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BOOK REVIEWS & SHORT NOTICES

Michael Allen. *Sanctification.* New Studies in Dogmatics. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017. Pp. 302. $34.99 (paperback).

Michael Allen, who is the John Dyer Trimble Professor of Systematic Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary (Orlando, Florida), is eminently qualified to write this volume on the Christian doctrine of sanctification. As one of the co-editors of the series of which this volume is a part, he demonstrates throughout the commitment of the editors to write a series of studies in dogmatics that exhibits the traits that characterized similar series in the past like the well-known works of G. C. Berkouwer. The aim of this series of studies is "to fill the gap between introductory theology textbooks and advanced theological monographs" (Series Preface). Each of the volumes endeavors to summarize the teaching of Scripture on a particular subject, but to do so in conversation with the church's "most trusted teachers" of the past. The goal is to contribute to a renewal of contemporary theology, but in a way that honors Scripture, the church's theological tradition of reflection upon Scripture, and the great creeds and confessions of the church throughout her history. Allen's book admirably achieves these aims, and represents a rich account of the biblical, historical, and theological dimensions of the topic of sanctification.

In Chapter 1 of his study ("Sanctification and the Gospel"), Allen makes clear that he is not interested in a narrow treatment of the way the Holy Spirit sanctifies believers who are united to Christ through faith. Though he treats this theme in the last chapters of the book, he places the topic of sanctification in a much broader context than within the confines of what is commonly known as the *ordo salutis* or the order of salvation. While he aims to arrive at a point where the manner of the Spirit's work in the sanctification of believers through union with Christ is considered, he wants first to place this work within a much broader gospel context. As he puts it right up front, he wants to reflect upon "holiness in the sphere of the gospel, that is, holiness in the wake of the economy of the Triune God's life-bestowing grace" (21). Allen aims to provide a broadly theological reflection upon the teaching of Scripture and Christian theology regarding the holiness of the Triune God that is communicated to his creatures in creation and redemption. Since God is Triune and graciously imparts his holiness to his creatures in the course of the history of redemption, Allen develops his treatment of sanctification in explicitly theological, Christological, and pneumatological terms. Accordingly, the "orienting contexts" for his study are the Trinity, the covenant, and the "twofold grace of God" in the free justification and on-going sanctification of believers in union with Christ.

Consistent with his broadly theological and Trinitarian approach to the topic of sanctification, Allen begins his study of sanctification with three chapters that address, respectively, the intrinsic holiness of the Triune God, the creation as the arena within

which God's holiness is manifest, and the covenant between God and human beings as his creatures. Each of these broad themes contribute to a broadly theological understanding of God's holiness that underlies all of God's redemptive acts in Christ and through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In his chapter on God's intrinsic holiness, Allen argues that the holiness of God is a richer attribute than theologians often recognize. Whereas the tendency of many theologians is to attenuate God's holiness, reducing it to a moral attribute indistinguishable from his righteousness, Allen persuasively argues that it is an attribute that firstly distinguishes God from all other creatures (who is like him?) and secondly distinguishes him in his perfect moral purity. God alone is absolutely, intrinsically, and necessarily holy in a way that distinguishes him from all creatures whose holiness is always derivative and dependent upon God's gracious communication of his holiness to them. As he puts it, "God's ontological singularity grounds and implies God's moral incomparability as the canon and rule of ethical purity, righteousness, and goodness" (68-69). In his chapter on creation, Allen seeks to show how creatures, particularly human beings who are uniquely created in the image of God, manifest something of God's holiness by way of God's free bestowal of some likeness to or participation in his holiness. Thereafter, in a chapter on the theme of covenant, Allen offers a careful account of the pre-fall covenant relationship between God and his image-bearers. Though this covenant relationship is often termed a "covenant of works," Allen notes that it is freely, sovereignly, and graciously initiated by God and, though it requires obedience of the part of God's image-bearers, it promises more than they could ever strictly deserve. The importance of the theme of God's holiness, however, is exhibited in the way God insists that his image-bearers be holy in their relationship to him and the obligations of his holy law.

In Chapters 5 and 6 of his study, Allen moves from the broad themes of the Triune God's holiness, creation, and covenant, to the Christological themes of the Old Testament's preparation for the coming of Christ in the fullness of time, and the incarnation of the Son of God, who assumes our human nature in order to fulfill all righteousness on our behalf. In these chapters, Allen seeks to show how fallen sinners, who lie under the condemnation and curse of God's holy judgment upon human sin, are in need of all that Christ accomplishes for them in the covenant of grace to be restored to fellowship with God. In order for fallen sinners to be restored to God's favor and fellowship, they must receive through the work of Christ a twofold cleansing from both the penalty and the power of human sin. They need to be forgiven and placed in a new relationship of acceptance with God (justification); and they need to be renewed in holy obedience to God (sanctification). The work of Christ as Mediator of the covenant of grace answers precisely to this twofold need. The active and passive obedience of Christ constitute the righteousness that God grants and imputes to believers as the basis for their justification. Furthermore, when believers are united to Christ through faith and by the ministry of the Spirit, they are also restored to life-communion with Christ as those indwelt of the Spirit of sanctification. Allen develops this point at length in an extended chapter on justification and sanctification, which Calvin termed the "twofold grace of God" that believers receive through union with Christ. While Allen maintains that these graces or benefits are given simultaneously and inseparably by virtue of the believer's union with Christ by faith, he also rightly

insists that they are given in a theological order with justification properly termed the "first" and sanctification the "second" of these benefits. God justifies and accepts sinners, but at the same time commences to sanctify them in holiness.

Only after his rich treatment of the theological and Christological bases for the topic of salvation does Allen take up, in relatively quick succession, a number of the topics that are usually associated with the doctrine of sanctification. Among these topics, he addresses the relation between grace and nature, arguing that God's gracious work of sanctification involves the restoration and perfection of nature, not its supplementation or supersession. Grace perfects, but does not displace nature. He also offers a finely-nuanced treatment of the way the work of the Spirit in regeneration and sanctification honors the responsible engagement and action of the believer. Divine and human actions concur, without competing or displacing the other, in the process of sanctification. In treating this topic, Allen offers a helpful account of the way believers work out their salvation with fear and trembling, even as God works his will through them. In a final, relatively brief chapter (somewhat oddly entitled "Grace and Discipline"), Allen treats a number of issues, such as the role of biblical exemplars (including Christ) for providing believers with direction in the Christian life. He also treats the role of the law as a standard or rule for the Christian life. Believers who are united to Christ by faith obey the law as a rule of gratitude, and not as a means to obtain favor with God.

While my overview of Allen's book offers only a skeletal outline of its contents, I trust it is sufficient to convey something of the richness of his treatment of the topic of sanctification. Since Allen is one of the co-editors of the series that includes this study, it may seem superfluous to say that his study meets the high standards set for it. Nonetheless, I am pleased to say that it does. Readers will find exactly what the series aims to provide: a study richly informed by the Scriptures, conversant with the church's most gifted teachers throughout her history, respectful of the historic creeds and confessions, and deeply rooted in Trinitarian and evangelical theology.

If I have one reservation to express, it would be this: because Allen spends so much time developing the Trinitarian foundations and aspects of the doctrine of sanctification, he tends to give insufficient attention to the topics addressed in the last two chapters. For example, the Spirit's ministry in the church, particularly through the means of Word, sacrament, and prayer, receives very little attention in the concluding chapter where it would be expected. In a Trinitarian approach to sanctification, I would expect to find a more robust link between Christology, pneumatology *and ecclesiology* than is the case in Allen's study. He also offers little or no comment on such topics as the distinction some theologians make between "definitive" and "progressive" sanctification; various perfectionist views of sanctification; and contemporary "second blessing" views among diverse evangelical, Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal theologians. Notwithstanding these omissions, Allen's book is undoubtedly one of the best theological treatments of the doctrine of sanctification available.

—Cornelis P. Venema

Jon Balserak and Jim West, eds., *From Zwingli to Amyraut: Exploring the Growth of European Reformed Traditions*, vol. 43, Reformed Historical Theology (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017). Pp. 181. 85,00 € (hardcover).

This volume is one among many that celebrates the five-hundredth anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. It includes an international team of well-established and well-respected scholars treating issues related to Reformation and post-Reformation theology. The essays included are historical sensitive and they contribute greatly to our understanding Reformed thought in areas related to the Bible and exegesis, soteriology, church-state relationships, covenant theology, and prophecy. Each contribution is worth reading, even when provoking disagreement at points. This volume will help serious students of Reformed thought expand their horizons by introducing them to a wide range of topics from a group of capable scholars.

The editors classify the essays comprising this volume under three appropriate headings. These include the Bible and the republic of letters, Christology and soteriology, and other miscellaneous theological and political issues (7-8). This summary helps readers wade through the content of the book as a whole. Jordan Ballor opens the material by addressing Luther's revolutionary and gradual shifts regarding the role of the civil magistrate in reforming the church. This helps readers better grasp the subtle developments of post-Reformation thought in this area in ways that are often overlooked. Pierrick Hildebrand then shows the central role of covenant theology in Zwingli's thought, arguing that his development of covenant theology was not simply a tool to defend infant baptism. Jim West enlightens readers to the extent of Renaissance influences on Reformed theology through including previously un-translated letters between Zwingli and Bullinger. His primary contribution to this field of study is to make these letters available to English-speaking readers. Rebecca Giselbrecht next draws attention to the genuine piety of women who corresponded with Bullinger. Joe Mock then revisits the thorny question of Bullinger's views of the Lord's Supper, arguing that Bullinger influenced Zwingli rather than vice versa and that he developed his thought independently of ongoing ecumenical discussions.

Hywel Clifford outlines the anti-Unitarian thought of lesser-known French exile to England, Peter Allix, positing the idea that his dependence on pre-Christian Jewish thought and Hebraic studies marked a novelty in his work written in the late seventeenth-century. To some extent, this essay ignores earlier examples of this practice, such as Jerome Zanchius and John Owen, as well as Sarah Mortimer's fine study on the influences of English Socinianism in the 1640's and 50's. However, it fills in important gaps in the historical study of Christian Hebraism and uses of sources from ancient Judaism. Emidio Campi draws attention to the rise and influences of Giovanni Diodati's herculean efforts to translate the Bible into Italian, asking whether or not his efforts were worth it. Drawing from his book length study of Jerome Zanchius, Stephan Lindholm sketches the genuine developments in post-Reformation Christology, drawing both from medieval precedents and interacting with contemporary Lutheran authors. This kind of broad contextual study is exemplary in its approach to the history of ideas. Finally, Allan Clifford rehashes much of his earlier research on Amyraldian soteriology through the lens of its intended potential to create

a rapprochement between Lutheran and Reformed theology. Due to the fact that Clifford's earlier work on atonement themes has been subject to extensive criticism by authors such as Richard Muller and Carl Trueman, this essay will likely be the most controversial one in this book. This reviewer believers that his arguments in favor of universal atonement from Calvin's writings are debatable, if not dubious, Clifford illustrates well how thoroughly Amyraut drew self-consciously from Calvin's writings with an eye toward possible unity with Lutheran theology on this point.

Readers interested in the historical development of Reformed thought in its international and cross-confessional contexts will find this volume to be good reading. The authors help us better understand the long-reaching influences of Reformed thought that stretch up to the present day without blurring the lines between historical and contemporary theology. Even if readers are not always convinced that these authors have fully represented the theological developments that they treat, they will not be disappointed by taking the time to read them.

—Ryan M. McGraw

Hans Burger, Arnold Huijgen, and Eric Peels, eds., *Sola Scriptura: Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Scripture, Authority, and Hermeneutics*, vol. 32, Studies in Reformed Theology. Leiden: Brill, 2018. Pp. 372. $76.00 (hardback).

Scripture has always held a central role in the Christian tradition. This is particularly true in its Protestant branches, which historically have assigned magisterial authority to Scripture alone, with the church retaining ministerial authority to help believers understand what Scripture means. The present volume asks whether *sola scriptura* continues to be a viable principle for Reformed theology. The consistent answer of most of its authors is, "sort of," as long as *sola scriptura* is qualified heavily or reframed completely. This reviewer believes that, with few exceptions, this results in changing the image of Reformed doctrine of Scripture into the image of post-modern philosophy. While this volume is thought provoking and takes contemporary philosophical trends seriously, its defections from classic Christian views of Scripture's inspiration and authority move towards cutting most of its authors off from the catholic Christian tradition. After summarizing the contents of this book briefly, this review focuses on two summary areas of concern.

This volume is divided into five sections. The first includes four systematic theological perspectives on Scripture and the second treats seven exegetical issues. The editors note that these two sections receive the most attention from the two respondents that constitute part five and that they represent the core of the volume (7). The historical perspectives treated in part three are disappointingly truncated because they are limited to Luther and Calvin only. While these two essays are useful, treating Luther and Calvin alone solidifies an impression created earlier in the book that early Protestant theology had a soteriological aim in view with regard to Scripture while the Protestant scholastics tracked epistemological mud into this soteriological pool (e.g., 4, 20-21, 105, 111). Henk van den Belt's chapter on the origins of *sola scriptura* (38-

55) augments the historical material to some extent. While his arguments for the late origin of the *solas* of the Reformation are sound, this author does not agree that we should jettison the term because it needs to be nuanced so greatly. It is the nature of summary statements to be inadequate and to require explanation; otherwise, they would not be summary statements. *Sola scriptura* is thus a useful summary of the Reformed view of Scripture precisely due to its inadequacies. The two essays in part four address the role of Scripture in practical theology, but in a way that seems to rest more on the subjective impressions of current Christian communities than on the stable meaning and application of biblical teaching. Chapters 4 (Arnold Huijgen) and 18 (Kevin Vanhoozer) are the only two that unambiguously promote something like a historic Reformed (and biblical) doctrine of Scripture, excepting the chapters treating historical themes. Given the fact that the contributors represent most of the major universities in the Netherlands, this is a sad commentary on the current state of Reformed theology in that country. This author has reduced his critique to two areas below with the caveat that Vanhoozer's concluding chapter offers the kind of thorough critical interaction that this book warrants.

The first overarching problem with this volume is that most of the authors make little appeal to Scripture itself in order to develop a doctrine of Scripture. There are exceptions, such as Arie Versluis' chapter on the idea of canon in the book of Deuteronomy (137-152), and there are extremes, such as Maarten Wisse's contention that personal selectivity makes doing such a thing impossible (19-37). Wisse, in particular, argues that any attempt to systematize the teachings of Scripture is a "power play" that favors one's own interpretation of Scripture to the exclusion of others (21, 81). He adds that this makes theologians "lazy" by failing to be self-critical in their use of Scripture (20, 23). He argues that *solus Christus* should govern our use of Scripture (21). However, it is unclear how such a claim is not self-condemnatory because it embodies precisely the kind of selectivity that Wisse rejects (Vanhoozer makes a similar observation on p. 352). His statement here that Lutherans viewed Christ as the focal point of Scripture while Reformed authors did not will be downright baffling to those who know the sources. At its lowest point, his view implies that Scripture is full of ethical errors, such as its views of women and homosexuals (34). This appears to epitomize selective reading because the only criterion for holding the Bible to be in error on these points is the fact that such opinions are no longer in vogue. If the basic assumption is that Scripture has no stable meaning independent of its readers (as asserted on p. 346), then it would be inappropriate to ask what the Bible teaches about itself (or about anything else, including Christ). Wisse's view mutes the voice of Scripture, depriving it of a vote regarding its own character. This is also an easy way of dismissing the voluminous orthodox Christian literature detailing the Bible's theology of what Scripture is and what its ends are. Instead, as the prophet Isaiah wrote, "to the law and to the testimony; if they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20 NKJV). Or as Jesus said, "he who is of God hears God's words" (John 8:47). Even if this reviewer multiplied such references indefinitely, Wisse could still dismiss them as selective. However, such words are not merely *selective*; they are also *representative* of the Spirit's testimony to his own inscripturated Word.

A second major area of concern is that many of the authors in this volume contend that we must largely choose between the possible epistemological implications of Scripture or its soteriological thrust (e.g., 56). As Vanhoozer wrote, the idea is that, "No one can serve two solas" (338). Later he asks pointedly, "Must we, like Israel before crossing into the Promised Land, choose this day whom we will serve: epistemology or soteriology?" (345). It is no secret that classic Reformed theology treated Scripture as the *principium cognoscendi externum* of theology, which meant that Scripture was the external epistemic foundation of the knowledge of God. Yet most of the authors in this volume seem to forget that the Holy Spirit's work in believers was the *principium cognoscendi internum* of theology. This reminds us that while Scripture has epistemological implications for the knowledge of God, it is still the knowledge of God at which theology aims. The goal of theology is to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he sent (John 17:3). Also, contrary to most authors in this volume, Reformed orthodoxy did not elevate Scripture as divine revelation at the expense of Christ, or even at the expense of earlier forms of revelation. Scripture is simply the final form of written revelation without which we have no knowledge of Christ. Yet the Spirit both reveals Christ (through Scripture) and unites believers to Christ through faith (also through Scripture; 1 Cor. 2 summarized). The epistemological implications of Scripture cannot be pitted against its soteriological ends any more than Scripture can be pitted against Christ as holding the central place in divine revelation. Scripture is the cognitive foundation of theology for those living after the close of the canon because Scripture is the means that the Spirit uses to drive people to salvation through faith in Christ. Scripture is the Word read and preached by which we are born of the Spirit (1 Pet. 1:23; Jas. 1:18).

While all of the authors in this book purport to be Reformed (3), most of them operate from an entirely different paradigm than that of classic Reformed theology. Instead of beginning with Scripture as one of the two foundational principles of theology, the contributors ask whether or not *sola scriptura* is still viable as a concept. From a classically Reformed perspective, taking this approach is like eating food one is allergic to while telling oneself that he or she will like it eventually and that continual exposure will make it healthy. Instead, the result is prophylactic shock. If this assessment seems overly harsh, then readers should realize that the intent of this stark language is meant to remind readers how starkly the approaches to *sola scriptura* presented here stand in contrast to the historic Christian tradition. Ironically, this Reformed reviewer has more in common in some ways with many Roman Catholic approaches to Scripture than with this group of scholars. At least conservative Roman Catholics believe that Scripture (and tradition) has a stable meaning independent of its readers. Doubtless some of the authors will dismiss this reviewer as a fundamentalist or (more accurately, perhaps) as a scholastic. So be it. The issue is what the Holy Spirit's view of Scripture is as he has revealed himself through his own Word and how the Spirit uses the Scriptures to drive Christ into our hearts to the glory of the Father. This reviewer is convinced that the views represented in this book break ties with mainstream views of biblical authority in the catholic Christian tradition. I want this review to be winsome (some of the authors are even personal friends). Yet I want it to be a bit provocative as well. Sometimes it is important through a bit of shock therapy

to show friends that they run the risk of sacrificing catholicity on the altar of breadth and relevance. We must listen to the Bible's view of itself and the doctrine of Scripture must continue to be the cognitive foundation of theology in order for theology to reach its soteriological goals.

—Ryan M. McGraw

John C. Clark and Marcus Peter Johnson, *The Incarnation of God: The Mystery of The Gospel as the Foundation of Evangelical Theology*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2015. Pp. 255. $21.99 (paperback).

C. S. Lewis's famous axiom is oft repeated: apart from knowing God, life is akin to choosing mud over a trip to the ocean. But what if one's vision of the sea is not all that clear? Seeking to help foster such a sense of godly wonder and appreciation, Clark and Johnson describe who it is that bears the title Son of God. The authors' aim "is to explore the relation of the incarnation to other major facets of the Christian faith, demonstrating that Christ holds together, and should indeed be preeminent in, the whole of our Christian confession" (12). In so doing, we understand *who* Jesus is. The authors' devotional and doxological aims are not lost amidst the clearly presented evidence and logic. Clark and Johnson write with a clear bent: to help the contemporary church clearly "see and savor the astounding mystery which lies at the heart of the Christian confession: God the Son, without ceasing to be fully God, has become fully human" (11).

