative nature of his self-identification with us, etc.). But the theme of substitution deserves to be included among them, as an important feature of the doctrine of Christ's saving work.

In my estimation, Gathercole has provided an important, and for the most part, compelling case for the importance of the theme of substitution in the New Testament's understanding of Christ's atoning work. In this respect, he has successfully fulfilled his limited aim, which is to provide a defense of this theme's place in New Testament teaching. The limited scope of Gathercole's study, however, is also one of the book's primary weaknesses. By refusing to elaborate upon the nature of Christ's substitution (To pay the wages of sin? To suffer the condemnation and death due us for our transgressions? To appease the wrath of God? To reconcile us to God?), Gathercole's study leaves some big questions unaddressed. Since Gathercole's aim is deliberately limited, and since he approaches the subject within the confines of present scholarly discussion among biblical theologians, his study bypasses broader historical and theological questions relating to the theme of substitution. Despite this limitation, Gathercole's

study makes a worthy contribution to our understanding of what Christ has done for us by his vicarious death.

Cornelis P. Venema

Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald, eds. *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013. Pp. xxiv + 616. $49.99.

This work epitomizes the understanding that the New Testament documents are historically rooted in the first-century. Contributors repeatedly assert that historical or sociological knowledge of the topics addressed are necessary for properly understanding the New Testament documents. Although perhaps this point is overstated, not many would deny the validity of the importance of the historical roots of the New Testament. Editors Green and McDonald have assembled a world class set of contributors—too many to name—to address topics in which they are proficient.

The book begins foundationally with an introduction by Green and McDonald and a sketch of New Testament chronology by McDonald. The book then falls into five parts. The first addresses exile and Jewish heritage, the second addresses Roman Hellenism, the third addresses Jews in the context of Roman Hellenism, the fourth addresses the literary context of early Christianity, and the fifth provides summary articles on geographical areas relevant for New Testament research. Appendices provide information on money and measurements in the first century, as well as a glossary. Each chapter concludes with an annotated bibliography explaining sources for further research.

Each article averages about ten or twelve pages and most contain pictures, illustrations, or charts. The editors did well not to choose topics that overlap much, so each chapter provides new, relevant information. Newer students will appreciate the relative ease with which these chapters may be read, and the contributors are generally helpful by focusing on primary source evidence more than recent scholarly debates. For example, S. Bartchy's article on slaves and slavery in the Roman world discusses several facts and figures derived from primary source documents, while briefly touching on how older and more recent scholarship has interpreted this evidence. This seems to be the most helpful way to present the topics to beginning students.

However, while there is an emphasis on primary source evidence, some biases inevitably arise, albeit only occasionally. For example, McDonald's discussion of pseudonymous writings tentatively suggests that they exist in the New Testament (presupposing some debated letters are not by the stated author) and that this was not a

fraudulent practice, but a standard Jewish and Christian practice. However, he claims the mid-fourth century is when the church started rejecting known pseudonymous writings (375), and that this was "remarkable." But he omits evidence from the second and third century that shows conscious canonical rejection of pseudonymous writings (*e.g., Mur. Can.* 64-65; Eusebius, *H. E.* 6.12.3; Tertullian, *De baptismo* 17; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 4.36). Thus, readers should be aware that perhaps not all evidence is presented by the contributors, and that the evidence that is presented is inevitably interpreted via biases, whether good or bad. In line with this issue, one major gap in the book is a discussion of methodology for applying historical data to New Testament interpretation. Students who acquire this background knowledge need to be taught how to apply it and how to discover biases in the interpretation of data so they can make cautious decisions when applying this knowledge to New Testament interpretation. Other biases are evident throughout the book that readers should be aware of, just as the assumption of a late date for the canonization of the Old Testament (after the council of Jamnia [AD 89]), and the acceptance of the evolutionary model of Jahwism when discussing monotheism (79).

Aside from this issue, this work is exceptionally helpful for the beginning student in New Testament. Since each topic is addressed by a scholar proficient in that topic, this book is more specialized than other books that address the same topics but are written by one or two authors. One of the more difficult subjects to grasp, New Testament geography, is addressed at length with a chapter each on Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Cilicia and Cyprus, the province and cities of Asia, Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Rome. These chapters are essential reading for understanding the historical nature of Paul's missionary journeys and ministry. Each chapter is full of maps, real-life pictures from the region, and explanation on why the region is important for New Testament investigation.

I would recommend this textbook for use in the classroom, with the caveat that one should beware of a few biases throughout the book which some may not wish to introduce uncritically to beginning students. This work is probably one of the best of its kind now in print.

Todd Scacewater

Bradley J. Gundlach. *Process and Providence: The Evolution Question at Princeton, 1845-1929*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013. Pp. xiv + 352, including bibliography, index and supplemental index: subjects by thinkers. $39.00.

This is a thoroughly researched, well-written, and carefully reasoned examination of the evolution question at Princeton. Princeton—both the college (university, after 1896) and the seminary, though not precisely the same on the issue—developed its thought along largely complementary lines. Princeton embraced process and development, both in terms of devolution and evolution, as a mechanism employed by God in his providential ordering and governing of the world. It rejected, at the same time, any form of evolutionism that rejected supernaturalism, claiming to be a closed system, with the process of evolution pretending to be able to explain origins and development without any need for God to begin it or continue it. This is what Charles Hodge meant, in his last published work, when in answer to the question, "What is Darwinism?" he declared, "It is atheism!"

In all of this, however, Princeton always distinguished the mechanism of evolution from the worldview of evolutionism. With respect to the former, Princeton believed that the scientist should be free to do his work and if some form of evolution seemed to explain the observable data of nature, and many Princetonians thought that it did, the scientist should see this as the way God providentially worked in the world he had created. With respect to the latter (the worldview of evolutionism), the Princetonians correctly did not see such as "science" but as "ideology" imposing itself on the data of science. As to evolution as a mechanism, the Princetonians tended to believe that the Bible did not teach any particular mechanism, nor did it rule out any, expect the purely natural.

God was the first cause of all things, to be sure, but in his providence he may have been pleased to employ a variety of secondary causes that believing scientists are free to explore. As a part of such an approach, the Princetonians did not think that the Scriptures taught any particular length for the creation days and did not believe that the Scriptures established the age of the earth. In fact, most Princeton men tended to believe that creation, and the earth as part of it, was quite old, and that extensive inter-species evolution had occurred, if not evolution from one species to another (they did not necessarily assume that the language in Genesis of "after its own kind," as a non-technical way of speaking, precisely coincided with technical scientific terminology like "genus" and "species"; perhaps it better fit with "family," the point being that this needed to be argued and not simply assumed and asserted).

The Princeton professors believed that scientists who were Christians were bound never to teach anything contrary to the Word. At the same time, the Princetonians taught that the Word itself did not set forth any particular scientific model of creation or the development that followed it. The kind of flood geology, for instance, that certain Reformed Christians developed later in the twentieth century and that finds expression at a place like the Creation Museum near Cincinnati, Ohio would be evaluated by the Princetonians as would

any other scientific theory. Flood geology, however, does not present itself as "a theory that does not contradict the Bible," but portrays itself as "that which the Bible teaches." The Princetonians would observe that the Bible does not give us any particular geology and that the best that scientists working from a Christian perspective can do is to work with hypotheses and theories that don't manifestly contradict the Scriptures, i.e., are not anti-supernaturalistic and embracive of other ontological or epistemological commitments that are at variance with the Bible.

Basically the Princetonians, while rejecting the anti-supernaturalism of a science that had fully embraced the Enlightenment and secularization, did not offhandedly dismiss evolution (or development) as a mechanism employed by God. What they dismissed out of hand was naturalistic evolutionism as a worldview, given that such naturalism is anti-theistic. Princeton did not find the notion of development or evolution to be anti-biblical and thus they did not find it to be anti-theistic. They did find Darwinism, the predominant form of naturalism, to be such and thus rejected it.

One may opine, as many have, that the Princetonians were overly optimistic about the possibilities of science and religion continuing to cohere, as they had in previous centuries. The skepticism that some would argue inhered in Enlightenment thought had by the nineteenth century developed into full-blown antitheism and the process of secularization had markedly impacted the sciences. Princeton, many have argued, did not seem ready or suited for the full development of modernism and the Nietzschean challenge that followed: they remain mired in Scottish Common Sense Realism, a philosophical approach ill-suited to deal with these antitheistic challenges. While there is a measure of truth in this, recent researches by Gundlach and others (especially Paul Helseth, one of the architects of the recent paradigm shift with respect to Princeton's view of "right reason") have shown that Princeton was not captive to rationalism or evidentialism as earlier argued, but was profoundly biblical and confessional in its theology and anthropology (and thus not as epistemologically naïve as earlier assumed).

To be sure, Princeton may not have been as alert as it should have been to the claims of a secularized naturalistic science, failing to realize that its claims of neutrality were not as innocuous as they purported to be. This does not mean, however, that Princeton was utterly caught unawares respecting antitheistic ontology and epistemology. Perhaps the better takeaway for us who are quite alert to the antithesis present in modernist and post-modernist thought is that common grace is also present in all scientific work and even the antitheist can, given our great and good God, produce much of value. We must not dismiss unbelieving science out of hand as many in our circles tend to do. Even those with presuppositions at variance with the Scriptures live in God's world and are constrained to do God's

will. Thus we can learn from the scientist (a good lesson to remember from Princeton). On the other hand, simply because someone is a Christian does not mean that his scientific hypotheses and theorizing are all correct.

As noted above, the model presented by flood geology has to seek to justify itself as does any scientific theory. It simply will not do to say, "The Bible teaches flood geology." This is simply not true. The Bible does not teach such, because the Bible does not give us scientific data or a scientific methodology. The best that one who is a Christian and a scientist can do with respect to this is to forward a theory of geology, biology or the like that does not appear to contradict Scripture. He can never honestly say, "Here, all that I am giving you in my text or my museum, is what happened, whether at the creation or at the flood, and this explains all observable data and this is how it explains it." We know from the Princetonians that this is a misuse of the Bible, as well as is arguing for Darwinism or other forms of naturalism, all of which deny the God of the Bible. Gundlach sets this all before us with clarity, depth, understanding, and relevance. This is indeed a fascinating book that I would recommend especially to all pastors and seminarians.

Alan D. Strange

D.G. Hart. *Calvinism: A History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013. Pp. 339 + xii. $40.00 (cloth).

Darryl Hart, a ruling elder in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), who has written extensively on American Presbyterian History, including Machen and the OPC, has now written a single, relatively concise, volume treating Calvinism and its spread. Hart casts his narrative in three phases. "In the first, Calvinism took root in settings where church reform was tethered to efforts to establish political autonomy. Although Reformed Protestant churches began across Europe, only those in Scotland, the Netherlands, England, and part of Switzerland and Germany became home to the most enduring branches of Calvinism." Hart sees the older model of Christendom as an "entanglement of church and state" that "became a burden." This brings us into our second phase in which "Calvinists adopted new models for extending their beliefs. Some of them were intentional. Others were the consequence of setting up churches in colonial governments or evangelizing the non-European peoples." In the third phase, "Reformed Protestants adjusted once again, this time to the rise of secular political orders prompted by the revolutions of the eighteenth century" (xii).

Hart sees the contribution of Calvinism, in no small measure, as overcoming both the Roman Catholic view of the church over the

state and the Erastian view of the state over the church, to embrace a view that included the complete disestablishment of the church, a position that "successfully disentangled Reformed churches from the patronage of the state, becoming the inspiration for communions around the world." Though "several gifted leaders" among the Calvinists contributed to this disestablishment, the tale of the development of the Calvinistic churches is "not a narrative abounding with episodes of power, heroism, and genius." Hart believes that "their absence makes the history of Calvinism all the more remarkable" (xii). Hart's absence of a "great man theory of history" with respect to Calvinism serves to highlight, though in a decidedly understated fashion, that there is a Great One guiding all of this, greater than all the players involved combined, somewhat as in the book of Esther in which God and his sovereignty are never mentioned but clearly present, forming the context and shaping the texture of the book.

This is a well-written, almost breezy book. Covering as much territory as he does, Hart's chief contribution here is integrative, i.e., the putting together of a lot of material to form a coherent narrative. It is an excellent introduction to the establishing, flourishing, and adapting (perhaps another way to think of Hart's three phases) of Calvinistic beliefs throughout Europe, the New World and then ultimately, in the missionary work of these churches, to many other parts of the world, down to the time of Barth and those that followed. He does not, in cutting such a wide swath, rely chiefly on primary sources but on secondary ones, assessing already digested surveys of this broad history. As intimated already, Hart has in view in this history an institutional approach that looks at the particular Reformed and Presbyterian churches that embodied Calvinism and the outplay of their development in terms of confessional commitments, polity, worship and life.

One will look in vain here for a history of Calvinism either as it became embodied among other groups (like Congregationalists or Baptists who were shaped by and in turn shaped Calvinism), or as it influenced (and even transformed) the broader society—the typical arguments that this or that prominent feature of Western society is due to Calvinism. Perhaps it would better be titled something narrower than "Calvinism," since such a title leads one to believe that it will be a broader history than it is. This is decidedly church history and not historical theology with there being little discussion of actual theology and much focus on the sociology of the church. Some have taken Hart's approach—looking at institutional actions—as downplaying the work of the Holy Spirit in all of this. I don't think that Hart would in the least downplay God as the One directing the course of history. It's just that in looking at second causes—the role of the historian—Hart seeks to discover the dynamic that actuated development below.

Perhaps the biggest problem is Hart's downplaying of the reality or the role of personal piety. Hart, while often noting ardent expressions of piety among Calvinists (e.g., New Side Presbyterians or partisans of the *Nadere Reformatie*), commonly appears skeptical, if not critical, of them. One can appreciate Hart's sense that the desire for personal godliness, and the expressions of piety that accompany such, often slyly turns to self-righteousness; furthermore, a proper view of God's holiness suggests that the best of us (whoever that may be) are comparatively not very righteous at all. Hart seems rightly sensitive to these realities. However, true Christianity produces not only trust in the only one whose holiness admits one into the presence of a holy God, but also a personal holiness arising from the sanctifying work of the Spirit. Hart does not deny the latter (sanctification), but seems ever wary of such in its practical out-workings. It's not bad for a historian to be cautious about claims of personal piety, but Hart must take care not to be or to appear to be simply dismissive of such.

That having been said, I affirm the worth of this volume as an introduction to the history of the churches that embraced confessional Calvinism, particularly in their interaction with the state. Hart well demonstrates the cultural adaptability, both good and bad, of such churches over the course of years, down to and past, the time of Barth and neo-orthodoxy. Hart seems to overlook or ignore much that properly accrues to any fair definition of Calvinism. It might, therefore, go a long way to add a few short pages nodding in such a direction in order to make up for his failure or refusal to address such. Still, this is a book that yields insight and provides a good institutional framework from which to address and understand Calvinism.

Alan D. Strange

George Hunsinger. *Reading Barth with Charity: A Hermeneutical Proposal.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015. Pp. xvi + 186. $24.99.

George Hunsinger, one of the foremost Barth scholars writing today, presents this book in order to address the recent revisionist interpretation of Karl Barth's theology, championed by his colleague at Princeton Seminary, Bruce McCormack—who is a highly regarded Barth scholar in his own right. Hunsinger is the president of the Karl Barth Society of North America, and his book *How to Read Karl Barth* is arguably the best single introductory volume to Barth's theology, at least for orienting readers to Barth's program and method.

The controversy in question, the revisionist interpretation of Barth's thought, has to do with the claim that Barth revised his ontology of God part way through the *Church Dogmatics*, though he

failed to consistently carry through with his new insight. At bottom, the question under debate is this: Does the divine Trinity (God as triune) precede the election of the Son of God to be the incarnate Christ, the mediator and redeemer of sinners (the classical view of orthodox Christian theism) or does the election of the Son of God to be the incarnate Christ, the mediator and redeemer of sinners, logically *constitute* God as triune? Is God, in the eternality of *being triune*, something derivative from the eternality of God *electing* Jesus Christ (the Son of God) as the incarnate Savior? To this last question, standard Barth scholarship answers in the negative, while McCormack and others answer in the affirmative. Indeed, McCormack was the first to adumbrate this revisionist take on Barth's ontology of God's being.

Among the belligerents the debate has been sharp but for the most part respectful. On the "classical side" of the divide are principally Hunsinger, Paul Molnar, and Edwin Chr. van Driel; on the "revisionist side" are McCormack, Paul Nimmo, and Paul Daffyd Jones.

McCormack's thesis, not surprisingly, has generated a great deal of debate among specialists in Barth's theology in contending that Barth revised and corrected his doctrine of God in crafting his doctrine of election. As noted above, McCormack argues that, for Barth, Christ's *incarnation* should be construed as being (logically) *constitutive* of God's eternal being. For clarity, it should be observed that McCormack is not saying that Jesus' human nature existed for all eternity—no, he is clear in maintaining that it came into existence at a particular time in history. Nor is McCormack saying that with this revision in his doctrine of God Barth follows Hegel, as if there is a blurring of the Creator-creature distinction, or as if the incarnation ceased to be a free divine act. Most certainly, Barth maintains (according to McCormack) that God pre-existed the creation, and God's eternal actions cannot be collapsed into history. Thus, the immanent (ontological) Trinity is complete before anything that has been made was made (including time itself). Nonetheless, the incarnation and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit are, for Barth (according to McCormack), *constitutive* of God's eternal being, by way of anticipation. In short, McCormack is asking about the *logical* relation of God's eternal decision (his decree if you will) of divine election and God's triunity. McCormack argues: "If election is an eternal decision, then, it has never not taken place" ("Grace and Being: The Role of God's Gracious Election in Karl Barth's Theological Ontology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, ed. John Weber [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000], 101).

Barth's concern is that we avoid speculation regarding God's essence (who and what God is) before the foundation of the world. Barth argues that Jesus Christ is the eternal, *ontic* ground of election. E. Brunner vented against this idea, for he said that it entailed the eternal pre-existence of the God-man, such that the incarnation

was no longer an historical event (Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, 347). Brunner's criticism, however, rests on a drastic misunderstanding, for Barth is not arguing that Jesus Christ existed from all eternity. Rather, Barth's point, says McCormack, is "that at the beginning of all the ways of God with the world stood not a *Logos asarkos* (i.e., a 'Logos outwith the flesh' in Brunner's abstract and absolute sense) but the God-human, Jesus Christ" ("Grace and being," 93). The difference between Barth and Protestant orthodoxy is that the latter maintained a distinction between *Logos incarnandus* (the Logos "to be incarnate") and *Logos incarnatus* (the Logos "incarnate")—this Logos being one and the same. For Barth, according to McCormack, the distinction must be collapsed so that we speak of the Logos *ensarkos* as the Subject of election. This means that the eternal Logos must not be viewed "as One whose identity is *not yet* determined by the decision of the incarnation"; and so he must not be conceived as "*incarnandus* only as a result of the subsequent decision; prior to making it, His being and existence are *undetermined*" ("Grace and being," 94). Barth's aim, according to McCormack, is "to speak of Jesus Christ [not as an abstractly conceived *Logos asarkos* but] as the Subject of election…" To do so, "he must deny the Logos a mode or state of being above and prior to the decision to be incarnate in time. … [T]here is no Logos in and for himself in distinction from God's act of turning toward the world and humanity in predestination; the Logos is *incarnandus* in and for himself, in eternity" ("Grace and being," 94-95). Again, Barth doesn't obliterate the distinction between *the Word-without-the-flesh* and *the Word-in-the-flesh* in history. But he wants to guard against the danger that we conceive of the eternal Logos as a God other than the incarnate Word, whose nature and essence may be known and defined "on some other basis than in and from the perception of his presence and action as incarnate Word" (*CD* IV/1, 181; cf. IV/1, 52).

McCormack argues, thus, that nothing less than the nature of divine ontology is at stake in this matter. How can God become incarnate without undergoing an essential change in himself unless the incarnation is in some sense, as part of the eternal decision of God to be God for humans, constitutive of the divine essence, "so that what God is essentially is itself constituted by an eternal act of Self-determination for becoming incarnate in time—in which case eternal divine action would ground divine essence" ("Grace and being," 97)? In brief, McCormack's point, in part, is that for Barth the eternal Logos is the Mediator who stands first in God's eternal decision, and as this Logos God is who God is and God is what God is; there is no eternal Logos who stands in back of this Logos as Mediator; this Logos is prior and first and already to be conceived as the Mediator, and from this perspective we see who God is who eternally wills his will ("Grace and being," 97).

McCormack, therefore, in seeking to express Barth's actualistic ontology over against (what McCormack calls) an essentialist ontology argues that an unknowable God always lies in back of the revealed God when an essentialist ontology has the field; however, with Barth's actualistic ontology we only know God in his actual activity in Jesus Christ, and this is God's being. God is none other than this One ("Grace and being," 98). Thus, while Barth knows of a divine essence, his essence is constituted in the eternal act of his electing grace. There is no God standing behind this God; God has no being different or other than this being—indeed, this is God's being-in-act; and it is being in this pure and singular act. This being-in-act in eternity corresponds exactly to God's being-in-act in time. God's being is actualized in the eternal decision for activity in time. This is Barth's actualism, says McCormack. In this way, God's essence posits no hidden God behind the revealed God. God's essence isn't somehow different than God's revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ—in fact, his revelation of himself in Jesus Christ in time is constitutive of the being of God in eternity. This is not Hegel, since, for Hegel, God and the world live in a reciprocal relationship from necessity, and the world expresses God; even more, the world itself enables God to come to full consciousness of himself. God's being *becomes*, develops, unfolds in and through historical processes, for Hegel. As such, the ontological Trinity, for Hegel, can only be an eschatological reality, not a present one. Barth and Hegel are at opposite ends, for Barth posits divine freedom where Hegel posits necessity. Barth never abandons the fundamental distinction between Creator and creature, whereas Hegel is a panentheist. And, third, for Barth, God's Trinitarian self-differentiation is eternal in God himself and may not be collapsed into the historical act of the incarnation. "The immanent Trinity is complete, for Barth, before anything that has been made was made (including time itself). It is not the consequence of the historical process" ("Grace and being," 99-100).

McCormack believes that Barth's revision created inconsistencies in the Swiss theologian's thought, which, however, can be remedied by placing the doctrine of election logically prior to God's being as triune. Hence, in this way the eternal decision of divine election becomes (*logically* speaking at least) *constitutive* of God as the Trinity ("Grace and being," 102). Barth does not make this move as such, but McCormack believes he must and should have done so; and thus McCormack proposes this logical revision in order to render Barth's thinking consistent. McCormack regards everything Barth wrote before volume II/2 to be irrelevant to the debate surrounding this question because with volume II/2 Barth changed his thinking. Thus, "those who would make exclusive and uncritical use of the *Church Dogmatics*, II/1, in their efforts to elaborate Barth's doctrine of God fail to see that his doctrine of election had ontological implications which brought Barth's thinking into conflict with elements of his ex-

position of that doctrine in II/1. … It is a postmetaphysical doctrine which must be teased out of his mature Christology in *Church Dogmatics*, IV/1, and following" (McCormack, "The Actuality of God," in *Engaging the Doctrine of God*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008], 240).

Again, tracing out McCormack's thesis regarding Barth's alleged revision of his thinking, it is necessary to reiterate that Barth's chief burden surrounding the doctrine of election is to escape the problem, as he sees it, of a hidden God standing in back of the revealed God in Jesus Christ. In short, argues Barth, Calvin gives us the God of the gospel, revealed in Jesus Christ as a gracious message to humans, as the manifest revelation of God's love and favor. But behind this revelation is something inscrutable, another and prior Word of God, hidden behind an impenetrable mystery of secret election and reprobation. This, in turn, makes persons take their eyes off the revealed Word in the grand Incarnation event of the Word and focus instead upon a sinister and determining Word that mutes, blunts, or otherwise transmutes the Good News of Jesus Christ into an unfathomable mystery, an anonymous grace, a message different and hidden behind the message revealed in the gospel.

Thus, for Barth (according to McCormack) to say that "Jesus Christ" is the Subject of election is to say "that there is no *Logos asarkos* [Word without the flesh] in the absolute sense of a mode of existence in the Second Person of the Trinity which is independent of the determination for incarnation, no 'eternal Son' if this Son is seen in abstraction from the gracious election in which God determined and determines never to be God apart from the human race" ("Grace and Being: The Role of God's Gracious Election in Karl Barth's Theological Ontology," in *Orthodox and Modern: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008], 191).

Hunsinger has responded to the McCormack thesis prior to this book, most notably in an article, "Election and the Trinity: Twenty-five Theses on the Theology of Karl Barth," in *Modern Theology* 24/2 (April 2008): 179-98. This book, however, pleads for a charitable reading of Barth and serves to advance in a sustained way the traditional understanding of Barth's view of God's ontology. Hunsinger, then, doesn't debunk all that McCormack has to say; rather, he accommodates the texts in Barth which McCormack cites to Barth's larger corpus of writing, showing that his theological ontology isn't purely actualistic versus purely essentialistic. Instead, Barth appropriated features of each and accommodated them to one another.

What is interesting about the debate is how it forces us to think about God's eternality and the relationship between God's being and will. For example, orthodox Reformed theology asserts that God's eternal will is his essence willing, which emphasizes that God isn't one entity, on the one hand, while his will is some other entity, on the other. God's will is an expression of God himself. While both

sides of the debate wish to safeguard divine freedom, such that God is and was and ever shall be free to will what he wills, the eternality of his will is in fact his eternal decree (the actual will of God) and that will includes God determining himself to a specific relationship with the creation he willed—a creation now fallen but under divine redemption. God eternally wills himself to be the Creator and Lord of this creation but also its Redeemer and Lord, the latter in the way of Christ's incarnation. God, then, eternally willed (affecting also himself) to be this God—that is, to be God in relation to a creation, a fallen creation, that he redeems through his Son Jesus Christ, taking on human nature and human guilt and penalty, to save sinners.

For McCormack and compatriots (in their interpretation of Karl Barth), this eternal will of God concerning the election of Jesus Christ (the eternal Logos) *ensarkos* is constitutive, in a logical if not a chronological sense, of God being triune. That is, God is triune in no other way than in this way; and God is not triune except in this way. The eternality of God's concrete will cannot be disentangled from God's being, such that God never was any other God than this God, willing the incarnation of Jesus Christ. So, logically speaking, the Son of God, acting as the Subject of election, did so not as an undetermined and undefined *asarkos* but as *ensarkos*—the One who from eternity is none other than this One. For Hunsinger and classical interpreters of Barth, God is logically, antecedently triune in his eternality which is the presupposition of the eternal will of God concerning the incarnation. The divine election of Jesus Christ (*ensarkos*) doesn't constitute God as triune; rather, God being eternally triune (and being who he is as that God) makes the eternal election of Jesus Christ (*ensarkos*) an actuality. God's being (his being/becoming triune) is not composed by his electing will concerning Jesus Christ (*ensarkos*). On the contrary, God, being the triune God of love and freedom, eternally wills or elects Jesus Christ, the Son of God *ensarkos*. For McCormack and company, Barth changed his mind in volume II/2 of the *Church Dogmatics,* treating divine election, so that Barth allegedly came to the view that we may never conceive of the Son of God *asarkos* (without flesh, non-incarnate) but only *ensarkos* (incarnate)—to do the former leaves us with an undefined, abstract Son of God. They also admit, however, that Barth thereafter espoused and applied that view inconsistently—so that he sometimes reverted to his former position. Hunsinger demonstrates that this is a misreading of Barth's ideas (39-72).

Hunsinger also demonstrates that Barth's theology has both Anselmian and Hegelian elements which play into Barth's essentialism and actualism, and so it is mistaken to jettison either of these elements from his thinking. Barth thus embraced a version of Anselmian "Perfect-Being" theology, even as he pilfered aspects of Hegel's actualism. Rather than thinking solely in static categories, we are served better to think in terms of happening, event, and action (to

think of God *as acting*). Similarly, Barth affirms a basically Chalcedonian understanding of the incarnation, but with actualistic traits—again, he makes this move to help us think about it concretely and actively (as ever-present divine activity) versus abstractly and statically (122-24; 133-34; 162-63; 178ff.).

Hunsinger also shows Barth's adherence to a version of divine immutability of God's will (131-32; 165-66). Most significantly, Hunsinger shows how Barth conceives of the idea that Jesus Christ is the Subject of election—and that electing Subject is one person, the eternal Son of God. "There is no 'hypostasis' of Jesus qua Jesus. The only relevant hypostasis here is the divine Son. Jesus qua Jesus has no other hypostasis than this one. It is not a matter of two electing 'subjects' or 'persons' (Jesus and the eternal Son) somehow operating alongside one another in concert. There is only one electing Subject … the eternal Son, who in this decision makes himself really but contingently (and irreversibly) identical with Jesus of Nazareth. In this (enhypostatic) sense, it can therefore be said that already in pretemporal eternity 'Jesus is the Subject of election' (cf. I/2, 163)" (71-72).

The implications of the respective positions come to this: If the election of Jesus Christ is constitutive of the Trinity, then God being the Trinity is consecutive with the plan for human redemption (McCormack's view). If the Trinity, however, grounds election, then God's act of divine freedom is the freedom of *the triune God*; election, then, neither consequently nor logically constitutes God as triune. This latter portrait seems to fit Barth's thinking much better than the revisionist model. The Son existed in eternity as the *logos asarkos*, in fellowship with the Father and the Spirit, as the triune God, and this is logically prior to his being the Incarnate One (*logos ensarkos*). The content and definition of the Son of God *asarkos* is none other than the revelation of himself in Jesus Christ, *ensarkos*.