The preface and chapter 1 provide a comprehensive taste of the authors' style and thought. Together with a host of witnesses—including Packer, Lewis, Luther, Sayers, and Webster—Clark and Johnson proclaim the profoundest mystery of God: the Christmas event. While Good Friday and Easter are marvelous, our authors (and their citations) do not hedge on the superior profundity of the time when God incarnated himself. This chapter provides an excellent primer on the doctrine involved and the core commitments that will characterize the remaining seven chapters.

To this end the authors provide three keys that guide their writing. First, this is a work of theology which demands a greater focus on *who* rather than *what*. Not neglecting the pastoral effects and practical results of understanding the incarnation, they pursue the greater question of "Who is the incarnate Christ?" (40). Second, this is a work of convictional theology. Rather than speculating about the *how* of the incarnation, the authors double-down on their focus of *who*. Third, this work is evangelical. The evidence is sourced in Scripture, while the authors employ their expertise on the sixteenth-century Reformers (43).

Chapter 2 explores trinitarianism and the impact of the incarnation on the relationship of the Godhead, namely how this event reveals the desire of God to work out the salvation of humankind. Chapter 3 contrasts common self-styled (read: idolatrous) assumptions of God's character with corrections as revealed by the incarnation. Chapters 4 and 5 focus on salvation, considering the kind of humanity Christ assumed and its significance, and exploring the scope of salvation. Throughout,

Christ is continually regarded as the substance and sum of salvation (more on this below). Chapter 6 considers the believer's union with Christ and the benefits therein (justification, sanctification, and adoption). Chapter 7 seeks to better the church as both the body and bride of the incarnate God. And the final chapter strives to encourage the church to pursue holiness. Of special interest, chapter 8 explores the fuller meaning of marriage and sex—understanding both to be living manifestations of the gospel (more below).

Chapters 4 and 8 provide particularly helpful glances into the thought and theology of this work. Chapter 4 hones in on the complex subject of salvation. Clark and Johnson clarify several misconceptions regarding the atonement and its effect. The goal of this chapter is to "demonstrate that a proper estimation of the incarnation deepens and broadens common notions of what it means to be reconciled to God in Jesus Christ" (104). Living with these misconceptions, however, "diminishes the scope and grandeur of the gospel" (104). Clark and Johnson also compare answers to the question that dominates the book, *Who is Jesus?*, in terms of the most recent manifestations of the major traditions: Roman Catholicism, Protestant evangelicals, and Protestant liberals. Following the overview, a comparison and response is provided. In putting forward a better understanding, Clark and Johnson pull from historic Christian sources such as Basil of Caesarea, Tertullian, and Gregory of Nazianzus. Quotes from Luther and Calvin are presented alongside John Williamson Nevin and Abraham Kuyper. "The condemnation of sin in Christ's flesh that surely *culminated* at the cross can neither be totalized by the cross nor isolated to the cross, as this condemnation *commenced* at his conception…. The incarnation attests to the reality that God the Son seized us in the state in which he found us, a state of condemnation, corruption, and alienation—assuming the only kind of nature that exists east of Eden, the only kind that actually needs redeeming" (113; italics original).

This chapter ends with a section on the atonement, titled "What Are We Saying and Not Saying?" where the authors provide a helpful list of five crucial clarifications and implications: (1) Paul's use of "flesh" language; (2) The beginning of the effectual atonement at the moment of incarnation; (3) The sinless assumption of sinful flesh; (4) The delayed glorification of the sanctified flesh which Christ assumed; and (5) The sure and certain "participation" of Christ fully in both God and man. Throughout this chapter, there is a push against the common "abstract and extrinsic" understandings of the nature of the atonement (125).

Chapter 8 focuses on the meaning of marriage and sex—ever increasingly debated issues. Clark and Johnson remind readers of the dramatic presence of the naked human body in Scripture, specifically the nakedness of Adam and Eve in the garden and the nakedness of Christ on the Roman gibbet. Yet the consistent image we see of Christ on the tree is clothed. Clark and Johnson elicit the penetrating question "If we have only a clothed Christ, how are we to understand and interpret our nakedness" (210)? The authors spend time showing the absurdity of sexual unholiness amongst those who are joined to Christ and argue that a prime casualty of the fall is our sexuality. Readers are taken through a discussion that locates the meaning of sex and marriage in the relationship of our triune God: God's trinitarian image is seen in the mutual indwelling and life-giving realities of marriage. Pushing deeper into the necessary

relationship between mankind and its maker, the authors say that "our existence as male and female is *intrinsic* to" what we image (216). Living out this image perfectly, then, is God's Son who refuses to exist apart from his bride, the church. The authors conclude this chapter with the many ways in which we effectively "mis-image" our Creator.

Clark and Johnson provide a gently provocative resource, rooted in orthodox historical and Reformed theology, for better understanding the scope and meaning of the incarnation of God in Christ. A careful reading will help to bring Christ nearer to the believer and cause readers to reflect on their understanding of God's condensation to save his people.

—Noah Debaun

Oliver D. Crisp. *The Word Enfleshed: Exploring the Person and Work of Christ.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016. Pp. 190. $27.00 (paperback).

As the title of this volume advertises, Crisp offers a collection of chapters that address a variety of questions regarding the person and work of Christ. Crisp, professor of systematic theology at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA, writes from the perspective of "analytic theology," which he defines as an approach that "utilizes the tools and methods of contemporary analytic philosophy for the purposes of constructive Christian theology" (x). Though this definition might suggest Crisp has little interest in the historic formulations of Christian theology upon the basis of its engagement with Scripture, the arguments that he puts forth are generally offered in defense of the classic doctrine of Christ's person and work codified in the great ecumenical confessions of the Christian church.

In the preface, Crisp informs his readers that he aims to provide what he calls a "joined-up" account of the person and work of Christ. By "joined-up" Crisp means to refer to a Christology that closely links the identity of Christ's person with the nature of his saving work. Since the classic Christian doctrine of Christ's person speaks of "one person with two distinct natures" (divine and human), it expresses the fundamental feature of biblical soteriology. Salvation for fallen human sinners entails the restoration of fellowship with the Triune God, and this restoration is already accomplished in the eternal Son's assumption of the fullness of human nature into unity with his person.

Crisp begins the book with three chapters that deal with the traditional doctrines of the "eternal generation" of the Son, the pre-existence of Christ, and the relationship between the divine property of incorporeality and the incarnate Son's assumption of human nature. Each of these chapters explores issues that have been the subject of some controversy in recent Christological discussions. For example, a number of theologians have argued against the biblical warrant and theological coherence of the doctrine of the Son's eternal generation. Others have maintained that the affirmation of divine incorporeality is difficult to square with the claim that the eternal Son assumed the fullness of human nature (presumably including a human soul and body).

Still others have contested the idea that the eternal Son of God pre-existed his identity as the Christ, arguing that this implies the existence of the Son *asarkos* (without the flesh or human nature he assumed) prior to the incarnation. In his treatment of these Christological issues, Crisp offers a highly analytic account of the arguments for each of these traditional features of the doctrine of Christ's person. Consistent with his methodology throughout, his analysis explores a range of views, including the argument's pros and cons, and then seeks to demonstrate the cogency of the classic doctrine of Christ's person in Christian theology.

Though Crisp remains largely within the boundaries of traditional Christian orthodoxy in the first three chapters, his arguments in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 are in some instances more innovative. This is particularly the case in Chapter 4 where he argues that the "image of God" should be understood "protologically," that is, in terms of the way human nature was fashioned after the image of the Son who is himself the image of God. Since the image of God consists in the way human beings are conformed to the image of the Son, Crisp argues that the incarnation involves the restoration of that union with and conformity to the Son in which humans were first created. Chapters 5 and 6 return to more acknowledged features of traditional Christology. In these chapters, Crisp argues that any contemporary formulation of the doctrine of Christ's person must be in harmony with the classic one person, two natures, formula of the Chalcedonian Creed. Though some diversity of expression is permissible (depending upon how we define "person" and "natures"), the traditional dogma sets parameters, however "minimalist" they may be, beyond which Christian theologians may not go. Crisp also argues in Chapter 6 that the traditional doctrine of Christ's person amounts to what in terms of analytical theology might be called a "compositional" view. Though the eternal Son possesses the metaphysical property of simplicity (not comprised of parts), the incarnate Son of God is "composed" of the person and nature of the eternal Son in union with a composite human nature (again, assuming some kind of distinction between body and soul).

In the concluding part of the book (Chapters 7-9), Crisp takes up more directly the relation between the person of the incarnate Son and the salvation of human beings through union with God, which is concretely manifested in the incarnation itself. Acknowledging the long tradition of emphasis upon union with God through the atoning work of Christ, Crisp endeavours to show the benefits of his reflections upon Christ's person for a retrieval of a more robust understanding of human participation in the divine life than is often present in evangelical atonement doctrines. In this part of the book, Crisp offers an outline of what he calls a "realist" penal view of the atonement rather than the prevalent covenantal representation view of Reformed theology since the Reformation (130-40).

While my summary of the main features of Crisp's book scarcely does it justice, I trust it conveys a fair account of its contents and what is required of those who read and profit from it. Readers of Crisp's book will find that it is not written for the intellectually faint-hearted, or for those who dislike a method that may often seem like an exercise in a bewildering array of thought-experiments. This is clearly a book for those who wish to engage in a particular kind of careful analysis of the traditional doctrine of Christ's person and work.

Though Crisp is clearly a gifted thinker and writer, his method has obvious limitations, even by his own admission. He makes no pretense, for example, of revisiting the traditional biblical arguments for the classic doctrine of Christ's person. Nor does he provide much Scriptural warrant for some of his more innovative proposals. However, he does offer a number of helpful analyses of difficult Christological issues and, in doing so, offers a contemporary defense of key tenets of the classic Christian doctrine of Christ's person. Since he does not claim to do more than this, the limitations of his approach ought not to be held against him. What he offers is exactly what he promises in his introduction. And for those who may find his proposals regarding the atonement of Christ rather too sketchy and innovative, he does promise the reader that he intends to write a sequel that focuses precisely on this topic (x).

—Cornelis P. Venema

Carlos M.N. Eire. *Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450-1650.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016. Pp. xviii + 893. $40.00 (hardcover).

The biography from the Yale University Faculty page says the following about our author: "Carlos Eire, who received his PhD from Yale in 1979, specializes in the social, intellectual, religious, and cultural history of late medieval and early modern Europe, with a strong focus on both the Protestant and Catholic Reformations; the history of popular piety; and the history of the supernatural, and the history of death." So Eire studied at Yale, teaches at Yale and published this volume at Yale. It goes without saying that this is quite a different Yale than the one founded in 1701 in response to Harvard (founded in 1636) having gone liberal. This is a Yale that has a Roman Catholic, as Eire is, for its leading Reformation scholar. Eire is a competent scholar who attempts to be equitable to all parties in his assessments and evaluation; that his perspective is that of a Roman Catholic does nevertheless manifest itself in several ways.

Eire's present contribution, as a fine addition to the burgeoning literature on the Reformation, joins scores of books written in this anniversary time (the Reformation was reckoned as 500 years old in 2017). Much of the earlier literature on the period was written by Protestants as a kind of hagiography, and when by Roman Catholics, it was sharply critical. Though Eire, as a Roman Catholic, is not narrowly partisan respecting the Reformation, he does refer to it in the plural ("Reformations"), as has become customary among academic historians of the period, the implication being, among other things, that the Reformation shattered the unity of the institutional church and resulted in variegated expressions that can only be captured by the use of the plural. He also has a significant section on Catholics (Part Three, 366-521) that treats the Roman Catholic Church not from the vantage point, strictly speaking, of its opposition to the Reformation (the *Gegensreformation*, or Counter-Reformation), but as if the Council of Trent (1545-64) and other responses to the Reformation was a Catholic Reformation of its own.

In fact, Trent was a reaction against the Reformation and a rejection of its teaching. The Roman Catholic Church professes then and now to be irreformable: so neither Lateran V (1512-17), which occurred at the beginning of the Reformation period, nor Trent, in later decades, can properly be said to be a Catholic Reformation, but a movement opposed to Reformation. This has all been agreed upon unto fairly recently. In the name of fairness, however, many scholars have begun to speak of a Catholic Reformation, as if this would be as unremarkable for them as for the Protestants, for whom Reformation is a hallmark.

The reason that the Protestant Reformation rose and burgeoned is because the Roman Catholic Church was not open to Reformation. We might put it this way: the reason for the church split in 1517 was because Pope Leo X refused to heed the biblical call to repentance of one of his theologians, Martin Luther, and instead split the church. The church properly, and always, stands only on the Word of God and its authority. While Vatican II (1962-5) has changed the tone of the church in some respects, with Protestants now regarded as "dissenting brethren," the essential Tridentine commitment to rejecting Protestant doctrine, including the doctrine of justification by faith alone, remains intact (the agreement between Rome and the Lutheran World Federation of 1999 on this issue notwithstanding, as made clear by the doctrinally sound critique of this concordat by the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod).

My assessment, then, of Eire is that that this work contains countless details and insight worth exploring, even though Eire is not as even-handed as he thinks himself to be and judges others not to be (whether current scholars or earlier Reformation scholars like Ernst Troeltsch, Max Weber, or Karl Holl, the latter indeed proving quite problematic). Eire himself does see the Reformation as involving a paradigm shift (or "a series of intertwined paradigm shifts," 746, since it was not singular but plural—"Reformations"), as does Frederic Seebohm, Robert Kingdon, Steven Ozment, Brad Gregory and others. These paradigm shifts (in a Thomas Kuhn sense) amounted to a desacralization (disenchantment?) of the world, the contours of which involve three things, particularly: "first, how matter relates to spirit; second, how the natural relates to the supernatural; and third, how the living relate to the dead" (748). Eire contends that this is chiefly that of which the revolution called the Reformation(s) consisted.

The first (matter v. spirit) resulted in iconoclasm and rendered God more transcendent (rather than immanent). The second (natural v. supernatural) furthered the distance between God and man, the former being unapproachably holy and the latter intractably sinful. The third (living and dead) made the two existences distinct so that "Protestantism stripped religion of meditation of and intimacy with the dead" (754), whether praying for those in purgatory or praying to the saints in heaven. This is all resulted in the fragmentation of Christendom.

While this reviewer neither disagrees that the three changes happened, nor that the theological concerns of many of us (e.g., justification by faith alone) can be located, after a fashion, in one of these three categories, I do believe that these three are not pointedly soteriological, as was the heart of the Reformation. These three points tend to obscure that at its heart the Reformation involved a recovery and advance of soteriology, both Christology and Pneumatology. Granted that in a number

of places, England under Henry VIII for example, the Reformation was not chiefly soteriological, being more political than religious. This is why I think that the plural is fitting in some measure.

However, the heart of the Reformation, certainly that which actuated Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and Knox, was pointedly theological, chiefly soteriological (whatever else might have been involved that was social, political, economic, etc.). So many of our university historians in our secularized age, which Eire and many other historians "blame" on Protestantism, fail to point out that the Reformation of the 16th century was at its heart a movement of the Holy Spirit to renew a moribund church and to refocus and develop it from the sacerdotal mess that it had become to a better church and that this work tended to the edification of the church and to the glory of Jesus Christ. This, warts and all, is the glory of the Protestant Reformation and justifies our continuing to celebrate its beginning, now more than five hundred years ago.

—Alan D. Strange

Peter Enns. *The Bible Tells Me So… Why Defending Scripture Has Made Us Unable to Read It.* New York: HarperOne, 2014. Pp. xiii + 267. $15.99 (hardcover).

In this book Peter Enns brings to a general readership his take on what sort of book the Bible is and how it ought to function for us being the sort of book it is. What this means specifically is that Enns seeks to confront and overthrow an approach to Scripture that minimizes its clearly human (all-so-human) character—an approach that treats it as a book dropped from heaven. Enns is interested, then, in how we approach the Bible, how we read and understand it, and how we deal with its various discrepancies and morally challenging issues. Therefore, what Enns is against (what he is fundamentally against) is a fundamentalist approach to the Bible that renders it into a rulebook or an instruction manual wherein readers bring their contemporary questions (and assumptions) to the text of the Bible and expect straightforward answers to those questions (with those assumptions). In many ways this volume is a popularized version of his earlier book *Inspiration and Incarnation.*

In *The Bible Tells Me So*, Enns, who is Abram S. Clemens professor of Biblical Studies at Eastern University, St. Davids, PA, writes a book that is accessible to a general audience. It is entertaining and humorous in many respects—if you can handle his perspective—and well-informed on the findings of modern scholarship relative to Old and New Testament studies. The seven chapters of this book are presented in a simplified style, wherein each sub-topic is set forth is easily digestible chunks—the result is that Enns gives us a book that is easy to read and can be taken in, if needed, in small bit-size morsels. Yes, this is a lively book, a page-turner!

That said, what does Enns do in this book? Principally, he shows how the Bible (to use his words) does not behave as we have been taught to expect it to behave—being the Word of God and all. It doesn't conform to the idea of rulebook or instruction manual. For example, the various stipulations of the Levitical laws (bodily discharges, etc.), are difficult for contemporary Christians to comprehend—what is going on with

that? The morality of *cherem* (wipe-everything-out) warfare presents an obstacle that requires explanation in light of the call to love our neighbors as ourselves. How can we square that morality with New Testament morality? How can the God of love require this? Enns finds the traditional set of answers to such questions wanting (see 41-53). Moreover, what are we to make of events the Bible says happened when archaeology challenges such claims? Or, what are we to make of biblical accounts in which the events portrayed by the Bible are presented in contradictory ways? What about the diverse, even contradictory, presentations in Scripture about God and his will?

In light of such issues and questions, says Enns, it has become commonplace to "circle-the-wagons" in order to defend the Bible. But Enns says we face still another obstacle (even if we take the "circle-the-wagons" approach): when we carefully examine how New Testament personages, such as Jesus and Paul, read and apply Old Testament texts, we face new difficulties, for their take on Scripture, particularly their use and interpretation of Scripture, does not at all fit modern (acceptable) approaches to handling the Bible—especially not what evangelicals require and expect. What do we do with that?

Concretely, taking up the extermination of the Canaanites under Joshua (chapter 2 of the book), Enns argues that here we find Israel talking about God in terms typical of those times, typical of the way her neighbors talked about their gods as rival national and tribal deities—that is, the Israelites spoke in language common to the conceptualities then sensible. But further down the way in redemptive history we get a portrait of God that has jettisoned these sorts of cultural entanglements and conceptions, wherein the Bible shows us God in a revised guise. Further down the way the Bible shows us God who so loved the world, the God who sends Jesus into the world to save sinners—Jesus, God incarnate.

Enns's point is that this manner of presenting God (regarding the extermination of the Canaanites) was fitting for the time and place in which Israel found herself (it was the only sensible way of talking about God *then*), but it is not a valid portrait of God and his will in later stages of salvation history, and not now. His point is also that God accommodated himself to the cultural givens of a particular setting in order to reveal himself. As such, God made himself relatively knowable on those terms. The human authors of the Bible, then, were persons of their times, and God allowed them (wanted them) to speak about him in ways accommodated for their times. But the Bible itself presses us beyond such settings; the Bible re-reveals God and his will to us.

In the next chapter, Enns takes up the various Gospel accounts of Jesus. The four Gospels are not to be read as "history" in the modern sense. Rather, the Gospels are presentations of Jesus designed to interpret and explain who he was and what he did. This explains the numerous discrepancies found in the four Gospels about events and timelines and words spoken. The birth and resurrection narratives alone evidence (very hard to explain) divergences (see 78-89). No worry, says Enns. This is precisely the Bible God wanted us to have, the Bible he is pleased to use.