I judge Hunsinger's book a success and side with him in judging the revisionist interpretation of Barth's thought to be mistaken. For Barth, God's being (his being triune) is necessary; it is his absolute being, for God is simply God in this way, the Triune One. But God's will, for Barth, is contingent, meaning it is not necessary; he is free to will according to his good pleasure, which in fact is his will concerning creation and election (see *CD* III/1, 15). To be sure, Christ's incarnation was eternally decreed; and, for Barth, Christ is the first of God's ways with human beings. God did not create the world apart from Christ but by him and for him and unto him. Christ—the Incarnate One—is the supreme goal of the divine decree and of history, i.e., the salvation he came to accomplish and the glory of God he reveals. What Barth is concerned to say is that we don't know God except in and by Christ; and given the eternality of God's will, he never did not will to be revealed to us in Christ incarnate—this was his eternal will. What was also of enormous concern for Barth was that we not attempt to discover an unknown God behind the revealed

God—to try to look behind his revelation to find a more fundamental or definitive truth about God. Barth hated this idea, so he hated the notion that God's identity remains hidden behind the God-in-the-flesh of the incarnation. Jesus said, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). There is no hidden God whose identity is different from God's revelation of himself in Christ—a revelation that is event (i.e., God acting).

Contrary to the McCormack thesis regarding Barth, God's election of Jesus Christ does not constitute God's being as the Trinity. For Barth, what is true is that we know God as the Trinity in Jesus Christ. The Swiss theologian asserts that God is not a different God than this God self-disclosed in the person and work of the Son of God in the flesh, Jesus Christ. Yes, according to Barth, God eternally willed to be this very God to us—thus, we must not look for another God behind the revealed God. And, yes, Barth dislikes the notion that God exists independently of his eternal will to redeem fallen humanity in Jesus Christ. The will of God is nothing other than his eternal and free will—his will willing *eternally* and *freely*. Here, arguably, Barth simply thinks more consistently concerning what an eternal will of God implies. If God's will is eternal, then never was it not willed; and, consequently, never was the content of his will not intended by God. It was always his eternal will to save fallen human beings in Jesus Christ. That is, God eternally and freely willed to be this gracious God to us. He eternally and freely willed to exist and live this way in relation to us.

I think that Hunsinger, with Paul Molnar, have drawn the stronger and more persuasive case regarding Barth's theological ontology. The revisionist model, among other things, labors under three burdens: (1) it is dubious to accuse a theologian of Barth's ability, with an intellect of his caliber, of inconsistency on a topic so fundamental and decisive; (2) it is not convincing to argue for a position that Barth, it is admitted, did not in fact advocate but *should have if he had been more consistent*; and (3) the position Barth is alleged to hold, God's being triune as logically determined by the eternal decision of Christ's incarnation, comes up short of logical coherence, for who is *this God* who eternally wills if not the triune God? He is the one who eternally wills Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord in the way of incarnation. For Barth, the Trinity (*that* God) wills creation and redemption—including the *Logos ensarkos.* God is triune without creation, without incarnation, without us. But God, the triune God, being the God who he is, eternally elected Jesus Christ as our Savior, and eternally elected us in him.

J. Mark Beach

Franciscus Junius. *A Treatise on True Theology: With the Life of Franciscus Junius.* Trans. David C. Noe. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014. Pp. 247. $40.00.

Many English-speaking Reformed Christians are unaware that Reformed systematic theology was written primarily in Latin until at least the early nineteenth-century. This means that the virtual absence of Latin in modern education has radically transformed Reformed theological training by cutting it off from the bulk of its classic sources. While translations are expensive to produce, selective in nature, and can never replace knowledge of the original language, they are invaluable in connecting a new generation of readers to the old foundations of their theological heritage. Such works can help foster the unity, purity, maturity, and progress of Reformed theology today.

Junius' work is significant historically. It was "the first fully developed prolegomena to theology" following the Protestant Reformation (ix). Junius developed the first principles of theology as stated in Augustine and the medieval doctors, filtered them through Scripture, and adapted them to provide Reformed theology with a lasting theological foundation and a clear structure. In addition, his use of concepts such as archetypal and ectypal theology were adopted unanimously in both Reformed and Lutheran dogmatics and dominated them until the nineteenth century (xli). In light of the highly scholastic character of *A Treatise on True Theology*, the moving autobiographical material may surprise readers who are unused to combining scholasticism with spiritual vitality. Junius illustrates that it is possible to develop a precise, Scriptural, complex, and unifying theology in the midst of severe hardships and persecution. The autobiography, coupled with his theological treatise, gives readers a unique window into life, education, theology, and piety in late sixteenth-century Europe.

Junius' work is significant for its content. This is true particularly of the manner in which he defined true theology. In contrast to post-Enlightenment Reformed theology, Junius introduced what became a consensus in Reformed thinking by denying that theology was, strictly speaking, a science. While the meaning of the term, "science," narrowed in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries, post-Enlightenment Reformed theologians defined theology as a science with almost equal unanimity to the earlier rejection of such definitions. This represents a significant paradigm shift in Reformed thought of which few modern readers are aware. Junius denied that *scientia* defined theology adequately because *scientia* consisted of knowledge developed from commonly accepted human principles. Yet theology grew from divinely revealed principles and the supernatural illumination of the Holy Spirit. This also meant that an adequate biblical definition of theology must encompass the new birth and the

godly character of the true theologian. For this reason, Junius considered theology, properly speaking, to be *sapientia*, or wisdom because it incorporated regeneration, communion with God, and personal piety within theology rather than merely being the intended results of theology. This reflected the assertion that theology was not a discourse about God as much as it was the saving knowledge of God, in Christ, by the Spirit. The result was that while Reformed scholastic theology could be complex, it should never become dry, since, by definition, it always addressed the mind and heart of the true theologian.

Junius' prolegomena will likely challenge commonly accepted ideas in modern Reformed theology. Yet it is precisely this kind of challenge that the church needs in reconnecting to the great cloud of witnesses that has gone before her, enabling her to stand on the shoulders of her forefathers as she addresses a new generation. Such translations will help prevent the church from being tossed about by every wind of doctrine and to grow up to a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

Ryan M. McGraw

Timothy Keller. *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism.* New York: Viking, 2015. Pp. viii + 309. $19.95 (cloth).

Tim Keller's book on preaching is sure to be widely read and become a textbook in many homiletics courses. This title is divided into three parts: Part One: Serving the Word; Part Two: Reaching the People; and Part Three: In Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power.

Naturally, the first section makes the case for preaching, specifically for expository preaching, and for preaching Christ and the gospel. Noteworthy here are the practical procedures and hermeneutical devices Keller suggests in order to preach the gospel, with Christ at the center. Also to be noted is Keller's helpful analysis that the preaching of the Word, while the pulse-beat and center of Word-ministry in the church, is not the only form of ministering the Word of God that the Spirit is pleased to use in order to bring and build people up in faith—a sentiment shared by no less a figure than Herman Bavinck.

Under the second section Keller includes a chapter entitled "Preaching Christ to the Heart." This chapter's burden is to help ministers learn to be *real*, to preach in a manner that the listeners experience as *real*, and which therefore addresses the "affections," understood in the Edwardsean sense of that word. Unfortunately, even veteran preachers sometimes never learn to do this consistently. This chapter, then, serves as an antidote to that malady.

The greatest strength of Keller's book is his concern that preachers always preach the gospel and that they always preach Christ. The second great strength of this volume is the wisdom it shows in bringing the gospel to our current North American culture. We are mistaken when we preach out of a traditional church-culture inherited from the past, for then we cannot help but miscommunicate the gospel to the secularized culture which predominates in modern environs; in fact, we also miscommunicate the gospel to our own already-convinced parishioners.

Leaning heavily upon Charles Taylor, Keller argues convincingly, I think, that we live in a "late-modern" versus a "post-modern" culture; more importantly, the nature of secularism is something the modern preacher of the gospel must understand in order to communicate the gospel authentically, winsomely, and honestly to an increasingly global culture.

This book is glutted with almost seventy pages of endnotes, which ought not to be skipped. This is however an annoying feature of the book since the reader needs to literally bookmark the endnotes in order to be delivered from constantly thumbing back to the references. Nevertheless, Keller's work is a valuable contribution to the already well-populated field of homiletical studies. It is not the best book of its kind, but it should not be ignored; and given its above mentioned strengths, it makes a fine companion volume to other books in homiletics.

J. Mark Beach

Robert Letham. *Gamechangers: Key Figures of the Christian Church*. Fearn, Ross-Shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2015. Pp. 208. $14.99.

Bob Letham, a systematic and historical theologian of some note, having served many years both as a Presbyterian pastor and lecturer/professor in various theological institutions in the United States and in the United Kingdom, brings that wealth of academic and practical experience to bear in this gem of a book. Stemming from a series of occasional lectures that he gave when serving as an Orthodox Presbyterian pastor in Wilmington, Delaware, Letham traverses in a brief span (twelve fairly short but meaty chapters) the whole of church history through a select number of figures that the publishers call "Gamechangers." All of the figures are ones of renown, except perhaps, as Letham notes, his penultimate one, the nineteenth-century Reformed theologian J.W. Nevin (who has made a bit of a splash in more recent years). The rest, however, are all acknowledged key players in each of their respective periods of the church, if not to

say, in the whole of the church, beginning with Athanasius in the fourth century down to Barth in the twentieth. One figure, it should be noted, is neither a theologian nor pastor: Charles the Great, who, while a ruler, greatly impacted the church of his time.

The twelve figures might be categorized, for the sake of convenience, into four groups of three, corresponding to different periods of church history: Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Augustine (ancient church); Charles the Great, Anselm, and Aquinas (medieval church); Martin Luther, Heinrich Bullinger and John Calvin (reformation church); and John Wesley, J.W. Nevin, and Karl Barth (modern church). Letham looks for the particular contribution each of these thinkers/leaders made to their own place and time, both positive and sometimes negative.

What particularly marked the ancient church—development of the doctrines of God, Christ and man—is evident in the seminal figures Letham treats. Athanasius (c. 295-373) defended the doctrine of the full deity of Christ against Arius and all comers, and properly stood "against the world." Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 330-391), as one of the three Cappadocian fathers (together with the brothers Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa) also defended the full deity of the Spirit and pioneered a way of thinking about God so as to preserve both the unity and plurality of the Godhead. Augustine (354-430), as the capstone of the patristic period, recaptured the Pauline definition of predestination and grace so as to set the plate for the rest of church history, with, as Warfield noted, Roman Catholics focusing on his doctrine of the church and Protestants on his doctrine of grace. Letham particularly reminds us to pay attention to and mine the whole of church history, as did the Reformers, beginning with the riches of the ancient church.

Charles the Great (741-814), or Charlemagne, is the only one treated herein who is not a theologian. His grandfather, Charles Martel, in 732, had stopped the Muslims from overrunning Europe, and he himself came to head a kingdom that would later develop into the Holy Roman Empire. Charles patronized a renaissance that preserved learning in the monasteries, promoting preaching and reform in church life, and presented, for the first time since the fall of the Empire in the West (476) a civil ruler who could rival the bishop of Rome. Though Martel had stopped the followers of Mohammed, Europe was effectively surrounded and the Mediterranean became a "Muslim Lake." Europe was forced to fall back on its own resources, giving rise to seignorialism (and the feudalism associated with it). The stagnancy of this period began giving way by the time of Anselm (1033-1109) and Aquinas (1225-74), with the former developing the doctrine of atonement in a way that it had not been previously (the ancient church having focused more on the person of Christ than the work of Christ) and the latter developing systematic theology as a whole, with an unfortunate sacramentology in the place of a devel-

oped pneumatology (which would await the Reformation, particularly John Calvin).

The Reformation came about not only because of problems like absenteeism, pluralism (clerics not being present in the parish and holding more than one benefice) and moral turpitude, but because of doctrinal unrest. Augustine's view of justification ultimately proved unsatisfying to Luther who could never feel that he had done his best (following the admonition to such by his nominalist teachers). Luther (1483-1546) discovered that the righteousness God requires he gives freely as a gift, received by faith alone. This understanding of definitive forgiveness now (not in the future, after being thoroughly sanctified by purgative fires) led to a Reformation that embraced Bullinger (1504-75), Calvin (1509-64), and many others: Bullinger showed that even among the Reformed the approach was not monolithic, seen in his doctrine of predestination and the place of the state over the church; Calvin, influenced particularly by Bucer of Strasbourg, developed the doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit so much that Warfield called him the Theologian of the Holy Spirit.

So if the ancient church particularly developed the doctrines of God and man and the person of Christ, the medieval church the doctrine of the work of Christ, the Reformation church the doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit, can it be said that the modern church developed the doctrines of the Christian life, the church (in a Protestant sense), and eschatology? Perhaps so, certainly Wesley (1703-91) focused on the Christian life, but, as Letham notes, sometimes excessively individualistically, if not to say, perfectionistically, and thus not always helpfully. Nevin (1803-86) sought to recover the balance of a more churchly approach, although one might argue that while he recovered certain needed elements of the Reformation (e.g., Calvin's Eucharistic emphasis), he did so in an imbalanced way. Similarly, Barth (1886-1968) sought to oppose the immanentism of liberalism with the transcendence of God that he found in several places, including Calvin (though some would argue that he "gave away the store" in the process). All of the men that Letham treats in the modern period remain rather contested figures as to their legacies.

Letham helpfully provides after each thinker a short list of both primary and secondary sources for further reading. This volume is slim enough to be accessible to any interested reader, yet pointing those desirous of following up on any particular thinkers to the resources to do so. Each chapter is relatively brief, addressing the life and times of the "gamechanger" as well as the substance of his work and the impact of his thought. This would be a fine book for a young adult or adult Christian education class or some other such venue. Exposure to, and understanding of, church history needs to figure

more prominently in the church's program of Christian education. Letham's book is an excellent entree into such.

Alan D. Strange

George Marsden. *The Twilight of the American Enlightenment: The 1950s and the Crisis of Liberal Belief*. New York: Basic Books, 2014. Pp. xxxix + 219. $26.99.

There may be no historian better known by the academy for being an evangelical and first-rate scholar than George Marsden, though Mark Noll may give him a run for the money. Marsden was trained at Westminster Theological Seminary (Philadelphia), doing his Ph.D. at Yale, and teaching at Calvin, Duke, and Notre Dame. He's won many major prizes and written the definitive biography of Jonathan Edwards, perhaps the best Christian biography ever written. His father, Robert Marsden, was a renowned and able preacher and pastor in the OPC, with George Marsden later becoming CRC. Thus Marsden's life has bridged two worlds: the literate, educated Reformed confessional world (together with the more mainstream evangelical one) and the liberal, secularized "Enlightened" world of the university and cultural mavens like Eric Fromm, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Reinhold Niebuhr, David Reisman and others (about whom, as "Enlightenment thinkers," we learn a good deal in this volume).

Marsden laments the failure of all these American Enlightenment thinkers, whose high water mark was in the 1950's. He believes that subsequent developments of their individualistic and autonomous ideals showed their bankruptcy: their ideals proved inadequate to support any proper notion of commonwealth, proving as ineffective for a "more inclusive pluralism" (Marsden's goal) as anything set forth by the religious right. The reason that these Enlightenment thinkers failed is that in their vicious secularism they trashed all proper transcendence and had nothing on which to found their ideals, leaving all their deepest convictions hanging, as it were, in midair. This led to a mere (and forceful) assertion of those ideals in the 1960s and 1970s that led further to the backlash of the religious right in the late 1970s and 1980s.

In other words, the partisans of the "American Enlightenment" asserted their particular secular nostrums with ever increasing volume, a tack that did not create fruitful engagement with those who did not share their liberal sensibilities but only made for a more highly polarized society, which yielded liberals and conservatives yelling party slogans at, and past, each other. Liberals have their secularized views and shout them at conservatives (especially religious ones), who shout back their own religious views. There is no common

ground, no communication, and nothing but increasing disparity. Marsden finds all of this quite distressing.

What Marsden calls for to cut through the current impasse is a rediscovery and appropriation of the thought of Abraham Kuyper. Here's how Marsden sees it: Enlightenment thought, foundationless though it is, remains enthroned, though impotent; in casting down the religious right, as has happened in more recent years, all Christian thought has been marginalized and effectively banished from the public square. This sort of one-sided vicious secularism stands at odds with what Marsden thinks most effective and fair for our democratic society: a more inclusive pluralism that might be achieved through a return, of sorts, to Abraham Kuyper.

Marsden wants neither a thoroughly secularized culture that does not account for or permit religious voices, nor does he want a Christianized culture that excludes all non-Christians, whether religious or irreligious. He wants a culture in which all are given a proper voice, a place at the table. As he notes, the Christian right responded to this liberal enlightenment project of the 1950s and 1960s with a call in the 1970s to "take back America": this "only made it easier for the more secular-minded people to dismiss religion as simply a threat to diversity in the public sphere. Conservative Christian attacks on the feminist and gay agendas reinforced the tendency of the champions of cultural inclusivism to favor a more thoroughly secular culture" (162).

Here's where Kuyper comes in. While acknowledging that Kuyper was a man of his own time and place (the Netherlands of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries), Marsden argues that we in the twenty-first century could learn a lesson or two from Kuyper, particularly from his conviction that there is no neutrality and that all worldviews are, foundationally, religious. This, together with his doctrine of common grace and sphere sovereignty, gives Kuyper a better vantage point to see that since nothing is neutral and all is religious, the commonwealth is best-served by taking all this into account and developing a principled pluralism. This seems, to me, too little too late and remarkably naïve for a man like Marsden who is otherwise quite a sophisticated thinker.

Marsden, it seems to me, has to downplay Kuyper's antithetical approach and even then, to put it as Dr. Phil might, "How did that work for you?" In other words, did Kuyper's approach in Holland in the early twentieth century yield the kind of society that he, or any of us who are believers, wanted by the end of the twentieth century? The Netherlands, in 2000, led the way in terms of same-sex marriage, hardly a good argument for this approach, at least from my perspective. Clearly, Marsden sees the kind of Kuyperian pluralism that he calls for as the way of overcoming the false dichotomy that he so laments, "as though the only choices were between a fully Christian society and a wholly secular one" (172).

In the current atmosphere, it is almost impossible to convince the partisans on either side—those demanding that society be either fully Christian or wholly secular—that a third way is possible, and, perhaps it isn't, and we're simply left with what Marsden so dislikes and dreads, an ongoing, highly divisive, cultural war. Even if Kuyper could model a better way for us, considering American society, which is the subject of this volume, how do we get there from here? I am afraid I feel rather like the Mainer these days who declares that such seems impossible. Then, of course, this always raises the question: do we really have options? Are our only options a full-blown theocracy (which we don't find warranted) or a wholly secularized society that pretends that neutrality is possible (which we don't find possible, because we are inescapably religious, the question being, which religion?)? Many of us do not enjoy being impaled on the horns of this dilemma and continue to look for a third way, which I suppose is what Marsden is doing in his own way. Take and read and appreciate the difficulty that we all face with respect to this.

Alan D. Strange

Michael J. McVicar. *Christian Reconstruction: R. J. Rushdoony and American Religious Conservatism*. Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 2015. Pp. 326. $34.95.

Michael McVicar, assistant professor of religion at Florida State University, has written the first, and, at this point, the only scholarly work on Rousas John Rushdoony (1916-2001) and the Christian Reconstruction movement (another work on the movement is in process, to be published soon by Oxford University Press). It is rather significant that Christian Reconstruction is now deemed to merit a work by a religious scholar at a secular university published by an academic press. McVicar's judgment of Rushdoony, Christian Reconstruction, and, what he calls more broadly, "American religious conservatism" is judicious and temperately rendered. The work consists of an introduction, six chapters, conclusion, and helpful bibliography. Both the bibliography and the extensive endnotes prove interesting and useful and indicate extensive primary as well as secondary research.

McVicar was given extensive access to Rushdoony's personal papers and wide correspondence as well as to his private library. McVicar even vetted the materials with the Chalcedon Foundation, the organization started by Rushdoony, with Mark Rushdoony and others there being able to interact with and comment on the manuscripts. The final product is the author's own, of course, and all of his conclusions would hardly find agreement with all of the Chalcedon folk; yet, it is remarkable that Professor McVicar interacted as he

did and he and the work are to be commended for achieving remarkable even-handedness while retaining a truly critical stance towards a man and a movement that Dr. McVicar obviously regards as aberrant if not alarming.

The introduction seeks to set the plate, noting that Rushdoony reprehended the modern secular state and sought some way to counteract it and return America to what he took to be its Christian constitutional heritage. Rushdoony saw the secularized state and its educational system as a counterfeit Messiah, an idol tempting Christians to sacrifice their children even as did Moloch the children of Israel. He found all the sorts of things that those in the burgeoning conservative movement, led by William F. Buckley and others of his ilk, espoused to be pusillanimous and ineffective. Upon discovery of the writings of Cornelius Van Til and others, Rushdoony concluded that what was needed was a thoroughgoing reconstruction of society along explicitly biblical lines. He found in the Old Testament what he took to be the blueprints for all godly societies and thus was born what came variously to be called Christian Reconstructionism, Theonomy, and the Theology of Dominion (though the second has particularly to do with the "abiding validity of the moral law in exhaustive detail" and the last especially to do with the various charismatic and health-and-wealth groups that appropriated Rushdoony's insights).

Chapter 1 deals with Rushdoony's background (his family were persecuted Armenians in Turkey)—McVicar argues that this is the cauldron whence develop Rushdoony's convictions about the use and abuse of state power—his birth in New York City, and his early life and education. A number of things about his background disposed him ultimately to a conservative, family-centered approach, though he initially was otherwise minded, as he followed in his father's footsteps into the Presbyterian ministry, being educated at Berkeley and in divinity at the Pacific School of Religion. Thus, Rushdoony came to minister in the mainline Presbyterian church with an educational background at two leading liberal institutions. He had himself been rather liberal when he came to attend these institutions, but was repulsed by what he found to be the regnant Marxism there and in much of academia. He glommed on to the "political theology" at Berkeley of German historian Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz, who "convinced Rushdoony that the political and juridical are always essentially religious" (19). This, together with his coming across Van Til's work, began to lead him to link up what would become his life's work: the connecting of all the Bible to all of life, refracted through a particular lens that would privilege kin and see the modern nation-state as a contemporary Babel competing with God's sovereignty for suzerainty.

Rushdoony became convinced that a state constructed along the lines of Old Testament Israel, both in its moral and judicial laws, was

the only thing that could tame the behemoth of the totalitarian state, which he believed that the state in its secularized form must be. The only way to protect true liberty was severely to curtail the power of the state in so many of its facets while at the same time making it a sort of theocracy that would punish with the severity that God's law in the Old Testament did. If Islam meant in some sense the Arabization of the world, Rushdoony's Christian Reconstructionism meant in some sense the Israelization of the world.

Chapters 2-6 tell the fascinating tale of how much of American religious conservatism came tacitly to embrace aspects of Rushdoony's program without either knowing it or, in some cases, admitting it. This was the case even though the mainline American "fusionist" conservative movement (a broad group that fused conservatism with economic libertarianism, determined to defeat international communism and domestic liberalism, 65) ultimately rejected Rushdoony's sectarian and extremist demands (he never compromised on a Calvinist and Old Testament reconstruction blueprint). Rushdoony's views, in other words, were seen as too religious, extreme, and exclusive in any broader societal context and while many of his ideas were appreciated and appropriated, they were rarely attributed to him, because he was seen as too much of a reactionary to be associated with. Chapter 2 covers Rushdoony's initial attempts to penetrate the broader conservative movement as it was rising and taking shape in the post-World War II era and the mutual rejection that occurred: he rejected the conservative movement, and they and their foundations and publications ultimately rejected him.

Chapter 3 details how that, though rejected by conservative intellectuals and leaders, many of the housewives and other middle class conservatives, including the types that supported the John Birch Society (a staunch anti-Communist, international-financial-conspiracy group) embraced Rushdoony, providing the support that he needed to start the Chalcedon Foundation and the publishing of his Reconstructionist ideas. Chapter 4 treats his on-going struggle with the conservative religious establishment, especially the magazine *Christianity Today* (actually addressed more in Chapter 6) that not only did not permit him to continue writing for it (he sought to have a significant role in the magazine), but also ultimately exposed and condemned what it was that Rushdoony was up to in terms of his movement.

Chapter 5 deals with his gaining a following, both among men like Gary North (his son-in-law), Greg Bahnsen, John Whitehead, and others (tracing many of these men's personal histories), and more broadly on the Christian right, especially in the burgeoning homeschool movement, in which he served in many legal cases as an expert witness. And, finally, in Chapter 6, McVicar examines the further broadening of Rushdoony's influence in movements that Gary North and others impacted (North and Rushdoony coming to a deci-

sive break in the early 1980s): from the "Christian America" of a Jerry Falwell and D. James Kennedy to the Dominionism of many Pentecostals and charismatics, including, quite markedly, a presidential candidate in that mold, Pat Robertson.

However, this diffuse version of Reconstructionism, insofar as it was not Calvinist and presuppositional, was not something that Rushdoony approved and that he disavowed together with his son-in-law North and others who departed from his vision of Christian Reconstruction. McVicar's point here, though, seems quite valid: even though the Dominion theology of so many charismatics may have significantly departed from Rushdoony's vision of Reconstructionism, Rushdoony nonetheless influenced the Dominionists as well as much of American religious conservatism more broadly and thus has had enormous influence on the American religious and political scene even if it took a different shape than he intended it to take in his massive *Institutes of Biblical Law* and the many other publications that he put out to promote his ideas.

In his conclusion, McVicar seeks to capture and sum up, with consummate fairness, his estimate of the matter: "Rushdoony and the Reconstructionist project he cultivated cut to the very heart of a brutal century dominated by the technocult of the modern state and a global autophagic capitalist order. If his vision of the world is disturbing, it is because it grew from cultural soil fertilized with the rotting offal of modernity: three world wars (two hot, one cold); industrialized genocide; mass revolutions; the rise of omnipresent governmental and corporate surveillance systems; corrupt political regimes; skyrocketing domestic crime; and corporate piracy. Rushdoony's political theology spoke to all of these issues and offered prescriptive, often nauseatingly violent responses to deal with a century that was, in so many ways an unmitigated disaster for a significant portion of humanity. And in the process, he led a grassroots movement in the United States—he influenced a generation of preachers, challenged conservative seminaries and small liberal-arts colleges to rethink the way they taught Christianity, and helped thousands of American families free themselves from what they perceived as the shackles of state education" (230-31).

In short, from presidential candidate and Nixon-aide, Howard Philips, to his son, and Vision Forum Founder, Doug Philips, Rushdoony's influence manifested itself: in the libertarianism of Ron and Rand Paul (the former of whom had Gary North as an aide) and the constitutional recovery of Philips and the Tea Party, all owe a debt to Rousas Rushdoony. I met Rushdoony in the late 80s and Howard Philips in the mid-90s and came to know Greg Bahnsen rather well in the few years before his death in 1995. Others, like Gary North or Gary DeMar, I've only briefly met, though I've read their writings. From my knowledge of and personal interaction with them, it seems to me that McVicar tends to get them right. I would say that McVicar

tends to be more critical of Rushdoony's heirs than he does of Rushdoony himself. Thus he does not discuss in any detail the darker side of Rushdoony, like his relationship with racism and kinism, his holocaust-minimizing, and his ruthlessness with opponents (though he hints at the latter and teases us with respect to the situation and fate of the first Mrs. Rushdoony, perhaps not being able to trace out more clearly what really happened there). Doubtless, some of these things will come out in other books, but for now McVicar has made a first-rate beginning in seeking to detail the life and significance of a man and to take the measure of the movement that he founded, which continues, in various forms, to exert influence in American culture, religion, and politics.

Alan D. Strange

Larry Osborne. *Accidental Pharisees: Avoiding Pride, Exclusivity, and the Other Dangers of Overzealous Faith.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. Pp. 197. $14.99.

This book is designed for pastors and inquisitive laity, yes, all believers willing to (re)evaluate their walk of faith—whether in fact they are following Jesus or chasing after a spirituality that bears the traits of Pharisaism—an accidental Pharisaism.

The book is divided into seven parts with twenty-one chapters. The first part treats overzealous faith. Most interesting here is the second chapter which examines how the Pharisees came to be viewed in such a negative light. Part Two examines pride, which makes us compare ourselves to others. Given pride, the end result of comparative thinking is that we come out favorably, others unfavorably. How easily Christians pray the Pharisee's prayer at the temple, except we compare ourselves with different sorts of sinners than the tax-collector. Perhaps we positively assess ourselves against the Pharisee.

From here, Osborne considers exclusivity, the topic of Part Three. Osborne shows how churches actually aim to keep the "riffraff" out of their ranks, even as they are not adverse, all in the name of piety of course, to "thin the herd" (illegitimately); and this entails a failure to disciple people patiently to maturity. Part Four tackles legalism. Chapters under this heading treat the danger of litmus test Christianity, the danger of adding extra rules and fences to God's Word, and the death of mercy—the most dangerous side of legalism. Yet Osborne shows how even Pharisees need mercy.

Idolizing the past takes up Part Five. Under this topic the author demonstrates that we are prone to view the past, "how it used to be," through rose-colored lenses. We idolize leaders—especially after they are deceased. Instead, we need respectfully to learn from the past

while confronting our present failures and needs with biblical honesty and courage.