Next Enns takes readers on a journey through the different portrayals of Israel herself—i.e., that presented by 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings (where we get

portraits of David and Solomon, warts and all), and that presented by 1 and 2 Chronicles (where David and Solomon are idealized—anything that might tarnish them is omitted). Moreover, the story of the ten tribes of Israel is omitted altogether (for they are already long gone). What about these discrepancies? Enns maintains that the Chronicler intentionally crafted his materials in order to present Israel's past in a more positive and encouraging light, to assert, yes, Israel still has a future. Again, the point is that we are not supposed to read these materials as "history" in the modern sense of the word. Ancient peoples didn't think like we do. There is nothing wrong with these biblical materials. They don't need our defense. What they need is our understanding—to treat them as they were written and intended to be understood in their ancient context (see 90-98). That, agree or disagree, is Enns's point.

This leads up to a discussion of Israel's origins. Enns calls us to read the creation narratives in Genesis—really, the whole Pentateuch, along with Joshua and Judges—as background to how Israel came to be. Israel's origins stories, then, function as a purposeful framing of coming attractions in Israel's failure in the Promised Land (see 100-112). These materials, in other words, intentionally echo Israel's present (exilic) crisis, a kingship in crisis. In short, the current story of Israel's crisis is nothing other than the old story of the original crisis (as told in the creation stories), wherein a heavenly mandate in a blessed land is violated, with exile and misery as the consequence.

So, yes, according to Enns, Israel accommodated her creation narratives along the lines of the Babylonian story; and, yes, the book of Genesis is written as providing background to address Israel's current circumstances; this includes the sorts of neighbors she has and the relationships she has with those neighbors. Genesis, in other words, was written in light of Israel's pressing and current problems; it functioned first of all within that context.

From here Enns points out that throughout Genesis it is the little brother who is privileged and blessed, not the expected eldest brother. Such is true of Abel versus Cain, Isaac versus Ishmael, Jacob versus Esau, Joseph versus his brothers, and King David among Jesse's sons. Moreover, the same is true relative to Judah and Benjamin (Judah being the fourth son and Benjamin the youngest of all the twelve), composing the southern kingdom—these two siblings versus the northern ten tribes. This is the scripted drama of Judah's past. It helps explain why Judah survived the Babylonian exile whereas the other ten tribes were swallowed up by the Assyrian deportation. Once more, Enns's point is to argue that Israel's stories of the deep past were not written to answer our modern questions or to provide a factual presentation of what transpired way back when (like modern historiography). Rather, they were written to offer explanations for what presently is (i.e., relative to Israel's present exilic circumstances). The past is shaped to address the present.

Addressing the creation/fall narrative in Genesis 2-3 in particular, Enns argues that Adam, as told in these chapters, represents Israel's whole story. It previews Israel's later life. In Paradise the choice was obey and stay; or, disobey and be banished. The same applies to Israel in the Promised Land (113-115). The Exodus story, similarly, is not likely an account of the way it actually happened—though Enns does believe it has historical grounding. The problem is the utter lack of archeological

evidence for the Exodus. This is strange, he notes, given the numbers purported to be involved and the failure of the narrative to provide details that so characterize other reports of events and happenings in the Old Testament. One view is that through re-telling over generations the Exodus story became the biblical story we have, and that God wanted us to have. (Enns, however, admits he is open to other views on this matter.) As *history* we face problems, but as *story* Exodus packs a wallop (118).

So, yes, ancient myth in incorporated into the Bible, but Enns observes that the word "myth" has a technical meaning. It is not fairytale. Myths were a tool to describe "ultimate reality," reflective of "a higher and more primal plane of existence," a peek into the behind-the-scenes actions back "there and then" which produce ripple effects in the "here and now." Myths were deeply meaningful stories that connected the earthly to the heavenly. The Exodus story, then, shows Israel how her God is greater than Pharaoh's gods—gods depicted in the form of the cobra, the frog, the sun, and a god of the dead. The parting of the Red Sea—which brings about the birth of Israel as a nation—echoes the creation narrative in Genesis 1, where God splits the deep in two and secures dry land. The "here and now" of the Exodus is a replay of the "there and then" of creation. God tamed chaos in creating the world; he tamed Pharaoh in drowning him and his army in the Red Sea (19-123). Enns offers an interpretation of the Flood narrative in this trajectory of analysis as well (see 124-126).

Enns's larger point in offering these vignettes of biblical stories in their scripted and fashioned form, containing mythological elements and the like, is not to negate history as such, which he asserts is "huge for the Christian faith," but to argue against the idea that the Bible in all its parts has to conform to our modern notion of history writing. The question: "Did what the Bible says happened really happen?" notes Enns, has been a crippling question for generations of Christians. Some fear this question; others abandon the faith because biblical claims seem doubtful or clearly mistaken. While some unbelievers chuckle at the Bible (allegedly shown to be mistaken), certain Christians counter-attack. They assume a "take no prisoners" approach in order to defend the Bible.

Enns believes both sides of this divide are wrong, for both share the "wrongheaded premise: any book worthy of being called 'scripture' has to, if anything, get history 'right' " (128). And "get history right" means what moderns mean: report the facts accurately and as it all happened, with little or no spin or elaboration. Enns says this approach does not treat the Bible on its own terms or recognize the sort of book it is as an ancient text—that is, as God's book, a book not designed to meet the standards of our (modern) notions of history. Failure to treat the Bible as "the book it is" is a failure to submit to God; and in its most extreme forms entails molding God into our own image. In short, Enns maintains that we do much better to approach the Bible through the lens of "storytelling" than "history writing." Storytelling has its own unique power. Enns suggests that we should consider that God likes stories.

So, indeed, the Bible gives us multiple voices that show us how God speaks to us in multiple layers, which accounts for the diversity of ways God is depicted—as omniscient, as figuring things out; as unchanging, as changing his mind; as laying down the law, as requiring something else; as slow to anger, as having a hair-trigger temper. Enns wants readers to let the Bible be the Bible on its own terms and stop

expecting from the Bible what they think it should deliver. The diversity of voices in Scripture is its genius, which is a better approach than trying to make it speak as a one-size-fits-all instruction manual. The Bible doesn't speak in one voice; and, says Enns, that's just fine (see 127-136).

This brings Enns to consider some of the wisdom literature of the Bible. The distinct and diverse wisdom we find in the Proverbs offers a snapshot of how the Bible works as a whole. Ecclesiastes offers perspectives and sentiments that differ and point in opposite directions from Proverbs. But inasmuch as they are not rulebooks but instead offer *portraits* of God and the life of faith—both are rightly part of the Bible and both are valid; the same applies to the book of Job (137-149).

Enns next turns to the varied ways the Bible handles the idea of other "gods." Some portions of Scripture clearly declare them non-existent, as no-things (Isa. 44:6-20; Jer. 10:1-16; 1 Kings 18:16-46); but other passages treat the gods as real or regard Yahweh as one among the many gods (Psa. 82; 95:3; 96:4; 97:9). This diversity of voices, says Enns, shows the Bible's accommodation to the belief system of the ancient Israelites and her neighbors, where the existence of many gods was assumed. But the Bible in other places denies the existence of a panoply of gods, as if Yahweh was one (the most mighty and superior one, to be sure) among many. "Israel's story doesn't lay down at every point what all the faithful for all time *should believe* about God. It *shows* us how Israelites understood God on *their* journey with God, in their time and place" (153). God meets people, including ancient peoples, where they are—and so he accommodates himself to them, to be understood within the confines of their ancient horizon. But other parts of the Bible no longer accommodate such notions and declare unequivocally that only one God exists.

The idea of accommodation, for Enns, is not something that should bother us; rather, it is to be valued and celebrated. Although God is portrayed sometimes as a high, aloof, sovereign King, above the fray (Gen. 1), other parts of the Bible picture God as near, available, more human, walking with us in the cool of the day (Gen. 2-3). God can be reasoned with, pleaded with, persuaded, and he can change his mind (see Gen. 6, 22:1-19; Exod. 32). The first portrait is easily identified as God, but the other picture—"this ungodlike God of the Bible"—shows us "the very heart of both Jewish and Christian beliefs about God." He embraces human experience and becomes part of the human drama. He is present and near—and even comes to us as "God in the flesh" (150-159).

Meanwhile, a close look at the law codes set forth in the Old Testament uncovers discrepancies or contradictions from time to time—which are usually explained by saying that Israel had more than one legal tradition—and these different traditions, developed at different times and places, being combined into one version produces these problems (see, e.g., Exod. 22:31 and Lev. 11:39-40; Lev. 15:24 and Lev. 20:18; Deut. 12:13-14, Lev. 17:1-8 and Exod. 20:24-26; and Exod. 12:8-9, 46 and Deut. 16:7-8). So be it, says Enns, God gave us the Bible, edited in this way, with its tensions, messy. But what must we conclude from this? Only, that the Bible cannot be reduced to a rulebook, that it speaks with more than one voice, that it is not an owner's manual, and that it is instead a story, showing how God met with his people through changing times and circumstances. This Bible is fine the way it is—but it is this way (160-164).

In chapter 5, bearing the title "Jesus Is Bigger than the Bible," Enns turns to issues surrounding the New Testament. Nowhere, says Enns, is the story of Israel rewritten and revised more than on the pages of New Testament through the work of the four Gospel writers and Paul, as each incorporates the story of Jesus into Israel's story. Enns's work proceeds to make the point that Jesus is bigger than the Bible (a point well made, I think). When we consider how Jesus handles Scripture, how he uses and applies it, it does not fit within modern standards of sound principles of biblical interpretation. Enns argues that we need to let Jesus be a Jew whose creative handling of Scripture was typical in his time and setting, and who also colored outside the lines of conventional ways of interpreting the Bible—case in point (which we will not explore here), is Jesus's handling of Psalm 110 and Psalm 82 (see 175-179).

Matthew's Gospel presents Jesus as a new Moses, who has more authority than Moses, and following Jesus takes priority over certain commands of the Torah—like the command to honor your parents by burying them (see Matt. 8:21-22; 12:46-50), or stipulations relative to the Sabbath, or the obsolescence of food laws. Enns notes that how Jesus used Scripture was an ancient way, common for his day but uncommon (and unacceptable) in our day. Following Jesus takes priority over Torah in some circumstances (180-186). What is more, when we look carefully at how Jesus used the Bible we discover that he used it in the Jewish way of his times. As an ancient book the Bible only makes sense if we approach it on its own terms. This is to respect the Bible. When we impose our expectations upon it, we disrespect the Bible. Indeed, the ultimate mystery of the Christian faith is the incarnation; Jesus is God and man come together into a "union" that mystifies—fully divine, fully human. One of the implications of this is that Jesus is human as a particular human being; he is part of actual human history and so lives his life in a specific period of time, at a particular place, with its related customs, beliefs, and practices. As such, Jesus handled the Bible in a fully human manner. And yet we see that Israel's story is shaped by Jesus's story; and the apostle Paul bends the knee of Israel's story to King Jesus—and in these New Testament writers "a fully Christian way of reading the Bible is born" (187-189).

As noted above, Enns declares that Jesus is bigger than the Bible because, whereas the Bible (the Old Testament) is God's word, it is not God's *final* word. Jesus is that. A crucified and resurrected Messiah transforms Israel's story. Chapter 6 examines this transformation. A dead Messiah, an executed and resurrected Savior, argues Enns, was not on anyone's radar. Yes, a messianic figure was familiar; a Davidic messiah, but Jesus didn't fit into that suit. Jesus's resurrection was a twist in Israel's plotline no one saw coming. Suddenly, in light of what Jesus accomplished, a new order was ushered forth—the "world to come" came barging into the world of "now." Some "future" had backed up into the "present." A new era had arrived—one marked by Israel's God, through her Jewish messiah, including Gentiles into the covenant family! Says Enns, we need to watch how the writers of the Gospels and especially Paul tell this story, how they explain this twist, how they announce this new era—that is, how they read and used the Bible (the Old Testament) to explain who Jesus was and what he did (193-200).

For example, in Luke's Gospel, Jesus says that he had to suffer and die, and rise from the dead on the third day, and this is according to Scripture. But where? asks

Enns. There is nothing in the Old Testament about a future messiah dying and rising from the dead on the third day. It just isn't there. So why does Luke tell us this from Jesus's lips? It seems to make no sense. Indeed, it doesn't, notes Enns—until we are clear about what Jesus is actually saying. His point isn't that the disciples are supposed to find and fit "texts" from the Old Testament which support this claim. His point is that in hindsight, in believing in Jesus, you have a new starting-point by which to understand Israel's story. In other words, it is a call to reread Israel's story in light of Jesus; in doing so, you discover that Israel's story was never just about Israel but the Old Testament is about Jesus.

Matthew's Gospel also depicts Jesus, says Enns, from a rather strange reading of the Old Testament. For example, Matthew quotes Hosea 11:1 ("*Out of Egypt I called my son*") to the effect that the boy Jesus coming out of Egypt fulfills the Old Testament prophecy; but in fact Hosea's words aren't a *prediction* about the future Jesus. Instead, these words from Hosea are *reminiscing* about a former time in Israel's history; they are "looking back hundreds of years to the time when God rescued his 'son' *Israel* from Egyptian slavery" (204). Matthew, in other words, uses Hosea's words in a manner wholly unintended by Hosea. Today, in our exegetical labors, we would never permit such a "use" of Scripture. But Matthew uses the Bible this way—he deliberately adapts Israel's story to tell the story of Jesus. And this creative use of the Old Testament was permissible in the Judaism of his day. Matthew invites us to see Jesus in Israel's story and that story, in turn, tells us about Jesus. The point Enns wishes to make here is this: "for Matthew, what Hosea meant back then isn't what Hosea's words ultimately and *really* mean. Jesus has come and so Israel's story is now transposed to talk about Jesus" (205).

Enns maintains that all four Gospels tell the story of Jesus in light of a key moment in Israel's story, namely the Babylonian exile and Israel's return. But inasmuch as Israel had remained under foreign powers even after the return from exile, the exile wasn't wholly over. This accounts for the growing desire the Jewish people had for a Davidic messiah who would come and overthrow the Roman oppressors, bringing Israel back to her former glory. In this way, too, Israel's God would be acknowledged as the one and only God. Jesus's disciples embraced these messianic notions as well. They could not get their heads around the idea of a dying-messiah. But, at last, in grasping it, the Gospel writers each "*redefined* the familiar idea of 'exile' and what it meant for that exile to come to an end" (207). Thus, Matthew's genealogy tells the story of Israel in three movements: *Abraham to David, David to the Exile,* and *the Exile to Jesus.* Matthew crafts his genealogy deliberately in order to reveal "Jesus as Israel's long-awaited deliverer—descended from *David,* who would bring an *end to the exile* and restore the land promised long ago to *Abraham*" (208). This easier grasped expectation of deliverance from exile is transformed by the story of Jesus, who commends the meek, the peacemakers, and the persecuted. Jesus's message is not about revolting against the Romans. Jesus redefines the meaning of Israel's exile and how it is ended. And the surprise ending, including resurrection, sends Israel's God to the nations—no longer the hope that the nations would gather to Jerusalem. This is what brings Israel's exile to an end, not a David-figure on a Davidic throne in

Jerusalem. Rather, a great commission to go to the nations—a big twist on and transformation of Israel's story (208-209).

What is ushered in by Jesus and his kingdom, then, is a Jesus, i.e., a *Savior*, of Jews *and the world*. The Gospel of Luke, along with volume two, Acts, transforms the Jewish messianic expectation of a warrior-king into a full "return" from exile by means of the gospel of Jesus Christ being preached to the nations, that story ending in Rome, the nerve center of the oppressive empire. Meanwhile, Paul, even more than the other apostles, transformed Israel's story in light of Jesus's story. In its most shrunk down form, Paul showed that Israel's problem of guilt and bondage was a universal human problem, the problem of sin and death, and Jesus's death at the hands of enemies was not just another Roman execution but the sacrifice for sins to solve the universal human problem. The implications of this adds up to one people of God composed of Jews and Gentiles. The wall of hostility has been torn down. Israel's story is recast into a genuine universal story. And this story also declares that Torah-keeping is not, as such, faithfulness to God—and in fact that was never the case (so argues Paul). The New Testament shows us how Paul reads the Old Testament through the lens of the final word of God, Jesus. In so doing, Paul decenters Torah in Israel's story and emphasizes how Abraham and the Abrahamic covenant are the center of the story—only to be displaced by what is the real center: the Seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ (210-223).

Practically speaking, this played out in the obsolescence of Torah stipulations relative to circumcision and dietary laws—the obvious boundary markers that distinguished the Jewish people from the Gentiles. Paul argues that these requirements have met their expiration date in the coming of Jesus; he proclaims freedom from the law while he casts the new vision of self-sacrificial love (224-227).

What all this manifests, however, is that Paul retells Israel's story in light of the dramatic upheaval introduced by Jesus. The Gospel writers's and Paul's use of the Old Testament does not follow the model of owner's manual or rulebook or a set of instructions. Jesus is bigger than the words on the page; he drives the story, for Jesus is bigger than the Bible. For Christians, for the four Gospel writers and for Paul, the key issue is who gets Jesus right. In the light of who Jesus is, they (re)read the Bible and understood it in a new way (227).

In the final (7th) chapter of the book, Enns offers a synopsis of the entire book in 265 words—followed by extended, though short, commentary. The Bible, asserts Enns, is the book where God meets us. This book isn't fragile; nor does it need our constant arsenal of arguments to prop it up. Nope, this Bible is strange and complex, with many contours—it is an ill-behaved Bible but it is God's Word precisely in this way. God uses it to bring us, the readers of it, to a deeper trust in him. We may reject the Bible but we must cease trying to make the Bible into a book it isn't, a book in our own image, meeting our preconceived expectations (231-232).

Enns tells us in the last pages of his book that what he is working toward is "an attitude adjustment concerning the Bible and God in light of how the Bible actually behaves" (236). This leads Enns to offer a series of affirmations (with comment):

The Bible is God's Word. (That is, the Bible with all its peculiarities and riddles is God's book and it is effective as his Word in being what it is—it is designed to force us to wrestle with it.)

The Bible is not, never has been, and never will be the center of the Christian faith. (That position belongs to God alone and what he has done in Jesus Christ; yes, the Bible bears witness to Christ and as such it is indispensable. But it bids us to look up from its pages and see Jesus. We must look through it to him.)

The Bible is not a weapon. (It is God's instrument, turned inward on ourselves, piercing us; as such, it is the book by which we meet God. It is not supposed to be employed with the aim of picking fights with others—that's pathological.)

An unsettled faith is a maturing faith. (The Bible shows us that the journey of faith is often marked by doubt, struggle, and weakness. Being unsettled in faith is not abnormal; and this struggle is part of the process of becoming mature. Feeling dis-*ease* is often the path to growing up.)

Let go of fear. (That is, quit being afraid that you might be wrong about the Bible. We cannot master the Bible, and being right is elusive; and, with that, too, there is the ever present danger of being confident of being correct while you distort God and create a God in your own image. Trust must displace fear.)

Branch out. (When our faith communities become the defining element of our spiritual lives, leading to isolation, we are on a sectarian path, and we proceed to re-erect dividing walls where they don't belong. We must learn from traditions other than our own. To think that you got the corner on the truth, better than all others, is pride and insanity. Fact is: God probably likes diversity and our sparing and learning from others.)

Take a page or two out of Judaism. (The rich tradition of Jewish mediaeval commentaries shows us that diversity of interpretation isn't a bad thing as such, and debating matters of the faith is the path to knowing God. Ending the debate, definitively, with no back-and-forth tussle is not likely where God will be found.)