This brings Osborne to examine, in Part Six, the quest for uniformity, which destroys unity. Uniformity and unity are two different animals. The accidental Pharisee in us fails to see the difference and, significantly, the quest for uniformity quenches the Spirit, which Osborne argues can mean that we get overly zealous in the quest for theological precision. Uniformity splits believers apart and ruptures fellowship. We must learn to agree to disagree, argues Osborne.

The seventh part has the title, "Gift Projection," which has to do with expecting other believers to follow you in your most recent passion and calling. For example, if you are hot on prison ministry, then you expect every member to share your zeal and do what you are doing in this area of outreach. The overzealous seek to project their gift or calling or ministry onto the rest of the church, failing to see that the body of Christ has many parts and varied gifts. One of the chapters under this section is entitled "Gift Envy and Drive-by Guiltings," which is a negative trait and propensity too often exhibited by missionaries and evangelists visiting supporting churches. Gift envy of course is the flip-side to gift projection. Osborne argues that it is a myth to think that only ministers and such are in "full-time" ministry. The last chapter of the book treats the problem of "money police." The author is not advocating a wealth gospel, but he does contend against the sort of persons in the church who think they know exactly how you and the pastor should manage finances and spend every penny. Again, this over-policing of funds is a trait of accidental Pharisees.

Osborne notes that he is not contending against an accidental Pharisaism in order to advocate for or endorse a soft, sloppy, sudsy Christianity. His book, though, is a biblical plea to face-up to the pharisaical traits that mark our personal walk of faith and our communal behaviors and attitudes as churches. Osborne, a teaching pastor at North Coast Church in northern San Diego County, writes with flair, communicates effectively, and offers much pastoral wisdom for a sleeping church, disengaged from the hard work of discipling the nations. I commend this book as beneficial to pastors, to adult Bible-study groups, and also church elders. In fact, pastors and elders should be the first to examine if they have become accidental Pharisees.

J. Mark Beach

Thomas Piketty. *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Trans. Arthur Goldhammer. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014. Pp. 696. $39.95.

One might well ask, "What is a controversial, allegedly socialist, economic treatise doing in a nice quiet orthodox theological journal like this?" My answer is that our readers need to be aware of its argument and consider that things are not as simple as "unfettered capitalism is good and socialism is bad," so that anything alleged to be socialist, as is this book, is automatically suspect. This massive volume by French economist Thomas Piketty argues that there is a growing income disparity, a widening gap between rich and poor, and that something needs to be done to lessen that gap, not simply to bring the rich down, but, more so, to bring the poor up. I am uncertain about many of the book's claims, but I think it is important to alert our readers to this and a growing body of similar literature, not so as to simply put them on guard against socialism but to invite them to question what they assume to be economic verity and to look at what may be on their part unexamined premises.

When I was growing up, we used to hear about, and ourselves speak about, "godless communism." This was always a package deal and quite rightly so: Lenin and Stalin, Mao, Ho Chi Minh and all the rest were indeed not only godless in the sense that they were brutal, murderous rulers of their people, but also in the sense that, as Marxists, they were materialists and thus, philosophically, anti-theists, denying that God existed. It was often assumed, if not stated, in that same world, that America (whatever France, Britain or other Western nations may be or do) was opposed to "godless communism." America, it always seemed to be assumed, was neither godless nor communist.

Well it seems that such was right, at least the communism or socialism part. It turns out that much of what America opposed was the economic part of that system and perhaps not so much the godless part. Not to say that America even today would claim to be largely godless, but she doesn't, in her vicious secularism, seem to care. She still, however, cares about capitalism, and thus doesn't mind having, at least in a practical, if not theoretical sense, "godless capitalism." It seems that America defeated godless communism here and elsewhere only to find herself embracing godless capitalism. What I mean by godless capitalism is a system in which capitalist economics predominate without much thought as to the ethics of such, a laissez-faire approach that, for all intents and purposes, acts as if the material is all that there is. Capitalism, then, becomes about my getting as much as I can for myself and letting the other fellow be hanged. This presents rather obvious problems for the "Good Samaritan" dynamic that our Lord commands. Just as those who are Christian in communist lands have had to figure out how to render properly to Christ and to Caesar, we have to figure such out in our secularized capitalist lands. Just as Christians could not blithely "go along" with all the tenets of their society in godless communist lands, neither can we in our godless capitalist lands.

Piketty, a founder and member of the leading economics school in France (École d'économie de Paris), contrary to what some have alleged, does not reject capitalism, the market, or private property. In fact, he was confirmed in such after a visit to the late Soviet Union shortly before its fall. But he does believe that capitalism has, inherent within it, that which will lead to significant income inequality if the state does not intervene and impose a progressive global tax on wealth. His contention is that in developed capitalist countries the rate of capital return is persistently greater than the rate of economic growth. This creates an ever greater inequality if unregulated and unaddressed by the state. He calls for the state to seek to remedy these inequities with significant income redistribution through taxation. Piketty believes that a laissez-faire approach to capitalism imperils democracy and this threat to the well-being of democracy can be remedied only through state action. He also believes that such action by the state will not squelch economic growth or disincentivize enterprise altogether, but will permit all sectors to share in a growing economy rather than just a select few. All of this is, on the one hand, highly contested and, on the other, supported by a variety of economists. Much analysis has been brought to bear on Piketty's work and this should be read along with this massive volume for those interested.

Piketty has come to his conclusions by an empirical study of economic data going back more than two hundred years. Much of this data has not been readily available and thus ignored or understudied until recently. Particularly, Piketty's use of tax records has allowed him to study the very top of the economic elite and the way that personal income was accumulated vis-à-vis overall economic growth. While he has studied economic effects in many countries, what he found for a country like the U.S. was that, after the Civil War and before the income tax, i.e., at the time of massive personal capital accumulation (the "Gilded Age"), great income inequality occurred. This led not only to the rise of progressivism, socialism, and the like, but even populist economics within the mainstream political parties (think William Jennings Bryan and his famous "Cross of Gold" speech).

The rise of economic populism and the demand that the "robber barons" of industry pay their fair share as part of society led to the introduction in the U.S. of both the federal income tax and other taxation schemes. This resulted, by the middle of the twentieth century, in significant income redistribution. There were still many who were quite rich, but not as rich as in earlier pre-tax times in which the owners so outstripped the workers. A variety of things (including unions and not just graduated taxes) had contributed to achieve greater parity. Piketty argues that this structure of taxation did not impede economic growth, but increased it during this time, bringing far more than a small percentage along: there was less income inequality in

the mid-twentieth century than in the time when Carnegie, Rockefeller, Morgan, and the like flourished unchallenged.

Piketty argues that tax rollbacks and other factors, beginning especially in the 1980s, have once again yielded greater income inequality and that, unless significant taxation is begun or reintroduced, a new "gilded age" is upon us in which the rich simply grow richer and the poor poorer. Again, there are those who question Piketty's reading of the evidence, his assumptions, and his conclusions—all quite reasonable questions, it seems to me. My concern, however, is that in our community—the confessional conservative Reformed and Presbyterian one—this discussion is a non-starter. It seems assumed that laissez-faire capitalism and political libertarianism, especially in America, is part and parcel of the gospel and there is no discussion of these things. If anything can be labeled "socialism" or the like it need not be discussed and that's the end of the matter. I've even read Christian organizations address and heard pulpits preach that the Bible teaches capitalism, libertarianism, and the like and that progressive taxation is robbery and contrary to Scripture. I don't think that the Bible gives us a detailed political and economic model any more than it does a detailed scientific one. But the Bible has principles that impact all these areas and certainly ones that speak to our views of wealth and the poor.

I am not advocating what Piketty is proposing in this book because, even after studying these matters a bit, I seem still to have more questions than answers. But I do think that the confessionally Reformed Christian community in this country would well serve itself if it would permit a wider discussion of these sorts of political and economic matters and not foreshorten any such discussions merely by crying "socialism" when income inequality is raised. The pre-capitalist economy of the Old Testament, for instance, did not have the sort of inequality that unfettered capitalism produces and seems, in fact, in its opposition to interest and in its gleaning, Sabbath-year and jubilee laws, to have elements that would militate against such an unfettered capitalism. The jubilee principle particularly strikes at cycles of poverty, especially inter-generational poverty, and the notion that your property is yours alone (instead of God's, for whom you serve as a steward). To be sure, the Bible would also militate against an idolatrous state that seeks to displace God and that is unlimited and unfettered in its power. I see the problem that such extensive taxation, as Piketty calls for, creates, for example, in a radically secularized state that disdains God and almost inevitably sees itself as God. It has the tendency to create a totalitarian monster that will allow no rivals to its claims of deity.

Modern capitalism itself, however, is a creature of the state: the corporation, for instance, is in no natural sense a person but has been given a legal status, and thus protection, by the modern state. My point is not to argue that the state should not permit capitalism

(some regulated form of that seems the best system to me), but that we must recognize that the existence of capitalism is due to the state's legal structuring to permit and encourage such. We no longer have a seigniorial or mercantilist economy, we have a capitalist one, created by the modern state. To say that the state cannot regulate what it has legally permitted seems not to follow. I do not argue for a return to a pre-capitalist agrarian society as do some; that seems an untenable, impractical solution to our problems. What I am calling for here is for Christians to recognize that godless capitalism does not cohere with our faith and that, whatever we do about it, our motto cannot be that of those around us whose chief commitment is to "the bottom line." Our bottom line must always be the love of God and of our neighbor, not simply what most enriches me.

As noted, I do not believe that the Scriptures give us any sort of detailed economics that should be considered normative for modern society, but they do have a concern for the poor and warnings against riches. Many conservative Christians would say that this is to be reflected only in our personal ethics and has nothing to do with civil government in any sense. For most American Christians, however, I do not see how this is reflected even in our personal lives and I am not convinced that such large concerns are intended to have no structural consequences. In our conservative circles, I often do not see these biblical concerns clearly reflected and many conservative Christians act as if the Bible is an apologist for a modern capitalist society—it simply is not. I am not saying that the Bible teaches socialism. I am saying that concern for the poor and warnings against riches is neither socialist nor capitalist but simply biblical. How this all affects our economic positions should be an on-going discussion and not a foregone conclusion. This book, those like it, and those responding to it, seem to me to be a good place to begin to have this sort of discussion.

Alan D. Strange

Barnabas Piper. *The Pastor's Kid: Finding Your Own Faith and Identity*. Foreword by John Piper. Paris, Ontario: David C. Cook, 2014. Pp. 153. $12.99.

Barnabas Piper has done pastors, churches and pastors' kids (PKs) a huge favor in writing this book! As the son of the well-known pastor, John Piper, Barnabas is well qualified to speak about the challenges and complexities of growing up a PK. All of his formative years were spent in Minneapolis, Minnesota, as his father served Bethlehem Baptist Church.

His aim is to give voice to the challenges of PKs to help pastors, churches and PKs understand the unique issues being faced. PKs

will be helped by a description of some of the difficulties they face, while pastors and churches will be made aware of the depth of the struggles PKs face and how they contribute to these struggles. Hopefully, this will lead to a deeper sensitivity and desire on the part of pastors and churches to change how they relate to PKs.

The first four chapters are spent on setting forth the struggle of PKs. They are normal kids, but find themselves in an abnormal life situation. "Dad and Mom might be following God's call, but these kids are just following Dad and Mom. What choice do they have? A child doesn't know the call of his pastor father. All he knows is the effects it has on his life" (25-26). The effects are tremendous; it feels like being in a pressure cooker because "the ministry creates a pressure of expectation that is unlike any other. … For a PK, there is no choice but to *be* holy lest the name of Jesus and the position of Daddy be shamed. The job itself requires holiness" (26-27). This kind of pressure leads to significant "spiritual, identity, and lifestyle challenges" (27). After setting forth this general description of the problem in Chapter 1, the author focuses on three different areas of struggle.

First, in Chapter 2, he describes the assumptions made about PKs because of the fishbowl-effect. People assume that because they know certain things about the PK, they know him personally. Some of the most common assumptions are: the PK has a great relationship with God, with his family, that he loves the Church, is confident in his beliefs, and is a leader (38-42). These assumptions lead to expectations that are often baseless and oppressive.

In Chapter 3, he looks at some of these expectations placed on PKs. People expect the PK to be "The Perfect Angel," an "All-Star Bible Scholar," and a "Theologian Extraordinaire" (49-54). Piper calls this "legalism" since these are extra-biblical standards PKs are judged by and held to (47-49). Another category of expectation is "the pressure to *believe*, to stay in the proper theological, denominational, or lifestyle lane" (54). The pressure here is great from parents and churches. It is expected that PKs will follow in their parent's lane. "To change lanes is not just to break with tradition. It is to betray. For many PKs, to go a different direction from our upbringing is hurtful to our parents. Pastors *own* their beliefs; their theology and public ministry make up an identity. So when their children refuse to follow, it is personal, not merely ideological. It is a rift in the relationship, not just a difference of opinion" (57). In light of all these expectations, it is no wonder that Piper writes, "The constant pressure to *be* something, *do* something, and *believe* something creates enormous confusion for PKs. And one of the main confusions is about who we are, an identity crisis" (60).

Chapter 4 deals with this identity crisis. First, Piper discusses certain tricks of their trade: "the subtle, often instinctive, and maybe even accidental methods and skills that allow the PKs to survive and present the desired persona, to 'be' whatever is expected or neces-

sary" (65). He identifies four main personas adopted: the Onion (to fake), the Politician (to hide), the Chameleon (to blend), and the Rebel (65-72). What does the PK need to break free from these sham-personas and form their own identity? Piper gives an emphatic answer: "Knowing the real Jesus is the only way a PK can sort through his own identity issues. … Only when Jesus becomes real to a PK can she begin to figure out what she is, who she is. It is in the freedom of Jesus's overwhelming love that the PK can break out of false expectations and see what makes Jesus happy. No longer does the outside pressure define her. No more does she feel the need to fake it, to hide, to blend, or to rebel. She *know*s what is real–or rather who is real–and He is wonderful. Only in the person of Jesus is there power enough to free the PK to know who she is" (74).

This serves as a turning point in the book from setting forth the difficulties PKs face to discussing positively what can be done to help navigate this challenging situation. First, he addresses the PKs themselves in Chapter 5, focusing on their profound need for grace. Then he focuses on the relationship of the pastor with his children in Chapter 6. The most helpful advice he gives is that a pastor should be a parent and not a pastor to his children (88-89). In Chapter 7, he addresses the congregation, zooming in on their need to have realistic expectations of both pastors and their children. The last chapter is a positive reflection on the blessings of being a PK. The book also includes a very helpful appendix: "Seven rules for when you meet a PK." Three of these stand out: "3. Do not ask us anything personal you would not ask of anyone else. … 6. Do not assume that we agree with all the utterances of our fathers. … 7. Get to know us" (146-147). These final chapters contain much helpful advice and grace for all.

I highly recommend this book to all. PKs, pastors and church members will be blessed and helped to relate better with each other. What a blessing that would be to PKs!