Christian, don't expect more from the Bible than you would of Jesus. (God incarnate is the grand mystery of the Christian faith, yet we resist fully embracing its implications. We easily de-humanize Jesus and place a halo around his head. But he was one of us, in a specific culture, place, time, and suffered the humiliation of execution. No clout among the power brokers. God entered our story in this form—God's Word in this way. Given that, it is a mistake to make the Bible less human than Jesus, more powerful than Jesus, to make the Bible an alien thing among its surroundings. A de-humanized Bible is nothing like Jesus and in fact doesn't exit. The Bible as God Word comes to us in the thick-of-things. Therefore, we must let the Bible be what it is on its own terms—with all its ancient strangeness and cultural baggage. This is the way it is God's Word to us, the way God would have it be. We must learn to read it this way—rather than our version of what it ought to be. When we do that, "we will find God as he wants to be found." "The Bible tells us so" (233-244).

In offering some evaluative comments on Enns's book, one can appreciate his honest embrace of the Bible as God's Word—God's Word as a human word. Enns, in other words, is not doing what an *unbelieving* higher critic does. For unbelieving higher critics, inasmuch as the Bible is obviously marked by these human (and flawed)

traits, it is ridiculous to regard it as divine revelation. In contrast, Enns presents his own embrace of various higher critical approaches to the Bible while also affirming, in light of such approaches, that it is God's Word precisely in that way, as that sort of book.

Many readers, no doubt, will be turned off and infuriated by this book; others will be thrilled and enthralled by it. Why such an extreme divergence of opinion? For the first category of readers, Enns's work will be read as a sell-out, a giving away the store, conceding to critical scholarship too much, such that the Bible we are left with cannot be preached because it cannot be believed. This sort of reader will conclude: if Enns is right, I can't trust the Bible anymore. The second category of readers will feel, to the contrary, that they cannot believe the Bible *unless* it is viewed in the trajectory Enns sets forth—namely, that the Bible is a book that bears heavily the traits of its diversified cultural settings and the human perspectives characteristic of the same. For this category of reader, then, Enns's work is a godsend, a reprieve, a way forward, enabling them to believe (again) that the Bible is God's Word; but it is God's Word as *this kind of book*, not the dropped from heaven, un-human variety. Such readers will say: "Because Enns is right, I'm ready to read the Bible afresh."

I don't find myself fitting either category straight away, however.

One question that kept coming to mind as I read Enns's book is how it will play in Peoria. The dropped-from-heaven idea of the Bible has long been rejected by evangelical scholarship, theoretically at least. Conservative advocates of biblical inerrancy have long felt the need to circumscribe the parameters of inerrancy (carefully delineating what they mean and don't mean by that term) and to affirm, strongly, the human character of Scripture. Concepts like "concursive operation" and "organic inspiration" were specifically proposed and elaborated upon in order to account for the Bible's very human characteristics. In that light, Enns could be a bit fairer to many confessional and evangelical scholars (and laypersons) who know that the Bible is far too complex and diverse, bearing the marks of various cultural contexts and settings, with multiple human authors, to reduce it to a rulebook or an instruction manual. But even granting his point that many treat the Bible as a haloed book, *as if* dropped from heaven, its humanity minimized if not excised, how can laity read a Bible so foreign and unfamiliar and finally inaccessible to them? It seems we are brought back to a Bible that can be read and explained by a few elite—that is, a scholarly elite.

Meanwhile, the Bible itself seems to offer itself to a general readership, not to a scholarly few. That is, the Bible doesn't show itself to be a volume designed chiefly for those in-the-know. Rather, the Bible functions, also on the pages of the New Testament, as a revelation from God in which its historical (story) reporting is taken as eventful—things that actually happened. Perhaps Enns would affirm that this is so, but given the findings of modern scholarship, we are now in a position to reassess how *we today* come to the Bible. But does the "we" refer to the world of biblical scholarship? Educated laity? Enlightened clergy? What about the uneducated, the unenlightened, the non-scholars?

For example, do we preach the biblical narratives, say, in Exodus, Numbers, and Joshua as *stories that happened* or do we announce that such narratives are an ancient

way of talking about God, a kind of hyperbole, and the "my Dad's bigger than your dad" approach to talking about God that contains this insight for our modern lives and walk of faith? In other words, is the Bible a book about which we must repeatedly, in our teaching and preaching, first deconstruct the laity's misperception of it (what sort of book it is and how it functions) before we can get down to business? Or, is the getting down to business the work of deconstruction? Must we, then, preface our proclamation with remarks to the following effect: although this biblical narrative is presented as though it actually happened (and that is likely how you are understanding it), it is really, being cast in ancient thought-forms, a story with mythical elements, and in this way a story (whether it happened or not) that packs quite a wallop for our journey of faith and our walk with God? If I follow Enns, I think we are supposed to re-educate the laity in our teaching and preaching concerning such materials. This elicits a further question, then: On those terms, is what we proclaim in the Bible "the Mighty Acts of God" or *culturally relative construals* of the mighty acts of God which, after being deconstructed, offer us some interesting insight for today? It seems that Enns proposes (at least some of the time) the latter, since, according to him, this is the sort of book the Bible in fact is. Is there evidence, however, that the writers of the Bible—through the centuries—conceived of Scripture in this way? It doesn't appear so. I understand that Enns wants us to approach biblical narratives more from the position of "storytelling" than "history reporting," but Enns offers us little to keep his methodology from running off the road. That is, why stop where Enns stops? Why affirm that there is a divine morsel of truth, from this ancient way of thinking, rather than simply maintain that the whole thing is humanly derived and only reflects a human, culturally relative, point of view? Enns, I'm sure, would reply that this humanly derived perspective is precisely God's Word to us. Take it as such. Fair enough, but some matters of faith require that the events described actually happened, their eventfulness is the difference between humans viewing something a certain way and God actually doing something to them, performing actions that transform and transplant them, like the work of divine forgiveness and its basis. Enns affirms that history is enormously important for the Christian faith, but it is unclear where storytelling stops and history starts (or vice-versa).

Enns, I think, is to be commended in that he presents many relevant issues and confronts perplexities that any serious student of the Bible cannot avoid. But, I seriously question whether his take on such difficulties is the only option. Sometimes, it seems a textured redemptive-historical reading of Scripture offers solutions to difficulties that still honor the Bible's human character without reducing the biblical narrative to culturally relative construals of God and his work. For example, the first great commission under Joshua, requiring *cherem* warfare as a means to secure a slender piece of real-estate for God's kingdom in a fallen world, gives way, through the course of redemptive history, to a second great commission under the other, better Joshua—Jesus—who wages war for God's kingdom with the sword of the Spirit (Rev. 19:15, 21), a kingdom that is divinely determined to fill the earth (Dan. 2:35, 45). Another example: Enns proposes that God comes to us under a new guise in the New Testament, compassionate and merciful, unlike the God portrayed by Joshua, but Enns reads Scripture selectively here, for the second Joshua, Jesus, is one who speaks of a

final, sin-purging judgment to come. John, the apostle of love, is unafraid to declare that Jesus is the Lamb who saves (John 1:29) and the Lamb from whose wrath sinners flee (Rev. 6:16).

Of course, the larger and more fundamental question is Enns's take on history, and his censure of our predilection to impose modern standards of history upon the narrative materials of the Old and New Testaments. Certainly Enns is not altogether wrong to warn us away from imposing false standards upon Scripture; and indeed we only honor Scripture properly when we interpret it properly. A misinterpreted and misapplied Bible is not a message that is conveying to human ears "the Word of God," even though words are quoted from the pages of Scripture. So, indeed, right interpretation must matter more than it does in some evangelical circles. While Enns believes that much of the Old Testament was composed late or after-the-fact as a constructed or fabricated history to meet the needs of Israel in her particular circumstances, and that the New Testament writers reinterpreted the Old Testament story in light of who Jesus revealed himself to be (a slaughtered messiah who rises from the dead), he seems to embrace, without reservations, the reality of Jesus's bodily resurrection from the dead. But why treat the resurrection as historical and decisive? Why can't that event be treated as another sort of storytelling, as a new type of divine accommodation to the needs-of-the-day, an accommodation to the cultural needs of the New Testament epoch? An assortment of biblical scholars and critics have argued along these lines. Enns stops short where many biblical scholars proceed headlong, arguing that the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a fabrication of the early church. Could they not argue that this is just Scripture behaving the way it chooses to behave, being very human in this way, contrary to our desires to have a *literally* risen Jesus from the grave? Is the matter of Jesus's bodily resurrection an imposition of modern standards of historicity upon the text of the Bible? And is the apostle Paul's defense of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, upon which he stakes all his hopes (cf. 1 Cor. 15:12-19), likewise an expression of cultural religion that is finally culturally relative? That is, is belief in such happenings just cultural religion with cultural baggage? I think Enns needs to sort these sorts of questions out with depth and consistency. Until he does, readers are left with the impression that he bridles his approach arbitrarily—and so rather arbitrarily hangs on to features of the historical Christian faith from his own faith commitment.

I have little difficulty in commending Enns for his textured reading of the biblical materials; and his analysis offers, I think, many helpful insights and fresh angles of understanding that need to be pondered and which, perhaps, may evoke fresh alternative perceptions. We can certainly welcome his desire to be rid of the dropped-from-the-sky notion of the Bible, even as we can welcome his desire to be rid of a conception of Scripture that de-humanizes its clearly human character. But Enns, I think, overdraws his portrait of evangelical scholarship in its contemporary, and diverse, expression. The growing entity of modern evangelical scholarship does not ignore the sorts of issues Enns presents (in fact, sparring about these issues is something Enns commends). Many within the guild of evangelical scholarship admit the challenges involved, without succumbing to a rule-book or instruction manual approach to the Bible. Caricature is not finally an effective argument. As biblical

studies (and biblical theology) mature, systematic theology will continue to glean from this field in order to present scriptural doctrines with more texture and theological nuance.

Enns's provocatively "popular" presentation of his ideas in *The Bible Tells Me So* has gained a wide readership and will likely continue to fuel discussion for the immediate future.

—J. Mark Beach

Richard C. Gamble, *The Whole Counsel of God: God's Final Revelation*, vol. 2, 3 vols. (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Publishing, 2018). xxxvi + 1102 pages. Hardcover. $59.99.

This book has been as anticipated as it has been long in the making. It is many things at once. It is a system of theology. It traces the development and historical unfolding of Christian doctrine through redemptive history. It also provides what is known as special introductions to particular New Testament books and it focuses on how the theology of these books fit into the overarching theology of the New Testament (though not including every NT book. xxxii). It is meant to serve as a textbook for college or seminary level studies rather than to address a scholarly audience (xxxi). Its aim, like that of volume one, is to present a systematic theology following a biblical theological model. However, rather than being a systematic theology incorporating and drawing from biblical theology, Gamble's work reads more like a biblical theology drawing from and incorporating systematic theology. While, in this respect, this reviewer believes that it is deficient as an ST textbook, it is still clear, interesting, and edifying and will push believers to love both the Bible and the God of the Bible more deeply.

This work has many useful features. The material is divided into five major parts, which treat New Testament revelation itself, revelation and exaltation, God's mighty acts in salvation in Christ, God's mighty acts in the church, and how God's people should live in an unbelieving world. The last of these sections is apologetic in tone, teaching readers how to use the system of theology taught in Scripture to defend the Christian faith against opposition (chapters 24-25). This helps believers see how the Bible is sufficient for defending the faith and for evangelism by bringing the biblical worldview to bear on standard philosophical questions. While eschatology initially appears to be missing, Gamble treats it extensively in chapter seventeen while introducing union with Christ (652-681). Of course, eschatology pervades the entire work as well (e.g., 19, 65, 152, 198, 209, 212, 214, 252, 278, 421, 467, 603, 751, 813, 840, etc.), highlighting the fact that theology always has its goal in view. Gamble quotes frequently from his first volume one in the footnotes. Some readers will regard this as a weakness because it gives the impression of saying the same things a second time, only more clearly and fully (Gamble almost says as much on pg. 982). Others will see it as a strength, enabling them to harmonize the teaching of the OT and the NT more effectively. However, his treatment of the NT moves the discussion forward

significantly in a number of ways. He presents the NT as the capstone of God's revelation and of his saving acts. This enables him to let the story of the gospel unfold through the NT Scriptures while backing into systematic questions as they arise, such as the effects of man's fall into sin (529-536) and election and reprobation (550-558). While such topics are always related to the topic at hand, they can make the volume difficult to navigate as an ST textbook. For example, he does not treat the marks and members of the church or the keys of the kingdom until introducing the Lord's Supper (856-860). The connection between these topics is clear and logical, but those choosing to read the section on the church alone in such a large volume will be confused by their omission there. His appeal to the beatitudes as a description of Christ's people in chapter nineteen is particularly helpful because it reminds us that doctrine is according to godliness and that theology is about knowing the right God in the right way (718-730). The great strength that ties all such examples together is that Gamble's theology rises out of biblical exegesis. Regardless of disagreements over the proper organization of systematic theology, this is a practice that every systematic theologian should follow and it is what will make *The Whole Counsel of God* interesting and useful.

Though this reviewer has more praise than criticism for this book, some methodological and theological issues merit some attention. Gamble's method of approaching and organizing theology remains the elephant in the room. His attempt to reshape the structure of systematic theology still threatens to rule ST out of existence (the first 342 pages, for example, read more like a NT biblical theology or special introduction to biblical books rather than an ST). Gamble remedies some of the systematic lacunae that characterized volume one by devoting chapters to the doctrine of God, the person and work of Christ, union with Christ, and other standard ST topics. Yet he still lacks the kind of systematic connections and formulations that one would expect in an ST. Instead of merely looking at the gospels as a starting point for ST (113), one might ask what is wrong with the older Lutheran and Reformed practice of modeling ST after the book of Romans? (Gamble notes this model in passing on pg. 170). Moreover, his arguments that the NT use of the OT provides a normative model of theological interpretation to readers today could become an argument for drawing systematic arguments from Scriptural texts and organizing and linking theological ideas in a way that makes the point at hand. The structure of ST versus BT is not so much a question of the theological structure of Scripture as it is of the kinds of questions we seek to answer and how those questions are interrelated. We need to understand the biblical system of doctrine as a whole as well as how the Bible gradually unfolds the story of redemption. A good BT will incorporate ST as questions arise, and a good ST will incorporate BT as answers are required. This means that *The Whole Counsel of God* remains difficult as a reference work for readers who are interested in a systematic and logically progressive summary of Christian doctrine. While reading this volume from cover to cover partly remedies this problem, many readers will doubtless dabble with rather than fully digest at 1100 page tome.

The book raises some theological questions as well. Gamble subsumes Christ's work under penal substitutionary atonement through his death. For example, he notes that Christ's active obedience refers to the whole of his life, but that Christ's "work

on our behalf is generally called Christ's passive obedience" (559). Yet did not Christ do everything that he did on our behalf or in our place? Would this not include active obedience as the ground of imputed righteousness? (Which Gamble confirms on pg. 561). He affirms that every part of Christ's humiliation and exaltation was relevant for our salvation, but it is hard to subsume so much redemptive content under the single category of the atonement, central and vital to the gospel though it is. Certainly his obedience qualified him to make atonement for our sins, but his active obedience is also the ground of imputed righteousness in our justification and of imparted righteousness in our sanctification (Rom. 5:19; 6:1-14). Some of these things are conjoined with atonement while going beyond it. While Gamble devotes great attention to sanctification and other key elements of salvation, subsuming everything under atonement makes the broader picture of redemption in Christ appear a bit out of focus. The atonement is not the entire good news; Jesus Christ, with the saving work of the Father and the Spirit, is. While atonement was one chapter in the redemption-accomplished portion of John Murray's classic *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, it encompasses the entire redemption-accomplished portion of Gamble's *Whole Counsel of God*. The model that Murray followed has greater biblical balance than does Gamble's. We must place Christ's atonement at the heart of the gospel, but we cannot make the atonement reach beyond its theological design. Penal substitutionary atonement is not an umbrella that has every saving act of Christ under it shadow. It is the capstone of what Christ came to do without being the entire building.

This is a great book. In this author's view, it is better than volume one. However, it is more a BT than an ST. In spite of this caveat, Gamble has given us a solid treatment of the theology of the NT while aiming to promote the saving knowledge of God and personal piety. This is no small achievement and we should be grateful for it. Targeting ministers and seminary professors, he reminds us, "Dead lives can do more harm than brilliant words can do good, and if sin reigns in the minister's life, no eloquence can overthrow the sins of the people" (31). Perhaps the reason why he can stress the piety of the theologian, which has been treated as taboo or unscientific in theology for far too long, is because he follows the NT wherever it leads him. As he wrote, "It is exegesis that must determine theology" (574). Such features, above all else, make this book useful to the church by reminding us that true theology is about knowing the right God in the right way and living for his glory.

—Ryan M. McGraw

Wayne Grudem. *"Free Grace" Theology: 5 Ways It Diminishes the Gospel*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016. Pp. 159. $19.99 (paperback).

During the latter part of the twentieth-century, a theological position was advanced, especially among dispensationalists, that is commonly known as the "non-lordship salvation" view. In the opinion of its proponents, the biblical teaching of free justification upon the basis of the righteousness of Christ alone militates against the

idea that believers must acknowledge the lordship of Jesus Christ in order to be saved. Since salvation is by grace alone, apart from works, it is theologically confused to say that believers must submit to the lordship of Jesus Christ in order to be saved. All believers need to do is receive Christ with the empty hand of faith. And while it is desirable and commendable that they do good works in obedience to Christ, the performance of such works is not indispensable to salvation. Believers may embrace Christ as Savior, even though they have not yet surrendered to his lordship. Oftentimes, this "non-lordship salvation" position was associated with a distinction between two kinds of believers, "carnal" and "spiritual" (appealing to 1 Cor. 3:1-4). Defenders of this position frequently argued that this position was the historic view advanced at the time of the Reformation. Therefore, any failure to maintain the non-lordship salvation position was tantamount to an abandonment of the Reformation's most basic teaching.

Wayne Grudem's *"Free Grace" Theology* aims to offer a critical assessment of the non-lordship salvation position. Grudem, a well-known evangelical who serves as research professor of theology and biblical studies at Phoenix Seminary, is well-qualified for the task. Since the proponents of the non-lordship position contend that it best conforms to the Scripture's teaching and reflects the historic view of the Reformation, Grudem sets about to show from Scripture that it "diminishes the gospel" and improperly appeals to Scripture. Though he expresses some reluctance in having to criticize fellow evangelicals whose commitment to Scripture is unimpeachable, he writes from the conviction that the non-lordship position represents a weakness in modern evangelicalism. As he puts it in the opening chapter, "modern evangelicalism has a tendency to avoid or water down any call for unbelievers to repent of their sins (not merely to 'change their minds') as part of coming to trust in Christ for forgiveness of those sins" (17-18).

In the introduction to his study, Grudem begins with a summary of the position he opposes, and offers an account as to why he prefers to call it "free grace theology" rather than "non-lordship salvation." Although the free grace position claims merely to be advocating the Reformation's emphasis upon "faith alone," it actually interprets this language in a "novel" way. Whereas historic Protestantism used this expression to maintain that works play no role in obtaining justification, contemporary free grace proponents use this expression to teach that true, saving faith need not be accompanied by anything else, including repentance and the beginning of new (albeit imperfect) obedience, in those who are justified. Whereas the Reformation taught that the same faith that alone justifies is never alone (without the works it produces) in the justified person, the free grace position follows the radical teaching of Zane Hodges. In this teaching, believers do not have to be called to repentance, heartfelt sorrow for sin and turning from it, in the presentation of the gospel. Indeed, any insistence upon the inseparability of faith and repentance in the gospel call seriously undermines the gospel of free grace.

In Grudem's estimation, there are two problematic features in the free grace position: First, it denies the biblical teaching that true repentance is "necessary for saving faith"; and second, it fails to recognize that true faith always produces, and is accompanied by, good works (24). Since the position he wishes to defend is actually

the historic position of the Reformation, Grudem contends that it is better to describe it as such, and not employ the misleading language of "lordship salvation." The position he aims to defend is simply the "mainstream, evangelical Protestant view since the Reformation" (24).