Jacques Roets

Alvin Plantinga. *Knowledge and Christian Belief.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. Pp. xii + 129. $16.00.

In his highly acclaimed *Warranted Christian Belief* (Oxford, 2000) Alvin Plantinga addressed, with his usual precision and intellectual rigor, the question of the rationality of Christian belief. In this new, slender volume Plantinga presents the same basic argument as before, but in a much briefer format, making his presentation more accessible to a wider audience. In his own words, he hopes this is a "more user-friendly version of WCB" (vii).

Plantinga, a world renowned philosopher of religion, addresses the topic of the rationality or sensibleness or justification of Christian belief. In view of the Four Horsemen of Atheism, Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris, and (the late) Christopher Hitchens, Plantinga judges that a simplified version of his academic volume is fitting. Plantinga notes that "the New Atheists" are not philosophically as sophisticated or intelligent as the old atheists: Bertrand Russell, C. D. Broad, and J. L. Mackie; nonetheless, "they do seem to make a good deal more noise." Indeed, they are "more style than substance"—except the style is little more than "furious denunciation." Missing in all this, says Plantinga, is "cogent argument" (viii).

Of course, the central issue under debate is the contention that Christian belief is irrational, such that persons, if they are in their right minds, are *unjustified* in holding to it. Essential to these claims is *the assumption* or *presupposition* that Christian belief is *false*—which to say: *de jure* objections to Christian belief rest on *de facto* objections to Christian belief. This proves to be a tumbling house of cards inasmuch as no one can actually prove that Christian belief, starting with the existence of God, is in reality (*de facto*) false. *De jure* objections to Christian belief, then—that one is morally unjustified (as in irresponsible and irrational) to hold to Christian belief—rest on *de facto* objections, which cannot be verified or proven; they must be assumed, *believed*, to be true (see Chapter Two).

Plantinga does not let atheists get away with this intellectual sleight of hand. He not only calls them on it, he ups the ante significantly (1) by arguing that Christian belief may be "properly basic," that is, it forms the foundation for knowledge, including a cogent account of functionality and warrant; (2) by showing the implausibility and logical inconsistency of creative anti-realism (relativism); and (3) by arguing that modern atheism, which rests on naturalism, has no cogent foundation for knowledge at all, even as it has no cogent account of functionality and warrant. (It should be noted that these latter arguments are not found in the current volume, but may be found in *WCB*. Indeed, naturalism's vulnerabilities are most fulsomely explored in *Where the Conflict Really Lies* [Oxford, 2011].)

I will not attempt to outline Plantinga's presentation here, except to note a few valuable features, some of which are occasionally misunderstood. (1) Plantinga exposes the false standard of intellectual credibility in the form of Cartesian and Lockean foundationalism. Foundationalism is the idea that all of a person's rational and justified beliefs must be founded on beliefs that are either self-evident (like 2 + 2 = 4), evident to the senses ("I hear my colleague talking to a student in the hallway"), or incorrigible (that is, I cannot be mistaken about my belief that "the cat appears to me to be black"). This strong standard of what is rational cannot meet its own test; a revised standard is necessary. (2) Plantinga takes on, if only briefly, many of the most important figures surrounding rationality and be-

lief in God: Kant, Hume, Freud, and Marx, among others—meaning, Plantinga engages actual arguments and their cogency. (3) Plantinga explains the idea of "warrant" as it pertains to questions of epistemology and argues specifically how Christian theism has warrant. "*[W]arrant is the property enough of which is what distinguishes knowledge from mere true belief*" (25). In other words, for a belief to be knowledge it must be true and it must have sufficient warrant. Thus, if Christian belief is true (and it is this belief which is properly basic), then Plantinga demonstrates how belief in God has warrant. He does this by offering a model of belief in God, as designed and effectuated in us by God—the Aquinas/Calvin (A/C) model. (4) Plantinga proceeds to show how "full-blown" Christian belief, if true, is also likely warranted (Chapters Four, Five, and Six). The *de facto* question, of course, concerning God's existence and Christian belief, is not something that can be demonstrated by way of argumentation—at least not by arguments which commend themselves to everyone. (5) Lastly, in Chapters Eight through Ten, Plantinga examines objections to Christian belief, what he calls "defeaters"—reasons for rejecting or giving up Christian faith. Specifically he considers historical biblical criticism, pluralism, and the problem of evil. Each of these alleged defeaters are examined and dismantled, or shown to be wanting. They do not undercut warranted Christian belief.

It should be carefully noted that Plantinga is engaged in philosophy, first of all, not theology. Thus, when Plantinga addresses the question of "proper basicality" he does so as one addressing how humans function in an epistemic sense. Therefore, he is not addressing himself, first of all, to the question of how there is such a thing as rationality in general or what might form the basis of human epistemic function *as such*. Instead, he is addressing the philosophical question of epistemology in terms of how humans form beliefs and come to knowledge. He is examining the mechanism and function of human knowledge, which includes what beliefs may *epistemically* possess proper basicality. He does this from what the created order shows us (or, how the world—and human thought—works)—which, given "God as properly basic," means that God made humans to function this way. Thus, it is God who defines ontology, even as he designed the human mind and how it functions; and he is therefore the source of being and knowledge. To take God as "properly basic" means that we do not have to argue our way to God; rather, he is the foundation upon which ontology and epistemology rest.

Therefore, second, Plantinga is asking a fundamentally philosophical question, without denying that there is also a theological one. This is important to observe, for (as becomes clear in both *WCB* and *Knowledge and Christian Belief*) Plantinga does not deny that the epistemological question is intertwined with and dependent upon fundamental ontological or metaphysical questions. The *de jure* question cannot be separated from the *de facto* question; and the *de facto*

question will hinge on one's religious stance, which gives credence to specific notions of what is rational or warranted. The epistemological dispute, Plantinga acknowledges, is fundamentally an ontological and theological dispute. This means that Plantinga recognizes the anterior—"at bottom"—role theological or atheological commitments play in this manner.

Third, Plantinga argues that *belief* in God is properly basic and has epistemic warrant according to how human knowledge *functions* (yes, as created by God). In doing so, his argument is not so much an examination of the root of knowledge as it is an examination of the *function* of knowledge—but a *function* that is *rooted* in God as properly basic. In doing that, he shows how Christian belief has warrant, while naturalism, and the atheism dependent upon it, does not.

Fourth, in the process of offering his marvelously cogent account of how belief in God, even more, the full panoply of Christian belief, may be *epistemically* properly basic, Plantinga also critiques naturalism—in *WCB* and at length in *Where the Conflict Really Lies*. In this way we are given a hands-on engagement of the issues. This comes to more than just a theoretical account of naturalism's vulnerabilities. In other words, Plantinga does not only talk about how evolutionary-naturalists ought to be confronted with Christian claims, he actually engages them. Plantinga demonstrates the inability of naturalism to account for rationality on its own principles—in a mechanistic and functional sense. Naturalism is unable to account for a cognitive process functioning properly in an appropriate epistemic environment according to a design plan successfully aimed at truth. Indeed, advocates of naturalism only manage to escape skepticism because they fail to think through properly the consequences of their position. If they did, they would cease to believe that they have a foundation for knowledge and that their knowledge is warranted.

Last, we should note the modesty of Plantinga's work. He isn't saying that he has produced a philosophical argument that *requires* Christian belief. He is saying that Christian belief is warranted and therefore it is not irrational or unjustified. He refutes various alleged "defeaters" for Christian belief. And, within his wider project, he shows how atheism, based on naturalism, as well as versions of relativism, are unwarranted and unjustified. He doesn't, however, argue that Christian belief is the only possible foundation of warranted knowledge. But, for now at least, these other contenders do not seem able to produce warranted knowledge.

This last point ought not to be misunderstood. Plantinga's revised foundation for true and warranted knowledge—call it a *Christo*-foundation or a *theo*-foundation—offers an account of how belief in God has warrant according to the panoply of Christian doctrines, given Christian theism. We reason (know things and form beliefs) *from God* within the context and order of the world he designed, just as we reason (know things and form beliefs) from the epistemic structure of

the human mind as designed by God (and restored to function properly enough to warrant true Christian belief in him). Starting with God and the essential doctrines of Christian theism, Plantinga shows how such belief has warrant on those grounds, and how such belief is therefore justified. For him, there is nothing more important than the truth of the Christian faith—with all that that entails. Philosophy however does not have the competence to produce an argument that can definitively prove and persuade all human beings that it's true—which is only to say, philosophy cannot displace what only faith can perform.

J. Mark Beach

Stanley E. Porter and Gregory P. Fewster, eds. *Paul and Pseudepigraphy*. Pauline Studies 8. Leiden: Brill, 2013. Pp. xv + 374. $180.00.

The editors begin with a brief summary of the history of pseudepigraphy research and then aptly describe the book as follows: "This volume clearly does not solve all of the issues surrounding Pauline pseudepigraphy. Nor does it intend to. However, even in its repetition and reformulation of old questions, new approaches are introduced, traditional evidence is reassessed, and some new suggestions are offered" (8). Indeed, this book does not provide a comprehensive *status quaestionis*, nor does it provide a unified set of essays arguing for one perspective. While most of the contributors argue for genuine Pauline authorship for either the so-called Deutero-Pauline and Pastoral Epistles, some contributors either presuppose pseudepigraphy of some of Paul's letters or argue for it. Part one explores critical issues in Pauline pseudepigraphy, including questions of methodology. Part two contains arguments on both sides about Pauline pseudepigraphy within the Christian canon. Part three contains three essays on Pauline pseudepigraphy outside the canon, which provides a focus on reception history rather than authenticity, something the editors think helps to move the discussion forward (4).

Part one contains several quality essays. A. Baum provides a translation of the most important ancient source texts relating to pseudepigraphy and an annotated bibliography of the major contributions to the topic (12–63). S. Porter argues Pauline chronology alone cannot solve the problem of authorship of the Pastoral Epistles. Of the three *Sitz im Leben* of the Pastorals (deutero-Pauline post-Acts 28; Pauline post-Acts 28; Pauline within the Acts chronology), he finds the third the most promising. G. Fewster argues historical criticism and canonical criticism use deficient hermeneutics and proposes a Foucault-inspired functionality between author and corpus. Meaning is derived through a "dialogical relationship between those

texts circumscribed by the author-signature" (103). He then applies this idea to the head-body metaphor in Paul's letters. A. Pitts' essay develops a sophisticated socio-linguistic methodology for analyzing Pauline style ("register shift") and concludes that the register shift in Paul's letters is "broadly consistent with the findings of studies examining style-shift in a single author with significant change in register" (145). He believes his register-shift model has more explanatory power than the pseudonymity interpretation (152). Lastly, J. van Nes' essay revisits P. N. Harrison's *Problem of the Pastoral Epistles* and the criticisms laid at its methodology, statistics, and assumptions. From his point of view, Harrison's work is entirely suspect and the great following he still receives is unwarranted (169).

Part two examines possible Pauline pseudepigraphy within the Christian canon. S. Grindheim argues Paul's ecclesiology evolves from his early to later letters, including his use of the word ἐκκλησία, the notion of Christ as head, the content of his *mystery*, and the depiction of himself in Ephesians and Colossians. C. M. Kreinecker examines the use of ἐρωτῶ, παρακαλῶ, and παραγγέλλω in 2 Thessalonians against their use in documentary papyri and the undisputed Paulines. She argues 2 Thessalonians uses the words differently than Paul in his undisputed letters, concluding it is pseudepigraphal. L. Belleville argues the creedal language in the Pastorals, often taken as non-Pauline, is actually genuine Pauline polemics provoked by the imperial cult in Ephesus, where Julius Caesar was proclaimed "savior" and "God made manifest" (241). C. Rothschild argues Hebrews was intended as an instructional appendix to Romans, focusing on the unique use of ἐφάπαξ by Paul and Hebrews. Hebrews' heavy use of ἐφάπαξ is intended to explain further Paul's truncated statements about Christ's once-for-all death in Romans 6:10 (258). Lastly, B. Dyer argues that Hebrews 13 is original to the composition and that the letter ending does not share distinctives solely with Paul, but more so with other New Testament letters, and is therefore not a Pauline pseudepigraphon.

P. Tite opens part three by providing an abbreviated version of his monograph on the *Epistle to the Laodiceans*. He argues for a literary unity, including a chiastic body, a structured paraenesis section, and a closing that echoes themes of the body (301–13). He concludes the epistle should be given more attention in its own right for its second century reception of Paul. I. L. E. Ramelli discusses the Seneca-Paul correspondence, arguing against C. Pascal and A. von Harnack that the original correspondence was written in Latin, not Greek, based on several syntactical Graecisms in Paul's letters (321–30). He argues for a late second to early third century date, because the original letters allude only to 1 and 2 Corinthians and Galatians, suggesting a date before the later letters were universally accepted as canonical (333–36). M. Kaler discusses the portrayal of Paul in the Nag Hammadi codices, arguing that Paul was the model apostle for the com-

munity (over Peter, James, and Thomas). The *Prayer of Paul the Apostle* and the *Apocalypse of Paul* provide a guide to their respective codices. Through his representation in these two writings, Paul is for the collector of the codices the "authoritative representative [of] the quest for both experienced and intellectual esoteric enlightenment so characteristic of the Nag Hammadi texts" (348–49).

One can see the immense diversity in this volume. For that reason, this work is not one to advance the discussion in a great way. However, several essays stand out as significant, such as Pitts' sociolinguistic methodology for analyzing Paul's style. Since style has long been a key factor in arguing against authenticity, a sophisticated method is necessary to analyze style shifts. Ultimately, the argument from style is softened by many recent studies on amanuenses and the possible influence of co-authors, but many scholars ignore such studies and continue to argue from style. For example, Kreinecker's essay relies on style and vocabulary to argue for pseudonymity of 2 Thessalonians. But 2 Thessalonians has two co-authors (Timothy and Silvanus) and contains Paul's signature at the end in his own hand (3:17), suggesting an amanuensis wrote the letter. Scholars who continue to argue from style and vocabulary must deal seriously with co-authors and amanuenses, and must use sophisticated methodologies to measure style shift, or their study is flawed from the outset.

Another essay that stands out is Grindheim's, but for a different reason. He assesses the evidence for pseudonymity of Colossians and Ephesians based on their ecclesiology, but it seems to be a perfect example of how biases or presuppositions will, in some cases, lead different scholars inevitably to different conclusions. He makes a plausible case for Paul's theological development throughout the letters, but the evidence could also be used plausibly for a pseudonymity hypothesis. The arguments are coherent on both sides. It seems, then, that the pseudepigraphy discussion requires more than simple evaluation of the evidence, or scholars will be forever divided based on their presuppositions.

This divide is one reason the editors included the third section of the book. The focus on non-canonical pseudepigrapha was intended to shift attention toward reception history, rather than authenticity. While reception history is important, and these three essays were stimulating studies of Pauline reception and use in early Christianity, authenticity is a subject that will not, and should not, fall by the wayside. Various hermeneutical theories have been created to cope with the loss of the apostolic author (for those that want to cope), and perhaps some of these have promise, but they may be equally unable to bridge authority from the pseudepigrapher to the reader. So while a focus on reception history is helpful for certain purposes, the authenticity question must still be addressed, as it was in part two of the book.

Overall, the work contains many helpful essays, but it is not groundbreaking, nor is it unified in its presentation. Anyone interested in the question of pseudepigraphy should consult the various essays of interest in this volume.

Todd Scacewater

Steven W. Smith. *Recapturing the Voice of God: Shaping Sermons like Scripture.* Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015. Pp. 230, including name, subject and Scripture indexes. $24.99.

One of the challenges for preachers in a media saturated age is preaching compelling and captivating sermons. Given this challenge, it can be tempting to spend more time on the form of our sermons and less time on the content. A well communicated sermon tends to elicit more approving comments from our listeners than a sermon which demonstrates faithful exegesis. How do we address this temptation? Dr. Steven W. Smith offers assistance in his book, *Recapturing the Voice of God: Shaping Sermons like Scripture.*

Smith is Vice President for Student Services and Communications and Professor of Preaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. As a professor of preaching, Smith evidences a zeal and passion for faithful expository preaching. Readers familiar with redemptive-historical preaching will find much in this work that is familiar and helpful. But Smith's burden in this book is not first of all faithful hermeneutics; rather, his primary concern is with faithful homiletics, and, in particular, with the form or structure sermons take.

The basic proposition of this book is that “the shape of the sermon should be influenced by the shape of the text” (3). When Smith refers to the "shape of the text" he is speaking of genre. There are nine genres of Scripture identified by Smith, but he reduces these nine to three major categories: Story, Poem and Letter. Under Story he includes Old Testament Narrative, Law, Gospel/Acts and Parables; under Poem are Psalms, Prophecy, and Wisdom Literature; and under Letter are the Epistles and Revelation. Each of these genres, Smith argues, calls for a distinctive sermon structure or form.

The basis for Smith’s proposition is his conviction that the goal of preaching “is to re-present [*sic*] what God has already said” (10). Consequently, a sermon should not impose a form on Scripture, but represent the form that is already in the text (10). Smith draws this conclusion from God’s own communication with us. In his own words, “Christ communicated the Father perfectly; and the Holy Spirit communicates the Son perfectly in Scripture. So what sermon form continues the trajectory…?” (14-15). The answer to this question, according to Smith, is a sermon form that “re-presents” the form of

Scripture. After providing a chapter on how to hear the voice of God or genre of a text, Smith offers a chapter on each of the genres he has identified. In these chapters Smith explains how a particular genre is to be understood and then provides a sermon outline showing how to apply the genre to a sermon form. Smith writes passionately and provides his reader with a clear understanding of how his proposition would function practically. There are some quirks that readers might want to reflect on along the way. For example, Smith offers as a possible passage for a sermon chapters six through nine of Genesis. This, however, may seem excessively large. He also suggest preaching through an entire book of Scripture in one sermon, like the book of Jonah. Smith's rationale for such large texts is not the natural divisions of the Scripture, but "pastoral concerns" (21). However, this anomaly does not ruin his overall emphasis on structuring sermons after the form of Scripture.

Before digging into Smith's homiletical argument it is worth noting his hermeneutic. The strength of this work is the constant insistence that preachers preach the text of Scripture. What is more, Smith evidences a clear understanding of Scripture. For example, given some of the discussion lately on preaching the law, Smith provides a clear and balanced approach to understanding the law. His overall approach to understanding Scripture is to see Christ as the center of every book. He carefully avoids allegorizing, moralizing, and spiritualizing the Old Testament. He roots the admonitions of the Epistles in the person and work of our Lord. As a result, anyone reading this book will be well equipped to hear the message of Christ on every page of Scripture.

However, the burden of this book is not hermeneutical, but homiletical. The proposition of this book is that the form of the sermon should be determined by the form of Scripture. Having reflected on Smith's argument, I'm not entirely convinced that he has established his proposition. To be fair, how insistent Smith would be about this proposition is not entirely clear. Early on in his work he states his proposition this way: "The shape of the sermon should be *influenced* by the shape of the text" (3, emphasis added). Smith's inclusion of the word "influenced" makes the statement less stringent. And yet later he states, "To capture the meaning of God's words we *must* present the Word of God in the voice of God" (5), and again, "The shape of the sermon *should be determined* by the structure of the text" (19). Even the subtitle of the book, "Shaping Sermons like Scripture," creates the expectation that the genres of Scripture will be more than a suggestion for preaching. The expectation based on the title and opening chapter of the book is that they will provide the form for sermons. This is also implied by the concern Smith expresses at the outset of this work. In the Introduction, Smith writes about the danger of formulaic preaching, that is, preaching that forces Scripture to fit the form, rather than the form fitting the Scripture. If our typical

forms have become tired and hurdles to hearing Scripture, as Smith argues, then one rightly expects that Smith will offer a new form for preaching. If Smith only intends to offer another form for sermons, one of a possible number of equally valid options, this book provides food for thought. However, it would seem as though his argument is stronger than such a suggestion. It sounds as though he would have us follow the form of Scripture as the rule for sermon structures.

It is worth noting that Smith appreciates that his proposition presents a challenge for some of the genres of Scripture. There are times when he pulls back from a strong application of his proposition. For example, a strong application of his proposition faces serious challenges when dealing with the genre of Poetry, particularly with the Psalms and Proverbs. Following Smith's proposition closely would produce sermons that are structured poetically or aphoristically. Smith appreciates this challenge. He writes, “We are not suggesting that the sermon can exactly mimic the text” (21). And then he writes, “Sometimes we borrow the sermon structure from the text; other times the text informs the sermon structure” (21). Yet, even with this qualification, the typical approach a preacher should take, according to Smith, is to let the form of Scripture determine the form of the sermon. This, according to the argument offered, is the most faithful “re-presentation” of Scripture. But is this in fact the case?

The basis of Smith's argument is that the purpose of preaching is to “re-present” what God has already said. Without question the content of a sermon should be a faithful representation of what God has said. But Smith's argument is that the form must also be a faithful representation of the genre of Scripture. By so closely identifying the form of a sermon with the form of Scripture, Smith has reduced the unique genre of preaching to “re-presenting” or “re-animating” (his word) Scripture. Yet, the language of Scripture would suggest that preaching is heralding the good news of the Gospel (cf. Isa. 40:9; 48:20; 52:7; Rom. 10:14ff; etc.). If we adopt this refinement of Smith's understanding of preaching, then a sermon should declare both what God has done and the significance of that reality for the hearers. Such a proclamation ought to be more than simply observational or descriptive, it ought to make a claim, a demand on its hearers. How to structure a sermon so that this claim is heard is certainly open for discussion. Learning from the genres of Scripture may be helpful, but only insofar as they serve the heraldic genre of preaching. For this reason, I’m not quite ready to follow the formula offered by Smith in this book

Despite this, I would still recommend reading this book. Even if Smith’s proposition is too strongly stated, there is still value in thinking through how the genres of Scripture might inform our preaching. And while the end of his argument may not be convincing, the start is certainly valid. Smith is concerned with formulaic preaching. This is a concern we should all have. It’s too easy to preach a sermon that

is technically correct but isn't a living word. Wrestling with how to best communicate the gospel in our media saturated age is always a worthwhile exercise, and that is what makes this book useful.

Joel Dykstra

Gary Steward. *Princeton Seminary (1812-1929): Its Leaders' Lives and Works*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2014. Pp. 336. $15.99.

Princeton Seminary recently celebrated its two hundredth year as the premier institution of theological training for the Presbyterian Church in the USA. At least it would see itself as such and for many years, without rival, served as such. In 2012, James Moorhead, long-time church historian at Princeton Seminary, produced a volume in honor of that bicentennial (earlier reviewed in the pages of this journal). Unlike the earlier two-volume history of David Calhoun (of Covenant Seminary in St. Louis) that covered only "Old Princeton"—the institution that existed from 1812 to 1929, before its reorganization by the PCUSA that resulted in its "liberalization"—the volume by Moorhead proudly covered the whole history of the institution, up until today. In fact, the Moorhead book seemed apologetic, if not to say ashamed, for much of the history that the more hagiographic volume of Calhoun gloried in, so much so that Moorhead never cited or mentioned Calhoun's history, as if it didn't even exist.

Gary Steward's fine new book on Princeton surveys the same ground as Calhoun's, Old Princeton, and is quite appreciative of that earlier work, certainly not ignoring it as did Moorhead. Steward's work, while certainly not critical scholarship in the vein of Moorhead's, is not quite as adoring as Calhoun's volume, but is, in its own way, deeply appreciative of Old Princeton. And this reviewer thinks that there is much to appreciate there (as well as to criticize). Princeton, and her worthies (the Alexanders, Miller, the Hodges, Warfield, Machen and many others), always had influence out of proportion to her size.

It is often noted how the college (then university, after 1896) in Princeton furnished so many national leaders; similarly, the seminary there influenced not only the Presbyterian Church more than any other seminary but influenced Protestantism more broadly in nineteenth-century America. At the death of Charles Hodge, for example, the national Methodist paper lauded him as the pre-eminent theologian of the day and, though clearly at variance with many of Hodge's views, went so far as to say "Princeton has lost its greatest ornament, the Presbyterian Church its most precious gem, the American Church her greatest earth-born luminary." This is not an uncommon testament to the influence of Princeton, her teachers, and her pupils.

Steward examines the background to the founding of the Seminary, particularly in the establishment of the College of New Jersey (Princeton) in 1746, and how the College, under John Witherspoon especially, began to have students interested in politics and other "secular" pursuits as much if not more than ministry. This shifting emphasis led to many arguing that a seminary was needed. Archibald Alexander, the first professor, set the pace with his dual emphasis on learning and piety, a tradition continued by his successors, including his own sons, James Waddell Alexander, a noted New York pastor and champion of the poor in addition to teaching at the Seminary, and Joseph Addison Alexander, a brilliant polyglot who adored his work at the Seminary. In each person that he treats, Steward generally follows his treatment of their life with one of their principal works, so that we not only get to know the person but also the work. Especially good in that regard, I think, is Steward's treatment of Archibald Alexander and his work on religious experience and A.A. Hodge and his work on the atonement.

I noted that Steward's book is more appreciative than critical (Steward even mutes criticism in his treatment of Princeton, politics, social reform and slavery; more than this reviewer would), but that's largely unobjectionable to this reviewer who finds the study of Old Princeton refreshing on several grounds, especially the strong dual emphasis on piety and learning, which is quite encouraging and always needed. There's much in the Princeton professors and students for any seminary professor or student today to emulate. Not only is studying Princeton vocationally encouraging, such study both reminds us of how far we've come in some respects while at the same time showing us what we now lack and might seek after. A serious read of this book should prompt any churchmen now to conclude that we have much to recover.

Alan D. Strange

Daniel Strange. *Their Rock is not Like Our Rock: A Theology of Religions*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014. Pp. 384. $24.99.

What a refreshing book Daniel Strange, lecturer in Culture, Religion, and Public Theology at Oak Hill Theological College, London, has written, especially in a culture that highly values a least-common denominator ecumenism above all: after all, we are so often told, either in popular or more academic form (by the likes of John Hick and company), all religions are the same. They all have the same goals, it is said, and, ultimately, worship the same god, so our purported differences really don't matter inasmuch as we are all pursuing the same spiritual ends. And the goal of all religion may be something along the lines of "peace and harmony among man," certainly more

than any sort of peace with a personal deity, the latter often being discarded in favor of some impersonal force, "peace with the cosmos," or the like. While all religions may present different paths to God, as such an approach alleges, they all lead to the same place, harmony with each other and the universe. Anything else that a religion may teach, like the need for atonement and wages of sin, is dismissed as divisive and hateful.

For at least the last century (and more), the approach that the university and secular society more broadly has taken to religion is purely phenomenological, rendering all religious studies a comparative study of religions, religion "from below" (since the Kantian noumenal realm—above—is inaccessible to examination and only the phenomenal realm yields to scientific study and public knowledge). If any common threads exist, they must exist in something like "love" (or the like), which Leo Tolstoy, as an example, believed to be the common factor of all religions. This conviction, while it has only grown in recent years, particularly among those who want simply to "coexist" and to transcend differences, all of which such "peacemakers" regard as petty religious squabbling, has been around for some time and longs for the end of all religious bickering and for the good that religion promises but in its doctrinal and actual warfare has failed to deliver.

Daniel Strange, in his book on religions, reminds us that "their rock is not like our Rock..." (Deut. 32:31a), which is to say, "No, all religions are not the same, leading to the same place, worshipping the same God." One might think such a commonplace unexceptional, but it is downright brave to assert such in today's culture that not only promotes pluralism but demands that we all bow before its altars. Strange commends what he calls a "bold humility" with respect to the exclusivity of Christ that is neither embarrassed nor arrogant. Over against this, the requirement to do obeisance to pluralism has been going on for some time, going back to the Enlightenment and finding expression even among once-biblical Protestantism in something like the 1932 Report of the Hocking Commission, *Re-thinking Missions*.

The Hocking report caused an uproar in several places, not least among them the PCUSA, leading ultimately to the rejection of the PCUSA Board of Missions and the establishment of the OPC. What did the Hocking Commission call for (that Pearl Buck and others warmly embraced, to the consternation of J.G. Machen)? An appreciation of a new approach to Christian missions that would downplay the exclusivity of the Christian faith and seek not only inter-faith dialog but be more concerned to teach how to live a good life than to teach the distinctive doctrines of the faith, like faith in Christ and his death, burial and resurrection as the sole path to heaven.

Relying on the Reformed missiologists Hendrik Kraemer and, especially his pupil, J. H. Bavinck, Strange seeks to apply their insights

(together with others to whom he is indebted like Cornelius Van Til, Chris Wright, and D.A. Carson, to name a few) to the contemporary scene. Strange describes what he is trying to do in this book in an interview with the publisher: "What I wanted to do was take a number of biblical doctrines that I already believe about who God is, who we are as human beings, what's gone wrong, what's the solution, etc. and simply apply these to what we call 'other religions'. My big idea is that the Bible shows that other religions are idolatrous distortions of God's revelation and so the gospel of Jesus confronts them head on. However, because idols are always parasitic on the truth, there will always be a connection between the gospel of Jesus Christ and other religions. Hence my one big idea is that the gospel is the 'subversive fulfillment' of other religions.' This approach is consonant with what many of us were taught: the world religions are a knock-off of the true—the Christian faith—and it seems to me a significant, and brilliant, insight to present the gospel as a subversive fulfillment of such."