The main body of Grudem's study consists of five chapters, each of which addresses distinct features of the free grace movement. In the first of these chapters, Grudem offers an assessment of the free grace movement's understanding of the expression "faith alone." Appealing to various Reformers, including Calvin, as well as a number of representative confessions in the Reformation tradition, he ably demonstrates that the free grace position diverges from the Reformation's view. In chapter 2, one of the more important in the book, Grudem demonstrates from Scripture that the call to repentance from sin belongs integrally to the biblical presentation of the gospel. Such repentance is not merely "a change of mind" regarding the identity of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior (as is commonly alleged by free grace proponents), but it is a heartfelt sorrow for sin and a turning from it in renewed obedience worked by the Holy Spirit. In subsequent chapters, he shows how the free grace movement offers a "false assurance" to believers who merely accept Jesus as Savior, but continue to live in a way that belies his claim upon their lives (chapter 3); how the free grace movement underemphasizes the way true faith involves a hearty confidence and commitment to the person and work of Christ, reducing it to a mere intellectual assent to biblical truths regarding him (chapter 4); and how the free grace movement is often obliged to twist or distort Scriptural passages in order to make them conformable to its teaching (chapter 5).

Though there are a number of books that offer a critical assessment of what is commonly known as the "non-lordship salvation" position, none of them surpasses Grudem's study in clarity or careful biblical-theological argumentation. In a clear, charitable, and engaging manner, Grudem presents a convincing case against what he prefers to call free grace theology. If you are looking for an accessible treatment of the free grace position to give to someone who might be tempted to embrace its teaching, I cannot think of a volume better suited to the task than this one. Nor can I think of a better addition to any collection of volumes on this topic.

—Cornelis P. Venema

Meredith G. Kline. *Essential Writings of Meredith G. Kline*. Edited by Jonathan G. Kline. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2017. Pp. xxx + 300. $29.95 (hardcover).

A writing career that stretches from 1950-2006 (or to 2016 if one counts a posthumously published short commentary) is an impressive feat. And yet length of career and size of output does not necessarily an insightful and provocative thinker make. With Meredith G. Kline, however, provocative and insightful do indeed characterize his literary production. A biblical-theologian and Old Testament scholar standing on the shoulders of Geerhardus Vos, Kline spent his career working out the

contours of a redemptive-historical hermeneutic and drawing concrete applications of this exegetical method to a range of theological and ethical issues. But when a would-be reader of Kline looks for a place to start to get a taste for Kline's approach, one is often at a loss for where one might begin.

Does one begin with Kline's 1963 book *Treaty of the Great King: The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy: Studies and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963)? This is indeed a fascinating study, written in the midst of a freshly burgeoning field of ancient Near Eastern treaty studies, yet with a unique eye for biblical-theological concerns. Nevertheless, it is a fairly focused book, the bulk of which is a note-style commentary on the book of Deuteronomy. Does one go forward to 1968 when Kline wrote *By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968)? Though this book does interact with the canon of Scripture more broadly, it too is quite focused, looking at the implications of suzerainty-vassal treaties for the initiation sacraments of the covenant community.

Kline's 1972 publication, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) – revised already in 1975 – does begin to broaden his hermeneutical import and, in this reviewer's opinion, does serve as an excellent introduction to Kline's most measured and insightful thought. And yet it is not until *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Overland Park, KS: Two Age Press, 2000) that Kline's insight came into its most imaginative and memorable form. His final book, *God, Heaven and Har Magedon: A Covenantal Tale of Cosmos and Telos* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2006) carries the insights of *Kingdom Prologue* forward into a more robust engagement with the eschatological structure of the canon of Scripture. What is often the case, however, is that when one begins with these last two works, the response is either an excited, wholesale (and sometimes uncritical) embrace of an incredibly novel approach (one noted for its complete absence of footnotes and citation of secondary literature), or a repulsed, frustrated rejection of not only an approach, but of a man who is deemed to be overly creative and speculative. Is there a way through this impasse?

With the newly published *Essential Writings of Meredith G. Kline*, editor Jonathan G. Kline has finally given us an anthology of Kline's writings that demonstrates the range of his biblical and theological thought. It consists of well-footnoted research and writing on a variety of topics spanning from the 1950s to the 1990s. This volume lacks the cumulative punch of a single, sustained monograph like *Kingdom Prologue* or *God, Heaven and Har Magedon,* but it does showcase his insightful creativity and gives readers a taste of Kline's contribution in approximately 270 pages.

Essential Writings of Meredith G. Kline presents a selection of Kline's writings in five parts. Part one, "Creation," contains two programmatic articles on Kline's framework approach to Genesis 1-2. These present the exegetical underpinnings to his literary interpretation of the creation account, and the "two-register cosmology" that informs his reading of the textual details. It is these studies in particular that led Kline to speak of the permissibility of "the current scientific view of a very old universe" and of "the theory of the evolutionary origin of man" (albeit one that saw Adam as "a

historical individual, the covenantal head and ancestral fount of the rest of mankind" and that "it was the one and same divine act that constituted him the first man, Adam the son of God [Luke 3:38], that also imparted to him life [Gen. 2:7])" (45, n.47). Those interested in understanding the different textual issues present in current debates over the nature of Genesis 1-2 will benefit from this section of the book whether or not they are convinced by its particulars.

Part two, "Covenant, Law, and the State," contains four essays applying his biblical-theological program to the question of the relationship of the civil magistrate to the inscripturated law of God. It is Kline's thinking as exemplified in this section in particular that has shaped recent debates around Theonomy and Two Kingdoms theology. Herein readers will see how Kline's approach has been built upon or rejected by theologians in their respective construal of Christ and culture.

Part three, "Faith, the Gospel, and Justification," moves into more traditional dogmatic waters. Three essays look at faith as it is seen in Genesis 15:6, the gospel as a narrative genre with Old Testament precedents, and the nature of God's judgement of sin. Much of this material is relevant to debates with Norman Shepherd and the covenantal-nomists whom Kline adamantly opposed in the 1980s and 1990s and remain relevant to ongoing debates concerning the Federal Vision.

Part four, "Redemption," consists of three more articles. The first is a rereading of the institution of the Passover in Exodus 12, providing a lexical study of the word פסח (*pasach*) that interprets God's actions in avian imagery as "hovering over" his brood (Israel) in protection against the destroying one rather than the idea of God "passing over" the Israelite houses as is often thought from the English phrase "Passover." This is a powerful and compelling exegesis of the relevant texts. The second article looks at the prose material in Job 1-2 and 42, casting the encounter between God and Satan (lit. הַשָּׂטָן, "the adversary") in terms of rival armies who send out their respective "champions" in lieu of direct military engagement. It helps to forge an even more direct Christological typology to the person of Job. The third is a sample of one of Kline's studies of Zechariah's night visions. It should be noted that this section does have application to dogmatics, though not quite as directly cued in to dogmatic debates as were the selections in part three.

Part five, "Resurrection and Consummation," concludes the volume with exegetical treatments that relate more closely to dogmatic formulations in the locus of eschatology. Covering death, resurrection, and the end of the millennium, readers of an amillennial persuasion in particular will find a set of exegetical studies that bolster their claims (vis-à-vis dispensationalism) in ways they may not have considered before.

As is always the case with a volume of selected, indeed *essential*, writings, one might quibble about the inclusion of certain articles and the omission of others. This reviewer wondered whether some of the articles that informed Kline's books *By Oath Consigned* and *Images of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980) might have been a better way to display the way in which Kline's exegesis related to dogmatic topics such as the sacraments and anthropology. Articles like these are often harder for the non-academic reader to access and a venue for publishing them might have also done the service of making available some difficult-to-access works. Some

of Kline's shorter, popular biblical writings (e.g., his "Bible Book of the Month" installments from *Christianity Today* on Song of Songs, Lamentations) would have also given a fine introduction to some of his biblical insight. Several of his shorter, also popular theological articles (e.g., "The Relevance of Theocracy," *Presbyterian Guardian* 22 [1953]: 26-27, 36; "Covenant Theology Under Attack," *New Horizons* 15, no. 2 [1994]: 3-5), though more polemical in tone, could have further demonstrated Kline's exegetical relevance to pressing theological issues. And though book reviews are not always the most stunning reading, Kline's reviews of several volumes likewise give insight into his distinctive thought and make note of places where fellow Reformed biblical theologians have not been as consistent and careful in their own reflections as they could have.

Nevertheless, critiques about omissions generally sound a bit inane. In fact, this reviewer felt that all of the articles chosen for *Essential Writings of Meredith G. Kline* were appropriate inclusions, showing that the book has indeed achieved its goal of providing a snapshot into the development of Kline's thought over his career. Chapters 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 13-16 struck this reviewer as very traditional biblical and/or theological studies which make for essential reading when studying the relevant topics. One other fine inclusion was "Meredith G. Kline: A Biographical Sketch" (xviii-xxx) written by Kline's son, Meredith M. Kline. It was sweet to read of Kline's relationship with E. J. Young (known to Kline as "Joe"). Though the two disagreed sharply over the nature of Genesis 1, Young and his family were loving and supporting friends to the Kline family, especially during some prolonged periods when Kline's wife Murial was hospitalized. This was a touching homage from a son to his beloved father.

In sum, *Essential Writings of Meredith G. Kline* is a welcome addition to the library of Reformed pastors. Hopefully it will go a long way toward disabusing people's extreme reactions to Kline, as noted above. Jonathan G. Kline has given us a handsomely edited volume, intuitively organized, and containing a helpful foray into the writings of Meredith G. Kline.

—R. Andrew Compton

Jonathan G. Kline, ed. *Keep Up Your Biblical Hebrew in Two Minutes A Day: 365 Selections for Easy Review, Volume 1*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2017. Pp. xiv + 370. $39.95 (hard flexisoft cover).

Idem. *Keep Up Your Biblical Hebrew in Two Minutes A Day: 365 Selections for Easy Review, Volume 2*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2017. Pp. xiv + 370. $39.95 (hard flexisoft cover).

Idem. *Keep Up Your Biblical Aramaic in Two Minutes A Day: 365 Selections for Easy Review*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2017. Pp. xiv + 369. $39.95 (hard flexisoft cover).

Idem. *Keep Up Your Biblical Greek in Two Minutes A Day: 365 Selections for Easy Review, Volume 1*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2017. Pp. xiv + 370. $39.95 (hard flexisoft cover).

Idem. *Keep Up Your Biblical Hebrew in Two Minutes A Day: 365 Selections for Easy Review, Volume 2*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2017. Pp. xiv + 370. $39.95 (hard flexisoft cover).

Already in 1918, J. Gresham Machen stated: "The widening breach between the minister and his Greek Testament may be traced to two principal causes. The modern minister objects to his Greek New Testament or is indifferent to it, first, because he is becoming less interested in his Greek, and second, because he is becoming less interested in his New Testament…. [T]he modern minister is neglecting his Greek New Testament because he is becoming less interested in his New Testament in general – less interested in his Bible. The Bible used to be regarded as providing the very sum and substance of preaching; a preacher was true to his calling only as he succeeded in reproducing the applying the message of the Word of God. Very different in the modern attitude. The Bible is not discarded, to be sure, but it is treated only as one of the sources, even though it is still the chief source, of the preacher's inspiration" ("The Minister and his Greek New Testament," in *Selected Shorter Writings: J. Gresham Machen,* edited by D.G. Hart [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2004], 210-11).

Fast forward 100 years to 2018, this scenario is alive and well. While many seminaries have dropped or reduced requirements for biblical Greek, many in more conservative ecclesiastical settings have continued to teach the language. But even in churches where Greek examinations are given to hopeful ministers at classis and presbytery, many pastors admit to using their Greek in facile ways, if at all. Biblical Hebrew has fared no better. Biblical Aramaic, due to its small presence in the Bible, has fallen on the hardest times; many seminaries offer no instruction in Aramaic except by way of an occasional elective offering pending student interest.

The Westminster Confession of Faith states: "The Old Testament in Hebrew … and the New Testament in Greek … being immediately inspired by God, and, by his singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as, in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal to them" (WCF 1.8). For pastors in the Reformed tradition, it would seem incongruous at best to neglect the ongoing improvement, let alone the maintenance, of biblical language study. And yet this is all too often the case.

Many pastors feel this pinch acutely. Their conscience pangs them in sermon preparation, and they are embarrassed when colleagues (or parishioners) correct their exegesis from the original text of Scripture by drawing attention to grammatical or lexical features they had overlooked. What is a pastor in this situation to do? Certainly rereading the beginning grammars used in their seminary education is a good first step, but are there any other resources that would reintroduce the reading and use of the biblical languages into the rhythms of their days and weeks?

The newly published series, *Keep Up Your Biblical Greek/Hebrew/Aramaic in Two Minutes A Day* is a wonderful resource that can begin to shore up this gap in

pastoral language use. Each volume in the series is divided into 365 daily readings consisting of (1) a single verse from the Bible in English translation, usually with a few original words included in parentheses; (2) a vocabulary word with a gloss and note about frequency; (3) the same Bible verse as it appears in the standard editions of the Hebrew/Aramaic Old Testament or Greek New Testament; and (4) a phrase-by-phrase chart showing the correspondences between an English phrase and its original language making it easy to practice reading the languages. For example, from Day 26, Week 4 (January 26) of *Keep Up Your Biblical Hebrew in Two Minutes A Day, Volume 1*:

2 Samuel 2:17 וַתְּהִי הַמִּלְחָמָה קָשָׁה עַד־מְאֹד בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא

And the battle was	וַתְּהִי הַמִּלְחָמָה
very fierce	קָשָׁה עַד־מְאֹד
that day	בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא

Not only does each day of the year have a page containing an exercise, the editor, Jonathan G. Kline, has offered a number of suggestions for using these volumes within different scheduling scenarios. If a pastor has only 10 seconds to 1 minute per day, they can simply read the English verse and notice the Greek/Hebrew/Aramaic words provided in parentheses. This will at a minimum remind readers of a few words. If a pastor has 2 to 5 minutes, they can read the whole verse in English and in Greek/Hebrew/Aramaic, and then work through the chart at the bottom of each page. Here they will be reminded of words, but also phrases and grammatical/morphological features of a verse of the Bible. If a pastor has 10 to 20 minutes per day to devote to this activity, Kline suggests reading all 7 pages for a given week. While early in the week these verses may feel awkward, later in the week the repetition will make the languages of these verses feel much more familiar. Of course with volumes like these, pastors have even more options than these and can tailor their time spent in the volumes to their needs.

Each volume is handsomely made. They have stamped hard flexisoft covers (a hardback covered with a leather-like material), rounded page corners, thick paper, and two cloth bookmarks. Each preface not only describes the purpose and intent of the volume, but offers pedagogical suggestions and tips for using the book most profitably. Finally, a Scripture index at the end of each volume shows which verses of the Bible are covered on which day, allowing a busy pastor a chance to see if any of the verses upon which he is preaching has been treated in the book and dipping in at that point to bolster his exegetical preparation of the sermon. The verses selected for each volume cover a wide variety of biblical books and genre types and provide an ideal tool for those who wish to keep up *and even improve* their knowledge of the biblical languages.

The only item of critique this reviewer has is the decision to use a published English translation of a given verse each day. While the translation varies from day to day (between ESV, NRSV, NASB, NIV, CSB, and MLB), it is still just that: a published translation. Kline defends this choice: “I hope that by seeing how each of these translations deals with a sampling of verses, you will grow in your familiarity with and appreciation of the translation philosophies that underlie them.” This is

certainly accomplished, but for a series aimed to improve the actual reading of the original languages, a more wooden translation could have better highlighted the grammar and translation of individual phrases.

Nevertheless, these volumes are a wonderful addition to a pastor's library. While readers will want to start reading longer passages of Scripture, perhaps using a Reader's Hebrew Bible or New Testament (see the options recently published by Zondervan, Hendrickson, and Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft), *Keep Up Your Biblical Greek/Hebrew/Aramaic in Two Minutes A Day* is a highly recommended resource for beginning this process. The overwhelmed and embarrassed pastor will find an eminently practical and achievable way forward that will guide them into better familiarity with the original languages of God's infallible word!

—R. Andrew Compton

Joel McDurmon. *The Problem of Slavery in Christian America: An Ethical-Judicial History of American Slavery and Racism.* Powder Springs, GA: American Vision Press, 2017. Pp. xxv + 436. $34.95 (paperback).

McDurmon is a Christian Reconstructionist who believes that chattel slavery in America was man-stealing, was rightly identified as such before America was an independent nation, and should thus have died the death that such an evil deserved. One need not be a Christian Reconstructionist to believe such, of course. This reviewer is not one and agrees with McDurmon on this point, who, in fact, finds himself in hot water with many fellow conservatives that have adopted a different approach historically to slavery, racism, and "social justice" broadly. Because of this book (and some other recent ones that he's written), McDurmon has come under fire for abandoning the traditional Reconstructionist vision, especially that of his grandfather Rousas J. Rushdoony and of the organization formerly headed by Gary DeMar, American Vision, now headed by McDurmon.

Part I begins with what McDurmon calls "A Judicial History of American Slavery," proceeding historically through the colonial foundations, early establishment, the American Revolution, the Antebellum, Civil War and post-War period. In this part, McDurmon details the arrival of the first slaves in Virginia in 1619, the growth of the institution later in the century after the waning of indentured servitude and the need for slaves in labor intensive crops (rice, indigo, and, finally, King Cotton), the apparent waning of slavery at the time of the Revolution, its revival with the invention of the cotton gin and its waxing in the early national period. At the time of the U.S. Civil War, not only did some want to revive the slave trade (that the U.S. Constitution, which guiltily never mentioned "slavery," had abolished in 1808), but claimed that it was the "cornerstone" of the Confederate States of America with no end in sight. After "emancipation," Jim Crow laws and other atrocities kept the former slaves still subjugated, an injustice righted only in more recent times through civil rights legislation, though racism has hardly been wiped out (sin remaining intractable).

Part II chronicles the role of the churches, which might be reduced to "too little, too late," permitting, over time, theological liberals, or non-Christians of various stripes, who appear to care more for injustices against blacks than do Reformed and evangelical Christians, to profit from the gross injustices perpetrated upon them in chattel slavery. McDurmon details the complicity of the church in this degradation of our fellow humans, a sad acquiescence given the cupiditous man-stealers in Africa, the deadly middle passage, the vile slave markets, selling down the river, cruelty at the hands of masters and overseers, ill regard for slave marriages, outlawing literacy, etc. It is the case that the PCUSA, at its 1818 General Assembly, condemned slavery as inconsistent with the gospel (with no recorded opposition) and called for emancipation. There were those in the Presbyterian Church, like Charles Hodge, who took a stand against it. But many others didn't, and the sad fact is that prominent Southern Presbyterians like Robert Lewis Dabney, Benjamin Morgan Palmer, and James Henley Thornwell were among its most eloquent defenders, and even advocates.

McDurmon takes his title, at least "The Problem of Slavery" part from several of David Brion Davis's titles on slavery. Davis, cited more than once in this work, is one of the great scholars of modern slavery and many of us first learned about its genesis in the West, growth in America, and sheer horror from Davis. I certainly did, in history graduate school in the 1980s, both from his books and hearing him lecture and lead a seminar. Thus the horrors of that "peculiar institution" that McDurmon sets forth in this book are no surprise to many of us but they may be to many of his Christian readers.

The full title, "The Problem of Slavery in Christian America," then brings into view not only that miserable institution but what the church did in propping it up and even promoting it. McDurmon does fault the doctrine of the spirituality of the church with much of the lack of a prophetic voice against the wrong. While it is true that a misguided spirituality did quench much ecclesiastical opposition, this reviewer, who has written extensively on a rightly constructed doctrine of spirituality—one that permits the church properly to distinguish itself from the world and to give itself to the world—would argue that the church needs a good doctrine of the spirituality of the church, one that does not silence her prophetic voice, while keeping her free from being overwhelmed by partisan politics.