Just this concluding note: our author is of Indian origin and notes that his father, when arriving in Britain, changed the family name from "Persaud" to "Strange," for reasons unknown. This reviewer, as one who shares that surname, and hails from a long line of Stranges in England going back to the Norman Conquest (and then France previously), says to my Indian brother, "Welcome to the name!" I am delighted to have this brother share it as a Christian and one who is so clear-headed in his thinking and reasoning. One might hope to encounter such epistemological clarity everywhere; alas, it is all too uncommon. I rejoice in such clarity in this important work of Dr. Strange and I heartily commend it to all of our readers. Here's hoping for much more of it in the coming days!

Alan D. Strange

Ferenc Morton Szasz with Margaret Connell Szasz. *Lincoln and Religion*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2014. Pp. xviii +103. $24.95 (cloth).

Ferenc Szasz, an award-winning professor of history of many years at the University of New Mexico, knew much more about Lincoln and religion than this tiny volume suggests. He had much interest in the subject for many years and read and collected vastly respecting it. Though he tended to write in many other areas, and thus only those who knew him knew how all-consuming his interest in Lincoln and religion was, he had intended to write this book for many years but other projects intruded and when he finally undertook it he was afflicted with a mortal disease; hence, its brevity. The shortness, however, should not be taken to indicate worthlessness, for in this brief

reprise Szasz covers a good deal of territory and casts helpful light on the whole question of Lincoln and religion.

Perhaps it's best to begin at the end, with a very helpful essay by Richard Etulain, "Historiography on Lincoln and Religion." Actually the very end (before the Index) is a focused bibliography and an appendix entitled, "Lincoln on Religion: Quotations," containing the primary quotes from Lincoln's papers on religion (addresses, proclamations, letters, etc.). Back to the historiography: Etulain argues that the secondary literature treating Lincoln and religion has enjoyed three phases. The first phase was in the first half century after Lincoln's death when two opposing views traded blows: there were those, many of the ministerial class, who loudly proclaimed Lincoln to be an orthodox Christian after his death; others, particularly led by his law partner, William Herndon, claimed Lincoln to be a skeptic. The second phase was the next fifty years in which many other issues than "Lincoln and religion" seemed to fill the field of vision for writers on Lincoln.

Beginning in the 1960s, however, we have entered a third phase in which there has again been an upsurge of interest in Lincoln and religion with a "nearly unanimous consensus" developing. "Lincoln's religious ideas were not only central to his personal beliefs but also frequently and distinctly shaped his political and moral decisions" (82). Richard Cardwardine, Allan Guelzo, and Mark Noll are three historians among many who have particularly contributed to this consensus and who this reviewer has found especially compelling. Note, however, and this will be taken up later in this review, that we have still not addressed the question that seems to bedevil so many—was Lincoln himself a Christian and, if so, of what sort?

Now to the beginning. The opening notes that Lincoln certainly seems to have had some sort of "faith perspective," quoting the Bible and speaking religiously at key junctures. Chapter 1 addresses his background, which religiously is mongrel (as is not untypical for America): the Lincolns were Congregationalists in England, became Quaker in the colonies, and then Baptists when moving to Kentucky (where Lincoln was born). Lincoln was reared as a Baptist but of the old Primitive (or Hardshell) hyper-Calvinist sort (who did not believe in evangelism, with much talk about predestination and the lack of any free will). This left a significant mark on him. He rejected their disdain for learning (scarcely any of the Baptist preachers he heard were literate) and lack of training but did take from them an unshakeable sense that God governed the universe, including the affairs of man. This sense of providence was what marked him early on, not any sense of God being triune or Christ being divine. He did read the Bible voraciously and that shaped much of his thinking and language, even if he was not receptive to all the teachings of Scripture.

When he courted, and then married in 1842, Episcopalian Mary Todd, this was likely his first significant encounter with learned clergymen. Particularly, Lincoln engaged Rev. Charles Dresser, rector of the Episcopal Church in Springfield, IL, in religious discussions, being influenced by those and *The Book of Common Prayer*, which, together with the King James Version of the Bible, formatively shaped Lincoln. Upon the death of the Lincolns' son Eddie, Mary asked Rev. James A. Smith, pastor of Springfield's First Presbyterian Church (Rev. Dresser being out of town at the time), to perform the funeral. The Lincolns were so impressed by Smith's words and manner that they began attending regularly the Presbyterian Church and purchased pew 20, though Lincoln never joined that church or any other (25).

In Washington the Lincolns continued attendance at a Presbyterian Church—Second Presbyterian Church, also known as New York Avenue Presbyterian Church (the Lincoln pew in that church remains unaltered to this day). The pastor of that church, the Rev. Dr. Phineas D. Gurley, an Old School Presbyterian graduate of Princeton Seminary (pupil of Charles Hodge), was one of the few visitors to the White House ever to have especially lengthy sessions with the President. After the death of the Lincolns' son Willie in February 1862, after which Mrs. Lincoln became mentally and emotionally imbalanced and the President was inconsolable, Gurley's role increased. It also increased when Lincoln consulted him in the darkest hours of the War.

What seems inarguable is that, whatever role religion played before the death of his sons and the agony of the War, during his White House years Lincoln became more religious. This is seen not only in his own prayer life and in the use of days of feasting and thanksgiving during the War (all of which played into the burgeoning civil religion of which Lincoln would become, especially after his "martyr's death," the center; this is the focus of discussion in Chapter 3 of this book), but also in his public addresses, especially the Second Annual Message to Congress (1862), the Gettysburg Address (1863) and the Second Inaugural Address (1864). The last of these was delivered only weeks before the end of the War and his assassination and is, arguably, the most remarkable, and religious, significant address given in American public life. It is for these reasons, and others, that the scholars of more recent decades have concluded that, whatever the personal faith of Lincoln (in terms of, say, orthodox Christianity), religion grew in importance to him and his sense of divine providence increased.

Granting that Lincoln became more religious, this still leaves unanswered the question that I posed above: was Lincoln, or did he ever become, a Christian? This question is posed in the conclusion and called "an enigma," because at the end of the day, for all his research into Lincoln and religion, Szasz is unable definitively to answer the

question. Lincoln held to ethical standards that comported with Christianity (although, of course, some who saw him chiefly as a warmonger might dispute that) and he was noted by all for his personal kindness and forgiveness, often to the consternation of his generals, who wanted to shoot deserters and to whom Lincoln's pen seemed too ready to pardon. And the leniency he had already begun to show the South and surely would have much further shown had he not been cruelly cut down by an assassin's bullet, certainly comported with Christ-like mercy. If he had earlier been something closer to a deist or even a skeptic (as his opponent, Methodist minister Peter Cartwright, had alleged in their 1846 Congressional race), such was no longer the case by the time of his death. He certainly affirmed that "God alone can claim" to have controlled the events of the War years.

All that having been said, however, Szasz notes that question of Lincoln's personal religious belief remains a puzzle. It is the case that he never publicly professed faith in Christ (though rumors persist, unverified, that he planned to do so when shot on Good Friday, 1865). It is also the case that, among the many glowing things said about him in the memorials that followed his murder, perhaps one of the most striking, and strangely ignored by Szasz in this work, is the funeral oration delivered by Dr. Gurley in the White House on April 19. Recall that Dr. Gurley was an Old School Presbyterian who had spent much time conversing with Lincoln. Among the many things Pastor Gurley said that might suggest Lincoln had become a Christian in the last years in the White House, speaking, for instance, of his "abiding confidence in the overruling providence of God and in the ultimate triumph of truth and righteousness through the power and blessing of God," he also said, more explicitly, "He is dead; but the God in whom he trusted lives." For an Old School Presbyterian to say that Lincoln trusted in God suggests that he had perhaps come to an evangelical faith. Or it might be giving him the benefit of doubt. It is certainly the case that this minister, not otherwise known to compromise, spoke of the man he knew well as if he were a Christian. I don't suggest that this settles the matter, by any means, but that it is another important piece of the puzzle of Abraham Lincoln and religion.

Alan D. Strange

Chad Van Dixhoorn. *Confessing the Faith: A Reader's Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith*. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2014. Pp. 512. $30.00 (cloth).

Dr. Van Dixhoorn is an acknowledged expert on the history of the Westminster Confession of Faith and here he proves himself to be a

competent exegete of the same. He brings all his historical knowledge to bear, having written a Ph.D. dissertation on certain aspects of the work of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, in the course of which he discovered, and has subsequently published, multi-volumes of Assembly minutes. This means that few, if any, living persons know more about the historical details of the Westminster Assembly than Van Dixhoorn.

For those, however, who find this intimidating or fear that Van Dixhoorn's treatment of the Confession will overwhelm with contextual particularities, let me allay your concerns. He wears his learning lightly and calls it to assist only when truly helpful and illumining. For example, in dealing with Chapters 7 (on the covenants) and 19 (on the law of God), he has a clear and straightforward exposition of what's actually in those chapters. He does not apparently find it necessary or fitting in this basic guide to the Westminster Confession to burden the reader with details about how the law given at Sinai is a republication of the covenant of works. His exposition of these chapters is quite satisfying and free of theological constructs which are at least extra-confessional and not necessary for a clear exposition of those chapters.

All this is to say that this work is quite intelligible to anyone interested in going through the Westminster Confession and surveying the grand system of doctrine given expression therein. One might then wonder if we have, say, A.A. Hodge and G.I. Williamson from the previous two centuries, what is the warrant for a new commentary on the Westminster Confession of Faith? It is my conviction that just as every generation needs a few good systematic theologies (which are to be expressions of the biblical doctrines of the faith reflected across time and given voice in light of contemporary matters), so too every generation needs those who grapple with the secondary standards of the church and give expression to those documents in a voice that is fresh and contemporary. In other words, the timeless truths of the Westminster Standards need always to be revisited, along with the Word of God, and newly exposited.

Why, though, this particular "reader's guide" from Van Dixhoorn? Well, because it is clearly and engagingly written, accessible not only to adults but to interested youth, being quite devotional and pastoral, in fact (Chad is both a pastor and a professor). I would highly recommend this for adult mid-week classes or other Christian education opportunities offered for adults. I might also suggest that if the youth memorize the shorter catechism (and perhaps study Williamson on the same) in middle school (grades 6-8), that this would make an excellent volume for a good teacher to teach the high school youth in their education times. Our times and their challenging nature require such instruction as much, if not more, than ever. Those who are beginners in their study of the Westminster Confession of Faith will have its rudiments clearly set forth; those who are veterans will be

refreshed in its doctrinal rehearsal and perhaps discover something that has been passed over before as unremarkable but now is brought home with freshness and profit.

Alan D. Strange

Grant Wacker. *America's Pastor: Billy Graham and the Shaping of a Nation*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014. Pp. 448. $27.95.

As famous as Billy Graham has been during the lifetime of much of the readership of this Journal, there is a rising generation who "knew not Billy," as hard as that is for some of us to imagine. Yes, Billy Graham, beginning in a big way with the Los Angeles Crusade of 1949, has been a national figure, forming the heart of what "evangelical" means to many of us. His last full crusade, however, was in 1996 and his last time preaching to a massive live audience was in the summer of 2006 (though there have been other occasions since; thus he has not completely faded from the public eye, but he has, as compared to his earlier years). Thus, as familiar as he is, the now ninety-five year old has been off the scene for a decade living in fairly secluded retirement in Montreat, NC. Grant Wacker's survey of the remarkable life that Graham has lived (he has regularly appeared on Gallup's list of most admired, every year for 49 consecutive years, far more than any other individual) is timely and needed, serving as a beautifully-written and deeply considered analysis of Graham and his times.

Dr. Graham's life and work is well-known, having received many treatments. Any serious student of his life should consult both the scholarly biography by William P. Martin, *Billy Graham: A Prophet with Honor*, and Graham's own autobiography, *Just as I Am*. Wacker's book stands in a rather different place, however, than these and many of the standard earlier biographical treatments of Billy Graham. This work by Wacker is simply unparalleled as a reflection upon and assessment of the impact of the life and ministry of Dr. Graham. Put simply, Graham has shaped his culture—Southern, evangelical, and American—and has been shaped by it over the better part of the last century. It was George H.W. Bush who referred to him as America's Pastor and he has been that in a number of ways for the last six decades. As he passes from the scene, talk of a successor has often emerged, but Wacker rightly concludes that Graham as a person does not have a successor, in part because the times would no longer permit a single person to fulfill Graham's place.

After the lengthy introduction setting forth the shape and texture of Billy Graham's ministry in the America of the second half of the twentieth century, Wacker graces us—and that word is used advised-

ly, because his prose is not only packed with insights but executed with aplomb—with eight chapters seeking to capture the many sides of Graham and what he has meant to us. The chapter titles are only one word and yet each communicates something significant about this man in context: Preacher, Icon, Southerner, Entrepreneur, Architect, Pilgrim, Pastor, and Patriarch.

When one thinks of the figures that most impacted the twentieth century, not to say only the religious figures that impacted the century, Billy Graham should be on that list, with perhaps only John Paul II rivaling him among similarly notable religious figures. Even as John Paul II helped bring down Communism in the Eastern bloc, so Graham in a post-World War II America helped it thrive, partly by being a cheerleader for American capitalism as much as John Paul II was a critic of communism. But the caricature of someone like Graham being a shill for corporate America is not quite accurate: his earlier fundamentalism gave way to a more moderate mainstream evangelicalism, part of which resulted in an embrace of a more moderate economic and social position, including a call for social justice. At the same time, Graham, though never tainted by any moral or fiscal scandal, as were so many other American religious figures in the latter part of the 20th century, was tainted by certain political associations, especially that with Richard Nixon.

If Graham succumbed most clearly to any temptation, it was to be in the company of and liked by American presidents and others in power positions. This has gained him in some circles a reputation for failing to speak truth to power. While Wacker by no means discounts such a reputation altogether, he considerably qualifies it and shows Graham to be someone who did wish to speak truth to power but in personal encounter often failed to do so, at least in the sense of issuing a prophetic challenge. This is not to say that he failed to challenge unbelievers wherever he encountered them to trust Christ; he did that naturally and easily. One only need look at television encounters like those with Larry King or Woody Allen to see how readily and fluently he shares Christ with them.

On the whole, Wacker presents quite a positive portrait of Graham. His personal interaction with Graham and Wacker's use of many letters from Graham's readers, including children, proves fascinating, throwing significant light on the public perception of Graham—in short, he is adored and respected—and on his love for and interaction with his followers. Graham is certainly not a scholar or a theologian, but was a communicator of amazing power and especially skilled in communicating the gospel in its essentials. He was a remarkable administrator and organizer as well, having an unfailing sense of what needed to be done to get the message out in the most effective fashion. And this is what he did, above all, in all the years of the worldwide crusades: communicate the gospel, albeit deficiently from a Calvinist perspective, to more people than any person in his-

tory. It is true that many who have "come forward" at these mass meetings have not persevered in their professions, but many have as well. I personally know people who came to Christ through his ministry and have consistently and well served him over the course of the years. If one wishes to understand not just Graham but the Graham phenomenon, and so much of the religious history of post-war America, this book is required reading.

Alan D. Strange