Another aspect of a proper spirituality of the church, while permitting the church to identify and call for repentance for sin, keeps the church focused on its gospel call and does not imagine that the church as an institution exhausts what Christians may do societally, either individually or collectively. In other words, Christians may personally and collectively pursue just societal aims, but this does not mean that the church as church is to pursue politics, something lost on some abolitionists, for whom nothing, including the gospel, was more important and who appear to have been willing to destroy even the church in the prosecution of that aim. McDurmon seems to miss the danger of the monomania of these radical abolitionists. The book also suffers from a number of stylistic and editorial infelicities, including a curious changing treatment of Thornwell's name. These are easily correctible matters that subsequent editions can make right.

A more careful treatment of matters like the spirituality of the church and radical abolitionism (John Brown was never the answer to anything properly), together with a more attentive scholarship, would surely improve this work. Is this work as sophisticated and informed as a treatment of this complex subject merits? Not quite. Does it always fairly portray the church, and does it rightly engage in a sweeping critique of the spirituality of the church? I don't think so. Is it naïve in its treatment of radical abolitionism? Yes. Nevertheless, McDurmon's exposé of the institution of slavery for what it was—a disgraceful stain on the Christians, especially Presbyterians, of this country—is needed: We need to acknowledge that we've not done right by our brothers and sisters from Africa and work to bring blessing where we've contributed to misery.

In fact, the Reformed faith, with its emphasis on the solas (especially "grace alone"), should fare much better in historically oppressed communities than it has. We have something to offer better than the social gospel of the theological liberals or the pull-yourself-up-by-your-own- bootstraps religion of the health and wealth gospel. We offer a Christ who paid it all, who calls the weary and heavy-laden to come to him for rest, and who loves us with a love that will never let us go. We need to be intentional in communicating this not only to the educated or otherwise privileged of our society, who are typically reached by Reformed churches, but also to the down and out for whom the grace of the gospel is especially well-suited.

—Alan D. Strange

Marcus A. Mininger. *Uncovering the Theme of Revelation in Romans 1:16—3:26: Discovering a New Approach to Paul's Argument*. WUNT 2. Reihe 445. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017. Pp. xvi + 410. 94,00 € / $141.00 (paperback).

In Pauline studies these days, readers may be dubious when a publisher promises, as Mohr Siebeck does on the cover of this dissertation, to offer a "new interpretation" that moves "beyond Old and New Perspectives." In the crossfire between the traditional focus on Pauline soteriology and the revisionist reading of Paul in ecclesiological and social perspectives, can anything fresh be said that might move through the impasse between the warring camps? The answer is Yes.

Marcus Mininger's *Uncovering the Theme of Revelation in Romans 1:16—3:26* (hereafter *Uncovering*) had its origins in his Master of Theology studies at Princeton Theological Seminary; and it is his 2016 Ph.D. dissertation at Westminster Theological Seminary, slightly revised and updated. It is a superb exemplar of careful exegesis: conversant with the spectrum of voices, past and present, that have addressed Paul's magisterial epistle; discerning and respectfully critical toward prior interpreters representing various "schools"; and *especially* attentive to the specifics of the text itself. Moreover, *Uncovering* is written in a refreshingly clear and engaging style. A scholarly dissertation that is a pleasure to read (though it demands close concentration)—who would have anticipated such a thing?

As the title indicates, Mininger's exposition of the opening movements in Paul's argument pays close attention to the motif of *revelation*, which, though prominent in Rom 1:16—3:26, has not received its due from interpreters. (The word "uncovering" itself nicely forecasts this motif, since it could well serve as a gloss for the Greek ἀποκαλύψις, usually rendered "revelation" in English.) As Mininger demonstrates, the revelation motif appears in these chapters through a wide variety of vocabulary: not only through ἀποκαλύπτω (1:17-18) and its cognate noun ἀποκαλύψις (2:5); but also through other words expressing *disclosure*, such as ἐνδείκνυμι (2:15), ἔνδειξις (3:25-26), φανερός (1:19; 2:28), φανερόω (1:19; 3:21), and συνίστημι (3:5); as well as in terms related to *knowledge and understanding* (or lack thereof) such as νοέω (1:19-20), νοῦς (1:28), γινώσκω (1:21; 2:18), γνῶσις (2:20), ἐπιγινώσκω (1:32), ἐπίγνωσις (1:28; 3:20), σόφος (1:22), μωραίνω (1:22), ἀλήθεια (1:18, 25; 2:2, 8, 20; 3:7), and ψεύδος (1:25); and in synonyms and antonyms related to *visual perception*, such as ἀόρατα (1:20-21), καθοράω (1:20-21), φώς (2:19), σκότος (2:19), σκοτίζω (1:21), and κρύπτος (2:16, 29). (See Table 1, p. 37—from which φανερός and φανερόω in 1:19 are omitted, though mentioned on p. 36.)

This is an impressive list. As Mininger patiently opens up the phrases, clauses, sentences and paragraphs in which the terms and the concepts that they convey appear, one marvels that so few students of Romans have given focused attention to the revelation motif in this early section. Earlier theme studies of the concept of revelation surveyed the New Testament as a whole or the Pauline corpus as a whole, and therefore treated Romans 1—3 briefly. Commentators on Romans have tended to read Romans 1—3 in light of questions informed by issues that Paul would address later in the epistle. As a result, the apostle's own emphasis on *God's revelation* in this section, signaled both by his lexical choice and by his method of argumentation, has been overshadowed by the traditional ("Old Perspective") paradigm's focus on the *soteriological* question, "How can sinful humans be justified before God?" and by the revisionist ("New Perspective") paradigm's concern for the *social/ecclesiastical* question, "Why must every division between Jew and Gentile be eradicated in the church of Christ?" While Mininger respects and affirms both the traditional interpreters' soteriological definition of the *content* of Paul's gospel (to be elaborated in Romans 4ff) and the revisionists' social emphasis as showing an important *entailment* of the gospel (to be spelled out in Romans 14—15), *Uncovering* argues that imposing these categories on chapters 1—3 tends to obscure the force of Paul's argument in this opening section. Because scholars in both camps have read Romans "backwards," importing into these early chapters motifs that Paul would address later in the epistle, they have expressed confusion, discomfort, and even sharp critique about the cogency of Paul's reasoning. By contrast, viewing Romans 1—3 through the lens of revelation, picking up the cues embedded in the text itself, unveils the cogency of the apostle's flow of thought.

Both in the introductory chapter and at the beginning of the following chapters on the discrete pericopae (1:16-17; 1:18-32; 2:1-16; 2:17-29; 3:1-8; 3:9-20; 3:21-26), surveys of previous interpretation demonstrate Mininger's extensive grasp of the vast history of Romans exposition. More importantly, these surveys identify the interpretive dilemmas that each text has posed for scholars who have approached it

from either a traditional/soteriological or a revisionist/social perspective. As each of these surveys concludes, the reader's cognitive dissonance is intense: Is a *coherent* reading of Paul's reasoning in these chapters even possible?

When, however, Romans 1:16—3:26 are approached through a "revelation-historical" perspective, both the function of this section in the epistle as the whole and the coherence of the various movements within this section become clear. This reading of Romans 1—3 recognizes that this epistle, like everything from Paul, is not a timeless theological discourse but an occasional and pastoral missive, directed to the life situation confronted by its original recipients. Paul's assertion that he is "not ashamed" of the gospel (1:16) implies the context of criticism toward the gospel in which he and his readers find themselves. That back-story emerges more overtly in 3:8 and in the claims of the interlocutors whom Paul debates in 2:1-29. Over against rival claims, Paul asserts that the gospel (to be as Christ's death and resurrection, Romans 4—8) is God's power that imparts salvation to everyone who believes, because "in it the righteousness of God *has been revealed*" through the redemptive mission of Christ (1:17).

Therefore, revelation—God's sovereign initiative to make visible in public history and human experience what would otherwise remain hidden to human creatures—is Paul's central theme in Romans 1—3. The fact that God alone can "reveal" implies a hiddenness/disclosure dynamic that defines the limitations of human perception and understanding, and demonstrates humanity's utter dependence on divine disclosure.

This hiddenness/disclosure dynamic operates not only in the sphere of special, redemptive revelation but also in the wider sphere of general revelation in creation, rendering all human ungodliness and unrighteousness inexcusable (1:18—2:29). God has displayed his invisible attributes—his eternal power and deity—through the visible products of his creation; but rebellious humans have suppressed God's truth and preferred the lie of creature-worship. Therefore, God has "handed them over" (1:24, 26, 28) to corrupt desires, visible in their bodies through distorted sexual practices. This is a *present* revelation of God's wrath from heaven (1:18) against a portion of the human race, flagrant worshipers of the creature instead of the Creator. As a consequence of *God's handing them over* to their corrupt passions, they are receiving in their bodies the dire consequences of their suppression of God's revelation in creation. God's wrath is now being revealed from heaven in their visible downward spiral.

Meanwhile, Paul's first interlocutor (2:1-16) passes judgment on such flagrantly depraved persons, taking comfort in the fact that, though he too practices "the very same things," he is experiencing not divine wrath but divine kindness and forbearance. This interlocutor is not explicitly identified as Jewish, nor is his self-assurance said to be based on a claim of moral superiority. Rather, he misinterprets the present inequities in divine providence, and so he assumes that his present exemption from divine wrath will be perpetual. Misperceiving his favorable visible circumstances as reflective of his relationship to God, this interlocutor fails to recognize that absolute divine justice is now hidden from human sight (by common grace) but will be displayed in the future, "in the day of wrath and *revelation* of God's righteous

judgment" (2:5). He fails to grasp that things now visible—behavior and circumstances—are not accurate predictors of the final verdict "on that day when God will judge humans' *hidden things* through Jesus Christ, in accordance with my gospel" (2:16). (This summary of the exposition of 2:1-16 fails to do justice to the precision of Mininger's exegetical treatment of this "problem text," which has been hotly debated recently in confessional Reformed circles and in New Perspective interchanges. *Uncovering* has advanced the discussion, so I urge readers to engage Chapter 4 directly.)

Paul's second interlocutor (2:17-29) explicitly calls himself a Jew and rests his confidence in his possession and knowledge of the Law. Whereas the first interlocutor noted the *visible* difference between God's present revelation of wrath against others and his own enjoyment of divine kindness, failing to take account of God's not-yet-seen final judgment of humans' secrets; the second focuses on *visible* features in himself—Torah-possession and instruction, with circumcision—that set him apart from the blind, the darkened, the foolish … the Gentiles. He too underestimates the truth that God perceives hidden things, whereas humans do not. Paul answers this interlocutor by defining "Jewishness" inwardly and the "circumcision" that receives God's praise as pertaining to the (hidden) heart. David, in his repentant acknowledgement of his own sin and God's righteous verdict (Ps 51:4, cited in Rom 3:4), was such an "inward" Jew whose heart was circumcised. This is the true advantage of the Jew: that David's confession in the oracles of God (τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ) (3:2) shows that God's righteousness is revealed *for salvation* "inversely"—not through a *correspondence* between God's righteousness and any credentials visible in human beings, but rather "*in diametric contrast to the human condition*" (289, italics original). In other words, Paul cites Psalm 51 not merely to affirm God's justice vis-à-vis human guilt, but also to bring into view the surprising grace that justifies the ungodly (4:5). Ancient Scripture supports Paul's defense against those who slanderously charge his gospel with commending evil-doing so that good may come (3:7-8).

Mininger's treatment of the second interlocutor's claims (2:17-29) is the one significant point on which his interpretation fails to persuade me, as he anticipated it might. His proposal is first offered tentatively (224: "The 'Form of Knowledge' as Bodily Circumcision?") and then with increasing confidence (e.g., 235: "…'form of knowledge and truth' *most likely* refers to the interlocutor's outward condition of circumcision" [italics added]). The proposal, that "the outward form of knowledge and truth" (τὴν μόρφωσιν τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας) refers to *physical circumcision*, gives me pause. This reading would, admittedly, address the objection of those who find Paul's introduction of circumcision in 2:25 abrupt and troubling. But in view of this interlocutor's confidence in his *noetic* advantage (knowing God's will, being catechized from the Law, a guide to the blind, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of toddlers), it seems a stretch to claim that Paul's first audience would perceive the term μόρφωσιν as signaling a move *at that point* in the direction of circumcision in the flesh. Mininger cites similar expressions in Second Temple Judaism, especially Philo, to demonstrate that circumcision was seen as emblematic of hidden heart/mind realities (232-34). But those parallels are not close enough to persuade, in my opinion.

Nonetheless, Mininger correctly observes that his broader argument does not depend on his distinctive interpretation of τὴν μόρφωσιν τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας, over against the view that enjoys "near universality" among scholars, namely that Paul intends "the visible form of knowledge and truth that the written Law comprises" (224-225).

It is tempting to continue mentioning fresh insights derived from the revelation-history perspective that *Uncovering* applies to Romans 1—3. For instance, the catena of OT citations in 3:10-18 traces an anatomy of sin, from the interior to the bodily/exterior, and from head to toe (throat/tongue/lips/mouth to feet) and back again (eyes). Its purpose is to demonstrate that remaining in the domain of Law entails remaining under the power of Sin (305-321). This Law-Sin connection (anticipating Rom 8:1-4) leads to this conclusion: "*No matter how many works the Law performs upon people, the solution to human unrighteousness and the power of Sin at work in and upon them is still never going to be more and greater uses of the Law. It must be something entirely different*" (322, italics original).

That entirely different remedy is the righteousness of God displayed "now" in the blood of Christ (3:21-26). Paul's twofold (3:21, 26) "now (νῦν)" and "in the now time (ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ)" set apart the present moment in the history of revelation both from that which precedes Christ's appearance and from the future "day of wrath and revelation of God's righteous judgment" (2:5). In this recently-inaugurated "now," God's forbearance (3:25) has created a window for repentance, the response to which his kindness should lead (2:4) through the gospel (350-354).

Since time and space are limited, I will forego more examples of fresh and cogent exegetical insight. But one further comment is called for: *Uncovering*'s concluding summary rightly notes that, whereas its close, contextual reading of Romans 1-3 through the lens of revelation-history takes issue with the traditional/soteriological interpretation of specific texts, "the present study has offered an approach to Rom 1:16—3:26 that reaches the same soteriological conclusions as the traditional approach" (372). It does so not only by resolving exegetical problems identified by detractors, but also by broadening the range of human/visible criteria against which Paul polemicizes in advancing his gospel of God's surprising grace to the unworthy, through the display of his righteousness at the cross of Christ. This rereading of Romans 1—3 reinforces and enriches the Reformation articulation of the gospel of grace, while providing an excellent model of attentive listening to the text of God's Word.

—Dennis E. Johnson

J.P. Moreland, Stephen C. Meyer, Christopher Shaw, Ann K. Gauger, and Wayne Grudem, eds. *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017. Pp. 1007. $60.00 (hardcover).

There have been many critiques of neo-Darwinism, naturalism, scientism, atheistic materialism and the like over the last few decades. Michael Behe, David Berlinski,

Alvin Plantinga, and so many others, both scientists and philosophers, have written critically of a worldview whose naturalistic foundations cannot account for logic, beauty, truth, morality and the scientific method itself. A designer-less world, it has been argued, not only cannot account for the fine tuning of the initial constants of the universe, but does not cohere with the project of science; rather antitheism undermines science, a matter treated with particular dexterity in Plantinga's *Where the Conflict Really Lies*. This volume under review, however, is not another one of those books answering antisupernatural contentions.

This book, rather, critiques professing Christians (chiefly, though not necessarily exclusively), not who argue for unguided evolution as such, but who argue that what appears to be unguided evolution was the method employed by God in the development of the universe. This work is a critique then of those who make common cause with antitheistic scientists, those who act as if the mechanism of unguided evolution sufficiently explains the world. The book is massive and endeavors to cover all the relevant terrain. It's in three large sections: the Scientific Critique of Theistic Evolution (Section 1); the Philosophical Critique of Theistic Evolution (Section 2); and the Biblical and Theological Critique of Theistic Evolution (Section 3). The five general editors both head up the editing of these three sections and also have essays in those respective sections. The volume also begins with a Scientific and Philosophical Introduction by Stephen C. Meyer in which he sets forth the definition and parameters of theistic evolution and a Biblical and Theological Introduction by Wayne Grudem in which he seeks to demonstrate "The Incompatibility of Theistic Evolution with the Biblical Account of Creation and with Important Christian Doctrines."

Why this book and now? This was written in response largely to the BioLogos Foundation, an organization created in 2007 by Francis Collins, head of the Human Genome Project and then Director of the National Institute of Health, to address the perceived warfare between science and faith and boldly to declare that the two are not opposed. Collins had written *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* in 2006, having become a Christian some years earlier. In the aftermath of that book, various Christians responded appreciatively, lamenting the friction that has only increased between faith and science since 1859, when Darwin wrote *Origin of the Species.*

It is particularly important to note that Meyer, in his introductory essay, does not rule out evolution as something that God could have used in developing creation. It's just that Meyer believes that evolutionary development is guided by God, as described by the Intelligent Design movement, of which Meyer is a key player, particularly as one of the leaders at the Discovery Institute in Seattle, with which several contributors to this volume have connections (as well as the allied Biologic Institute). Some have depicted this volume as a product of those Seattle organizations; a survey of its twenty-five essayists, however, reveal a broader base than just the Discovery and Biologic Institutes.

Back to Meyer's concern about theistic evolution: as defined by Collins and others, it is a version of neo-Darwinian evolution that acknowledges God and that he started the process. Other than God kicking things off (in terms of initial conditions and natural laws), however, theistic evolution of this sort sees all the development

thereafter as natural and takes no issue with Dawkin's famous claim, in *The Blind Watchmaker*, that things, like the interdependent parts of the vertebrate eye, only "give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose." The theistic evolution of this sort is one that concedes to the naturalists the appearance of purely natural (unguided) development as if the forces of such mechanistic evolution could account for the realities of the world as we know and experience them.

Why should theistic evolution be ruled out? One may not be convinced of it, but can we really say that God did not use a developmental process that took billions of years for the universe and millions of years for the human race? After all, didn't Old Princeton teach something like this? Not quite. Old Princeton, think particularly Charles Hodge and B.B. Warfield, was open on the question of the age of the earth, the length of the creation days, and some sort of evolutionary development. However, at the end of his life, Hodge, who was asked to write on Darwinism itself, wrote, after thoughtful investigation, "it is atheism." Warfield may have remained more open on the question. However, he too had serious reservations about Darwinism, refusing, in fact, ever explicitly to endorse any particular form of macro-evolution. Fred Zaspel's article in this volume makes that clear with respect to Warfield: the renowned theologian from Old Princeton did not endorse the kind of theistic evolution that this volume critiques.

The three main sections of the book all make excellent arguments, worthy of mature consideration and reflection; for our readers, the last section may be of most interest: the biblical and theological critique of theistic evolution. The theological treatment of Gregg Allison rightly focuses on the significance of the doctrine of creation, with all its implications, teased out in the historic creeds and theologies of the church. Guy Waters focuses on the New Testament witness to creation as well, particularly on the historical Adam (as the crown of creation) and the important connection, for Paul and Jesus, of the first and last Adam (in Romans 5 and I Corinthians 15, especially). If Adam was not a direct, divine creation, in the image of God, this renders the witness of Scripture suspect and undermines much of Reformed theology, insofar as it depends heavily on the two-Adam covenantal structure. Clearly this ties in with the Old Testament critique of John Currid.

In fine, Currid clearly exposes what has always been the greatest concern of this reviewer with respect to the sort of theistic evolution under fire in this book: it is not able fairly to make sense of the Old Testament text. Currid especially exposes the weakness of John Walton of Wheaton's tendentious reading of the OT, in which he reads the text of Gen. 1-3 in a way that would outdo any circus contortionist. Theistic evolution of the BioLogos sort, in other words, places demands on textual exposition that are unwarranted and unreasonable, requiring the text to be read in a way that lacks conviction and coherence. Currid's analysis of the failure of this sort of theistic evolution should prove fatal to it for those committed to the infallible word and, together with his fellows in this section, as well as the scientific and philosophical sections, renders this theistic evolution untenable. In this reviewer's mind, this is a decisive refutation of the BioLogos project.

—Alan D. Strange

Richard A. Muller. *Divine Will and Human Choice: Freedom, Contingency, and Necessity in Early Modern Reformed Thought.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017. Pp. 329. $45.00 (hardcover).

In this volume Richard Muller demonstrates once again why he is a premier scholar of the Reformed tradition in its multifaceted Reformation and post-Reformation codifications. Here presented is an expert treatment of divine will and human free choice as found within the multifaceted scholastic Christian tradition. The main thesis treated in this study "concerns the content and implications of early modern Reformed understandings of freedom and necessity in the larger context of an understanding of providence or, more precisely, the providential *concursus* or divine concurrence." And the point Muller argues is "that early modern Reformed theologians and philosophers developed a robust doctrine of creaturely contingency and human freedom built on a series of traditional scholastic distinctions, including those associated with what has come to be called 'synchronic contingency,' and did so for the sake of respecting the underlying premise of Reformed thought that God eternally and freely decrees the entire order of the universe, past, present, and future, including all events and acts, whether necessary, contingent, or free" (34).

Perhaps one way into the topic of Muller's book is to consider some words from the Westminster Confession of Faith. Prior to taking up God's providence in relation to the evil that is done in this world, this document explains (in the way of God's concurrence) how he works through secondary causes in diverse ways: "Although, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first Cause, all things come to pass immutably, and infallibly; yet, by the same providence, he ordereth them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently" (V.2).

It may be argued that such remarks have for some time drifted from their Reformed moorings. In order to re-anchor Reformed theology to its historical dock, Muller surveys historical materials that treat foundational questions pertaining to divine providence, even as he examines what these materials have to say about the nature of necessity, contingency, and freedom in human beings—all that in connection with the divine decree and its execution. Quite apart from contemporary assessments and formulations of these issues, Muller looks at such conceptions from within their varied historical contexts. In this way, he shines light on what is termed "synchronic contingency" and how that idea illuminates the relationship early Reformed thought had to an older tradition within Christian theology. Likewise, he shows how the Reformed understood human freedom as something distinct from the modern options at hand, that of compatibilism (determinism) and incompatibilism (indeterminism, libertarianism). In short, Muller shows that in order to parse correctly the Reformed understanding of synchronic contingency in relation to human freedom and the question of necessity, these concepts must be seen in connection with God's decree and providential concurrence (12-13).

Of course, that tells us very little to this point, but such are the perimeters of the discussion. So what do the Reformed have to say about freedom, contingency, and necessity? Prior to the coinage of the term "determinism," the early Reformed were

accused of being champions of Stoic fatalism which rendered God the author of sin. As the language of the debate changed, Reformed ideas were identified as deterministic, "even though the philosophical underpinnings of the Reformed orthodox formulations concerning necessity, contingency, and freedom did not coincide with the philosophical assumptions of determinists of the era in the lineage of Hobbes or Spinoza" (19). Muller maintains that Jonathan Edwards is representative of a new wave of Calvinistic writers who fit the deterministic paradigm—lending support for the notion that Reformed theology has always been deterministic. *This approach* views God as finally "the only genuine actor or mover." In the line of such thinking, Beza's *Tabula prædestinationis* is also interpreted as a "thoroughly deterministic system," serving as prologue to the rise of rationalism (20). All this is then portrayed as grounded in an Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition of thought-forms which is likewise viewed as determinist in orientation, fitting into a "compatibilist" line of formulation, like J. Edwards (22).

Muller's analysis challenges this now fairly typical portrait of what Reformed thought entails—namely that Reformed theology fits tidily into the compatibilist framework, that it is a form of (soft) determinism, and that such anachronistic terms usefully exposit it. *Contra* this representation, Muller offers a more contextual analysis. He argues that inasmuch as modern thinking has lost fluency with scholastic language—the language used by the early modern Reformed—confusion has arisen relative to soteriological determination which the Reformed advocated relative to human salvation and a divine determinism of all human actions as such, like combing one's hair or choosing between Coke and 7up. He references modern studies (most notably *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, eds. van Asselt, Bac, te Velde; hereafter *RTF*) that seek to reintroduce us to the import of Reformed scholastic language pertaining to human freedom, including the concept of "simultaneous" or "synchronic contingency." The payout of this concept is that the Reformed, in developing a robust theory of human free choice, were not determinists (or compatibilists) as commonly understood in the modern sense. Neither were they libertarians (indeed, they refused to be pigeonholed by Arminian critique, forced to choose between fatalism (determinism) or libertarianism, between necessity or contingency. Rather, the Reformed rebutted the Arminian premise, arguing instead for "a view that distinguished between absolute and relative necessity and arguing full creaturely dependence on God, a contingent world order, and human free choice" (27). This is directly related to synchronic contingency.

Muller notes, quoting van Asselt, that synchronic (or simultaneous) contingency, in contrast to "diachronic" or "temporal" or "statistical" contingency, "means that for one moment of time, there is a true alternative for the state of affairs that actually occurs" (27; *RTF*, 41). Muller continues: "In this account, synchronic contingency may be defined as understanding contingency to be rooted in a present potency to be otherwise (or not to be); and diachronic contingency as understanding contingency to be rooted in a past possibility of being otherwise: the assumption is that according to synchronic contingency, the present moment is contingent, whereas according to diachronic contingency the present moment is necessary in the strict sense that it cannot be otherwise. The modifier 'synchronic' is used specifically to indicate a view

of contingency alternative to the theory that identifies contingency restrictively with temporal change" (27-28, n. 31).

Muller observes that the findings of the team of scholars producing *RTF* met opposition by Paul Helm. Helm believes that the modern nomenclature of compatibilism and incompatibilism is quite serviceable to describe the views of various theologians from the past as they treat these and related theological topics, including Calvin whom he calls a compatibilist; and such is what the Reformed view comes to in Helm's analysis. Thus, while the authors of *RTF* maintain that compatibilist and incompatibilist categories are not the only options, Helm disagrees. He accepts "the premise that necessity and causal or ontic contingency, understood as the inherent possibility for things and events to be otherwise, are incompatible and that, therefore, there is no third category of explanation between libertarian [incompatibilist] and compatibilist options" (29). Thus, for Helm, if it is not the one, then it is the other. For the authors of *RTF*, synchronic contingency means that the Reformed were neither libertarians nor determinists.

In this connection, while Helm embraces Jonathan Edwards's account of human free will as representative of the classic Reformed position, Muller cites other scholarship that detects a shift in Edwards's approach, placing his view in line with the determinism of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, wherein "genuine contingency in the world order" is denied and human freedom is viewed as nothing more than the "freedom of spontaneity of will and the absence of coercion" (29). By way of contrast, the classical Reformed understanding of human freedom maintains that human freedom certainly includes the two above mentioned traits but also involves synchronic contingency, which means that there is "genuine alternative possibilities belonging to the human faculties." Helm offers Francis Turretin as a Reformed orthodox theologian who, like Edwards, is counted as a compatibilist and "disavows alternativity" (30). In a later chapter, Muller will rebut Helm's treatment of Turretin. Meanwhile, Muller notes that while Oliver Crisp unhelpfully and erroneously brands Turretin with Edwards as a "hard" determinist, Crisp is dismissive of the work of the Reformed writer, John Girardeau, who stands in a different trajectory of Reformed thought on human freedom than Edwards. Unfortunately, notes Muller, Crisp's work does not bring light to the topic and rather confuses the discussion (31).

But more to the point, Muller's concern is to trace out the implications of synchronic contingency and, in presenting what an earlier codification of Reformed thought taught relative to human free choice, to show how more recent discussions of human freedom (Calvinist and Arminian alike) do not stand in strict continuity with this prior codification of thought given their similar commitments to the strictly defined options of compatibilism and libertarianism (31).

In this light, Muller sets for himself the task to explore how modern scholarship faces multilayered challenges in seeking to tackle the question regarding the way in which the Reformers and Protestant scholastics sought to address themselves to the issue of freedom and necessity. These challenges entail how the early Reformers and their successors addressed these issues; and in back of that, how the Reformed appropriated old, usually scholastic, patterns of thought and argumentation with their philosophical leanings either in the way of Thomism or Scotism and the eclectic

tendencies that seem to prevail among the Reformed. Moreover, there is also the challenge of how the Reformed appropriation of the issues pertaining to freedom, necessity, and contingency should be understood in relation to the philosophical issues that stand in back of them, such as seen in the thinking of Aristotle and the Peripatetic tradition (32-33). This set of challenges elicits Muller's decision to divide his approach to this topic into three parts: Part one, which presents the contemporary debates concerning "synchronic contingency"; Part two, which examines questions of reception by the Reformed, looking particularly at texts pertaining to necessity and contingency in Aristotle, Thomas, and Scotus; and Part three, which explores early modern Reformed perspectives on contingency, necessity, and freedom through the lens of a panoply of Reformed writers.

Regarding the principal concept at hand, synchronic versus diachronic contingency, Muller offers this analysis: "In the diachronic model, the contingent is something in the present that could have occurred otherwise given past alternative possibilities or potencies. The contingency is defined primarily in terms of an alternate state of affairs that was possible prior to the eventuation of present moment, and, typically, the event or act in the present moment is understood simply as something that does not exist always and is not necessary. In the synchronic model, the contingent is something present that presently could be otherwise given the unactualized but nonetheless remaining alternative possibility or potency." That is, "The contingency is identified 'synchronically' as an alternative state of affairs that is possible (albeit not actual) in the present moment" (37).

Muller's point is not that these views of contingency are mutually exclusive as such, but the analysis of and the distinction between them must be read in light of the difference between "the simultaneity of potency versus the potency for simultaneity, the necessity of the consequent thing versus the necessity of the consequence, primary or ultimate causality versus secondary causality, and the composite sense versus the divided sense," and the like (36). Specifically, a key issue at hand is that synchronic contingency entails the exercise of human volition, "the capacity to will, not will, or will otherwise: the simultaneity in this case is not [only] a simultaneity of contingencies but also a simultaneity of capacities or potencies" (39).

Such, then, reveals the burden of Muller's study. It is not the aim of this review to trace out Muller's argument, which is quite detailed in its analysis and requires that the reader become familiar with the philosophical categories and language that forms the topic of God's will and human choice. This is only to say (as the above perhaps already demonstrates), that Muller's volume presents a technical and weighty argument, which can be appreciated only through patient and careful reflection. It is in no sense a "popular" study. Instead, this work pushes us deep into the sources treating necessity, contingency, and freedom. And Muller, in delving into these questions, refuses to cut corners inasmuch as, if the subject is to be treated fairly, requires first a careful examination of Aristotle, Aquinas, and Duns Scotus, among others. Note well, there is nothing slipshod in Muller's approach; he presents about one hundred pages of material on these writers since their work forms the background to the early modern Reformed perspective on these issues. In doing this, Muller always goes to the primary sources, while engaging an impressive array of highly informed

secondary literature—much of which he argues is too dependent on or uncritical of the modern nomenclature of libertarianism and compatibilism. A curious finding that Muller presents is that neither Aquinas nor Scotus argue for genuine "alternativity on the basis of indifference [of the will] or as moderns like to call it, equipoise" (177).

From this anchor point, Muller unpacks how early Reformed thinkers and their heirs, the Reformed orthodox, treated the questions of necessity, contingency, and freedom relative to the divine will. This (final) part of Muller's study takes up the second half of the book; and here he interacts with the most prominent Reformed writers of the era. Muller specifically analyzes the concepts of necessity, contingency, and freedom first in early Reformed codifiers like Calvin, Vermigli, Zanchi, and Ursinus, then he treats the more developed analysis of writers like Junius and Gomarus, Twisse and Owen, as well as Voetius and Turretin (181-257). This portion of Muller's study (most valuable in its own right) is followed by an examination of the nature of divine power, the meanings of "possible" and "possibility," and the distinction between absolute and ordained power (258-82). Muller concludes this study with an insightful investigation into the difficult topics of divine concurrence and contingency (283-310).

The conclusions Muller reaches from his study are multiple, beginning with the inadequacy of the modern nomenclature of libertarianism and compatibilism. This means that efforts to make Reformed orthodox theologians like Francis Turretin fit into the specifics that circumscribe the compatibilist definition cannot be sustained. Neither does libertarianism qualify, consequently, as the only other option. Rather, notes Muller, the early modern Reformed were able to affirm "human free choice as defined by intellective deliberation and multiple volitional potencies and as embodying genuine alternativity in a manner that does not comport with the assumptions of modern compatibilist theology and philosophy" (311). This did not negate their adherence to "an overarching divine causality necessary to the actualization of all things and events, coupled with an affirmation of an infallible divine foreknowledge of future contingency that cannot comport with the assumptions of modern libertarian theology and philosophy" (312).

Muller argues that the Reformed orthodox viewed divine and human will as concurring in the act of free choice. This indicates that "the distinction between divided and compound sense, and the distinction between necessity of the consequence (or *de dicto*) and the necessity of the consequent thing (or *de re*) do not lead to any particular conclusion about how one must understand contingency and necessity in a larger theological and philosophical context—they just distinguish the one from the other—nor do they specify how contingency and necessity relate in the real order" (312). This means the distinction can be used in reference to diachronic or synchronic contingency. As for synchronic contingency, it did not so much negate the diachronic variety as to add another layer of explanation relative to understanding free choice in the face of God's universal providence over all things. The idea of synchronic contingency enabled the affirmation of "multiple potencies" being present in the agent at the moment of decision. (A potency refers to the capacity for existence or actualization.) Synchronic contingency proves helpful "in explaining the interrelationship of divine and human causality, in which both agents, God and the

individual human being, have potency to more than one effect…." (314). Thus, an agent simultaneously has the potency to will either *p* or *not-p*. But any act of will requires divine *concursus*, for without divine concurrence, an agent cannot will at all. Or to say it positively, following Burgersdijk's dictum, "it is *ex hypothesi* impossible for a secondary cause [such as a human act of free choice] not to operate when the primary cause concurs with it" (314). Human free choice, then, involves potency to more than one effect, and in making a choice, we see "a necessity of the consequence, an effect that could be otherwise, and not a necessity of the consequent thing—and that this consequent necessity or contingency is not removed but rather is enabled by the concurrent divine willing that also could be otherwise." This reveals that there is a "genuine contingency on the basis of a synchronic presence of an actualized potency with an unactualized potency to the contrary" (314). In short, the significance of synchronic contingency is that "it does not merely posit a contingent reality and its logical contrary but actually argues a simultaneity not of contingencies but of potencies in a particular world order" (315). Here Muller helpfully sorts out the varied meanings of "possible" and "contingency" and shows how potency can never be a mere synonym for contingency, which pays out in showing that "synchronic potency" is actually a more accurate way to conceive of human freedom than "synchronic contingency" (315-16). Human freedom, to be sure, is a species of contingency, and involves "a genuine alternativity in human choice that is ontically grounded in the divine decree, maintained in the providential *concursus*, and rooted in the potencies belonging to the will and the free determinations of the intellect" (316). All this negates necessitarianism (317).

Muller also presents a set of conclusions regarding the historical narrative leading to the rise of Reformed orthodox thinking on this question. In brief, Muller rejects the determinist readings that are thought to bolster a determinist understanding of Reformed writing on human freedom (see 317-22).

The last set of conclusions Muller presents, resulting from his study, focuses on the terms libertarianism, indeterminism, determinism, and compatibilism and whether the Reformed orthodox may properly be circumscribed or captured by these definitions. While it is tempting to reproduce all this material, suffice it to observe that Muller concludes that the Reformed orthodox were "clearly not libertarian" and "not at all indeterminist," and likewise they were "not determinist." As for compatibilism, only under one of three construals of this term can the Reformed orthodox "be identified as compatibilist"—namely, when compatibilism is understood "to mean that the divine determination of all things is ontically as well as epistemically compatible with freedom of contradiction and contrariety, with the intellect understood as self-determining in its identification of objects." "But," notes Muller, "this definition would set an older Reformed compatibilism quite apart from classical and modern philosophical understandings of the compatibilist position where something, whether in the past or the present context, in addition to the intellect's judgment must be different and serve as a prior cause of that judgment" (323). Muller acknowledges that where the Reformed orthodox land is "not altogether congruent with contemporary usage," but to describe their position as "dependent freedom," a phrase suggested by the authors of *RTF*, serves well (323). Missing from modern discussions of

compatibilism and libertarianism is any placement of the doctrine of divine concurrence in relationship to secondary causality. For the Reformed orthodox, there exists only a creation that is utterly contingent and dependent on God's ontic priority, which means that human agency can only exist when human and divine causality are taken in concert with the other as "the necessary and sufficient conditions for free acts of the human will" (324).

Muller is P. J. Zondervan Professor of Historical Theology Emeritus and senior fellow of the Junius Institute for Digital Reformation Research at Calvin Theological Seminary. His volume is a most welcome addition to this important and difficult topic; and it will likely provoke much discussion for years to come.

—J. Mark Beach

Jonathan T. Pennington. *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017. Pp 326. $32.99 (paperback).

Jonathan T. Pennington, associate professor of New Testament Studies at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has done excellent exegetical work on the Gospel of Matthew. He is perhaps best known for his previous works, *Heaven and Earth in the Gospel of Matthew* and *Reading the Gospels Wisely*. Pennington's familiarity with Matthew is immediately evident upon reading *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing* where he provides more than a traditional commentary; calling it "A Theological Commentary", Pennington delivers.

The features that set this commentary apart from others on the Sermon are Pennington's directions for a proper reading strategy, his incisive and helpful explanation of the Sermon's "encyclopedic context," a detailed outlining of the theme "flourishing through wholeness," a unique perspective on the Sermon's structure, and fresh insights into this long-scrutinized passage of Scripture. Pennington lays out these concepts in Part 1, which he titles, "Orientation." Readers who like to skip the introductory material and dive straight in to the commentary portion will assuredly miss out on a necessary and orienting part of the book to their detriment.

Pennington's reading strategy consists of: First, identifying "flourishing through wholeness" as the main thrust of the Sermon and observing this thread throughout Second, reading with an "aretegenic" mindset, that is, reading "for the purpose of forming character or virtue" (15). He says about this approach, "Some readings of the Sermon on Christian history have touched on this in part, but none has provided an integrated reading of the parts and the whole of the Sermon from this perspective" (14). Thus, Pennington provides an original contribution to the reading, internalization, and application of the Sermon on the Mount.

The main thesis of *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing* is best illuminated in the chapter entitled "The Encyclopedic Context of the Sermon." Here, Pennington argues that the Sermon on the Mount "lies at the nexus of two seemingly opposed but providentially coordinated contexts—the Second Temple Jewish tradition

and the Greco-Roman virtue tradition" (24). He argues, therefore, that the best reading of the Sermon understands the text in light of these dual contexts. Both Greco-Roman virtue tradition and Second Temple Jewish tradition point to the same "meta-idea—human flourishing" (24). This encyclopedic context observes the historical, cultural, and social-scientific backgrounds of the Sermon, but does not end there. Pennington explains, "more is needed than this, an approach that is sensitive to how texts communicate and how language functions at the evocative or connotative level, not merely the denotative. We need an understanding of the social and linguistic encyclopedic context in which the Sermon was uttered so that we might hear it in a model way" (24).

Part 2 is the "Commentary," which he considers a "theological exposition" (137). In this section, Pennington comments on each division of the Sermon according to his detailed structure. He shows how Matthew is highly intentional in the way he lays out each unit and strings them together in "concentric circles" (113). Pennington leans heavily on this structure to inform the interpretation of individual passages and show how each passage fits into the whole. Some might consider this a potential liability, because if the structure is off then the interpretation of the text might be off. Pennington, however, is forthright with his structures and careful with his exegesis. The commentary does not provide verse-by-verse description, so readers who like to rummage through commentaries looking to copy and paste for their sermons will be left wanting. Pennington does not simply hand readers a fish. Instead, he hands readers a pole and shows them where the fish are biting. Those readers who carefully work though this book will be rewarded with exegetical tackle that will help them return to the ocean of Matthew's Sermon with the ability to draw out meaningful and virtue-forming lessons from the greatest Preacher of all time.

A couple general observations from the commentary portion are worth making. First, Pennington understands Christ's teaching in the Sermon to be virtue-forming. That is, Jesus teaches as a Jewish sage and a Greco-Roman philosopher in an effort to instill a virtuous disposition in his followers. His wisdom is meant to be internalized and applied (thus the Sermon is not a call to perfection that is unattainable for his followers, but rather real instruction to be exercised). Second, Pennington's understanding of *makarios* and *telios* are central to his interpretation of the Sermon. Both words are loaded with meaning and do not have a simple English gloss. *Makarios*, for example, is the state of flourishing enjoyed by those who live according to Christ's teaching (57). Additionally, Pennington argues that "perfect" is a misleading translation of *telios*. Rather, the term carries the idea of "wholeness"—being wholly devoted to the Lord on the inside as on the outside (79). These things come together to show a way of being in the world that amounts to true human flourishing.

In Part 3 which is entitled "Theological Reflection," Pennington offers six theses that serve to consolidate and form a "theology of human flourishing rooted in the Sermon" (291). This is a particularly helpful section that summarizes and categorizes many of the arguments made throughout the commentary. One thesis claims, "The Bible Is about Human Flourishing" (290). Not only does the Sermon teach how to experience true flourishing, but the Bible as a whole speaks to this issue, namely,

because "The Bible's Vision of Human Flourishing Is God Centered and Eschatological" (294). People come to experience flourishing in this life only when they have a relationship with God—and those who attempt to find flourishing outside of a relationship with God will come up empty. Because it is eschatological, there is a recognition that "the end has not yet come, [and] human flourishing will only be experienced in a paradoxical way that combines loss, longing, suffering, and persecution with true happiness, joy, satisfaction and peace" (296).

The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing by Jonathan T. Pennington is an excellent contribution to biblical scholarship, and a helpful exegetical resource for pastors. This book would make an outstanding supplement to both classroom study and sermon preparation. Upon successfully reading this book, readers will find themselves helped, challenged, stimulated, and edified.

—Mark R. Kelley

Marilynne Robinson. *What are We Doing Here?: Essays.* New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2018. Pp. xiv + 315. $27.00 (hardcover).

"One of the great novelists of our times" is not a description commonly applied to authors reviewed in these pages. Yet it is to Marilynne Robinson and not unjustly. Robinson has written, in addition to her outstanding debut novel *Housekeeping* (1980), three novels in series, *Gilead* (2004), *Home* (2008), and *Lila* (2014), in which she gives due to Calvin and Calvinism (of at least a sort). These novels are a delight and I heartily commend them to our readers. Robinson won the Pulitzer for *Gilead* in 2005 and a host of other awards, as well as appointments to significant guest academic posts and lectureships. She is good friends with former President Barack Obama, with whom she had notable published conversations in *The New York Review of Books* and who awarded her a National Humanities Medal in 2012.

This volume of essays (as well as several earlier such volumes) derives typically from lectureships and addresses in universities in America and abroad. She is well known in these and like talks, some at theological institutions, for defending Christianity and even Calvinism. Robinson believes that we are sinful and need grace, though she often puts it rather differently from that. But the need for grace and associated gifts of the Spirit that comes through in a rather more appropriately subtle way in her novels enjoys more direct expressions in these essays and talks that address rather more pointedly the metaphysical question suggested by this book's title.

These essays then come from the pen of one who is a highly skilled writer (heading up the Iowa Writers' Workshop for some years) and who has influenced many beyond the academy, including many prominent national leaders. Her influence consists of her religiosity combined with her historical and literary knowledge to make a sort of communitarian public policy cocktail that eschews unfettered capitalism and prizes appreciation of diversity over cultural competition. For her, diversity appears attractive as the appreciation of the divine image in all persons and she prefers to profit from all cultures rather than engage in jingoistic nationalism.

It's challenging to summarize a diverse collection of essays briefly and one might well wonder what the value of such would even be for the readers of this journal. The reason that I think it important to for the readers of this journal to know about her and her non-fiction writing (and not just as a scribe of first-rate fiction) is that many, from liberal universities to Christian colleges (she recently lectured at Wheaton), consider Robinson to be a sane voice for religion and politics. The question of "what were we doing here" is answered for us as Reformed and Presbyterian Christians by something like the first Westminster Shorter Catechism Q and A, which identifies man's chief end as "to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever." The law fleshes this out for us biblically in the two great commandments as love to God and love to our fellow man.

While these essays track along these lines in some measure (service to God and man is a prominent theme in Robinson), and reveal some encouraging religious commitments and insights, they also show her to put these ideals in the service of something that comes out sounding in many respects like some form of a social gospel. The question of why we are here is that, Robinson believes, the Christian faith yields a politics that is barely distinguishable from the political platforms of the most liberal and progressive parties. In fact, she self-identifies in this way (admitting that she is a liberal Democrat). This is entirely acceptable to mainstream media and culture, which is happy to have religion in its place as long as it remains subservient to a higher cause (politics) and the right kind (or, better, the left kind) at that.

My desire would not be that she instead espouses right-wing politics but that she, or anyone in her position, would espouse a truly biblical (and confessional) Christianity and that such faith would guide her away from partisan politics and give her the perspective that such an other-worldly commitment provides. Martin Lloyd-Jones was surely right when he said that the church does the world the least good when it seeks to be most like it. Robinson often speaks (and writes) in calm thoughtful tones that suggests a transcendent approach (and critique), just what the left and right need, a word that reminds them that all their programs and proposals are proximate, not ultimate, and that orients us to what is truly essential and of greatest importance, not what can be discovered by man in his rationalism or empiricism but that which is known by the general and special revelation of God.

But in these essays she attacks Fox News, Trump, and all the usual suspects on the right. And she celebrates some of the characteristic expressions of identity politics, championing LGBT rights and the like. She would be a true *vox clamatio in deserto* if she was a thoughtful religious voice (as she is in so many ways) that remained above partisan politics, criticizing the messianic pretensions of the left and right. She may be a far better writer than our current tweeters, but by turning out to be just a more articulate and reasoned voice in the cacophony of political sloganeering, she turns out to be a disappointing one, more literate than most and yet still not "above the fray," the best place to be for those whose first citizenship is not of this world and who are called to be peacemakers.

—Alan D. Strange

Alan D. Strange. *The Doctrine of the Spirituality of the Church in the Ecclesiology of Charles Hodge.* Reformed Academic Dissertations. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2017. Pp. xxx + 387. $59.99 (paperback).

The life and thought of the great Old Princeton stalwart Charles Hodge has for many years been mostly ignored. It is not as though he has not been read. Indeed, he has. His three-volume systematic theology is still in print although it seems to come in more for criticism and used as exhibit A for all the baneful influences of Scottish Common Sense Realism (I have in mind here the oft-cited quotation wherein Hodge compares the relationship of Scripture to theology with that of nature to science). However, beginning with the work of W. Andrew Hoffecker (*Piety and the Princeton Theologians*) and Peter Hick (*The Philosophy of Charles Hodge*), the old Princtonians in general and Hodge in particular, have received renewed attention so that we now understand these theologians as real, honest flesh and blood human beings who did theology. In fact, in 2011 we saw the publication of two Hodge biographies, one by Hoffecker and the other by Paul Gutjahr). The recent reevaluation of the old report on old Princeton (Noll, Marsden, Sandeen, et al) by scholars such as Paul Kjoss Helseth (*"Right Reason" and the Princeton Mind*) has given rise to a renaissance in old Princeton studies. Strange's work on Hodge and his doctrine of the spirituality of the church stands within this rebirth of freshness in old Princeton research.

Alan Strange's *Doctrine of the Spirituality of the Church in the Ecclesiology of Charles Hodge* is eminently readable and, for me, quite enjoyable. Strange, professor of church history and theological librarian at Mid-America Reformed Seminary, brings his many years in church historical studies, to the task of explicating Hodge's particular formulation of the traditional Reformed doctrine of the spirituality of the church in its 19th century American context in which the problem of slavery eventually tore the nation apart during the Civil War from 1861-65. *Spirituality of the Church* is at once intellectual biography, church history, systematic theological analysis, and cultural critique.

Spirituality of the Church is made up of eight substantial chapters covering the history of the doctrine of the spirituality of the church within the Reformed church (1-48), the life of Charles Hodge (49-87), two chapters on Hodge's broader systematics (88-131, 132-174), the question of slavery and the doctrine of the spirituality of the church (175-214), the outworking of the doctrine of the spirituality of the church in the Presbyterian Church USA up to the outbreak of hostilities in the Civil War (215-261), Hodge and his relationship to the general assemblies of 1862-65 (262-298), and finally, Hodge's assessment of the southern Presbyterian church and the 1869 reunion of the old and new school factions of Northern Presbyterianism (299-332), and the conclusion (333-343).

The author helpfully situates Hodge within his historical context of 19th century America with its internal strife over the problem of slavery. The doctrine of the spirituality of the church, holds that the church is to focus its ministry on the task set for her by her Lord, Jesus Christ, and not to become needlessly entangled in affairs of state, which has been a perennial temptation of the church since at least the time of the Roman emperor Constantine. The doctrine is embedded within the Westminster

Confession of Faith (especially 31.4) and Hodge embraced and embodied a nuanced form of the doctrine which is best understood in contrast to the view held by Hodge's contemporary James Henley Thornwell. Hodge upheld the doctrine of the spirituality of church in a seemingly more flexible form than advocated by Thornwell and others of his southern Presbyterian colleagues. Hodge wanted to allow for the prophetic voice of the church to function within the life of the nation. Unlike in our day, Christian theologians like Hodge had a public presence. Hodge was a public theologian in that politicians and other intellectual leaders within the broader culture actually were interested in what he thought about any given subject and what he had to say about it.

On the issue of chattel slavery, Hodge was a gradual emancipationist. On the one hand he held that Scripture did not outright condemn slavery as such, but on the other hand, he did expect the practice to eventually die out. Hodge was not an abolitionist. With his southern Presbyterian brethren, he rejected the unchristian basis for much of abolition. Christians within America were torn asunder just as much as the rest of the nation on this horrific affair. Hodge endeavored to walk a fine line in this matter. However, Hodge did side with the newly formed Republican party and supported the Lincoln administration in its prosecution of the war against the southern confederacy. Hodge had a commitment to the American experiment not unlike Lincoln himself. Hodge embraced what we now call American exceptionalism. Hodge was committed to the ideals of the American founding if not its putting those ideals into fitful practice since the time of the American revolution.

Strange is effective in elucidating the complex circumstances in which God placed Hodge as he attempted to theologize on the doctrine of the spirituality of the church in a disputatious context. Hodge, we discover, was a fallible human being who endeavored to be faithful to his Lord and his Word in the context of the Presbyterian church in America in the age of the industrial revolution and political upheaval at home and abroad. Strange's study is not the last word on Hodge, but it is a clear and helpful word.

—Jeffrey C. Waddington

Rebecca VanDoodewaard. *Reformation Women: Sixteenth-Century Figures Who Shaped Christianity's Rebirth.* Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017. Pp. 136. $14.00 (paperback).

What role did women play in the Protestant Reformation? Certainly, women influenced both the Reformation movement itself and their male counterparts who participated in it. However, much to the blame of ecclesiastical history, women and their contributions to this world-changing historical movement have been largely underrepresented, or ignored. VanDoodewaard seeks to remedy this historical gaffe in her new work *Reformation Women: Sixteenth-Century Figures Who Shaped Christianity's Rebirth*.

VanDoodewaard begins with an assertion that Katie, the late wife of Martin Luther and arguably most famous woman of the Reformation, did much in aiding her

husband to advance the movement of the Protestant Reformation. She continues by highlighting the important and often critical roles that women have played in church history, and also pointing to important Old Testament women such as Sarah, Deborah and Esther. Additionally, VanDoodewaard emphasizes women's tendency to be the first to believe, and nearly immediate willingness to serve God in the New Testament. Biblical Christianity has always lifted up the role of women and valued their contributions to God's story. Historical Christianity, according to VanDoodewaard, has often ignored them, and has done this to its detriment.

This work is divided into twelve chapters each addressing a particular woman of the Reformation. Each chapter is a short biography of these women, and is limited to women not well-known in modern evangelicalism. According to VanDoodewaard, there has been a plethora of writing dedicated to Protestant women such as Luther's wife Katie or Lady Jane Grey, but the subjects of this book are women who have greatly contributed to the Reformation but have been lost in (or ignored by) church history. Furthermore, the geographical scope of this study is limited to the sixteenth-century nations that were the most socially and politically receptive of the Reformation, namely Germany, France, and England.

According to VanDoodewaard, there are three main rationales for why the church today needs to become acquainted with these Reformation women. First, women observably represent approximately half of the population which is both presently and historically true, and the female half of the sixteenth-century were inarguably involved in the work of the Reformation. Thus, VanDoodewaard asserts, "Unless we understand at least some of these women's work and influence, we will have an incomplete picture of God's work during this [sixteenth] century" (x). Second, VanDoodewaard postures this work as a response to secular feminist historiography of recent years that has categorized some of these women as harbingers of modern feminism. However, the author successfully offers the actualization of biblical complementarianism as displayed in the lives of these women, as a retort to such incorrect deductions of feminist scholarship. Third, VanDoodewaard highlights the importance of the study of these Reformation women in light of a growing struggle to correctly understand and articulate biblical womanhood.

Several notable strengths of VanDoodewaard's work stand in need of emphasis. First is that the subjects of this book have gone highly underrepresented by ecclesiastical history, and VanDoodewaard offers a rare glimpse into the lives of these important Reformation figures. Second, is the inclusion of a reader-friendly introduction where she paints a brief historical canvas on which the lives of these women of the Reformation were painted. Third, is the narrative style in which this book is composed, with each of the twelve biographies bestowing an intimate presentation of these Reformation women, their lives, and their ecclesial contributions. Fourth is the personal style with which VanDoodewaard expresses herself in her writing, which is almost sermonic at times, challenges the reader to consider their own calling in light of the lives of the important women of the Reformation.

Some evident weaknesses of this book are VanDoodewaard's sweeping complementarian view of women. VanDoodewaard herself admits that many of the subjects of this book were women who were both wealthy and/or royal, neither of

which were typical for the vast majority of sixteenth-century women who undoubtedly were simply spectators of the Reformation by and large, rather than participants. Additionally, the reader may notice some historical discrepancy with VanDoodewaard's summation of the reign of England's Queen Elizabeth I and her "religious moderation" discussed in this book's introduction. While Elizabeth I may have been less religiously fanatical and violent than Blood Mary, Elizabeth I was not entirely innocent when it came to religious freedom and peace in post-Reformation England.

This book is not an "academic" work, although it is neither shallow nor simplistic. The chapters (indeed the book itself) is relatively short, and each brief biography can be read quite easily at a moderate speed. However, each chapter is filled with citations and footnotes, and the reader will undoubtedly benefit from the inclusion of two brief (but helpful) appendices at the end of this book. Similarly, this book's value does not come from an academically vigorous discussion, rather, the rarity of its subject in theological and ecclesiastical scholarship.

VanDoodewaard's *Reformation Women: Sixteenth-Century Figures Who Shaped Christianity's Rebirth* is an excellent and rewarding read. The author artfully captures the multifaceted identities of these women in all their depth and complexity, lifting them off the pages of ecclesial history and bringing them to life. This book will serve male theologians and pastors well in their consideration of biblical womanhood, the role and value of women in the church, and the theological contributions of women to the Protestant Reformation. VanDoodewaard is hopeful that the stories of these Reformation women will inspire new generations of Christian women to be actively involved in the church in a variety of ways. The women of this book display the best values and characteristics of the Christian faith, and are exemplary figures to be celebrated and remember in the Reformed tradition.

—Blake I. Campbell

Kevin J. Vanhoozer and Owen Strachan. *The Pastor as Public Theologian: Reclaiming A Lost Vision.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015. Pp. xi + 221. $21.99 (hardcover).

Kevin Vanhoozer (Research Professor of Systematic Theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) and Owen Strachan (Associate Professor of Christian Theology at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary) issue a plea to pastors, churches, and fellow academicians to correct the contemporary approach to pastoral ministry. What was once seen as a theological office has been reduced to a pragmatic profession. *The Pastor as Public Theologian* is an attempt to restore a lost vision of who the pastor is and what he does.

The argument is threefold: "First, that pastors must be theologians; second, that every theologian is in some sense a public theologian; and third, that a public theologian is a very particular kind of generalist" (5). This, Vanhoozer and Strachan claim, is the vision for the pastorate presented in the Bible and modeled through much

of church history. The locale for theological ministry is the "public" of the church. The church is a "public spire" that stands out in the midst of the "public square" (21). From this place within the broader public, the church is to live out its faith in such a way that acts as salt and light to those around them. To summarize, "Pastors are public theologians because they work in and for the public/people of God, for the sake of the public/people everywhere" (17).

Vanhoozer and Strachan argue that as theologians, pastors must necessarily be intellectuals. They define an intellectual as "one who speaks meaningfully about broad topics of ultimate social concern" (22). Since God's universal and cosmic plan is a "broad topic of ultimate social concern" they believe that pastors must therefore be intellectuals. They are not implying pastors be "specialists" necessarily—someone who knows a lot about a little. Rather, they propose that a pastor is a "particular kind of generalist who knows how to relate big truths to real people" (23). The pastor theologian must know extensively about "what God is doing in Christ," and from this knowledge he must skillfully derive implications and applications for people. They see the pastor as "a special kind of generalist: a generalist who specializes in viewing all of life as relating to God and the gospel of Jesus Christ" (25).

Chapters 1 and 2 ground the preceding claims in the biblical text and church history respectively. In chapter 1, Strachan offers a brief biblical theology of God's workmen—showing that God chose prophets, priests, and kings as his human instruments to mediate his purposes with humans. Principles from these offices are transferred to the New Testament office of pastor. Pastors in the New Testament are called to minister grace (priest), minister wisdom (king), and minister truth (prophet). With these principles in place, Strachan concludes, "the pastorate is, like covenant officers of old, an office grounded in theological realities: salvation, wisdom, and truth—in a word, Christ" (60).

In chapter 2, Strachan seeks to show that an understanding of the theological nature of pastors was the starting point and has remained so for the majority of church history. From Irenaeus, pastors began as resident theologians to their congregations and only in the Medieval period did this start to change. The Puritans, following the Reformers, restored the theological pastorate and "represent a faithful model for modern pastor-theologians to follow" (82). For revivalist Puritans like Jonathan Edwards, "There was no tension...between intellectual brilliance and evangelistic passion" (84). In the Second Great Awakening, however, a major shift occurred in the pastorate. "In many places, formal training was seen as a deadening agent on a young preacher and on the church, who endured his stilted preaching. The Puritan sermons with first subheadings were out; the freewheeling pulpiteer, master of the homespun story, was in" (88). Vanhoozer and Strachan argue that the modern church has not recovered from this turn.

Chapters 3 and 4 argue for the pastor as public theologian from a systematic theology and practical theology perspective. Vanhoozer describes the unique and important roles of the pastorate. Skeptics may critique the job of the pastor and wonder what exactly he does between Sundays. Vanhoozer puts measurable and objective labels on the pastor theologians' roles including: reading God's word (having biblical literacy), reading the world (having cultural literacy), and reading fiction (having

human literacy). From the understanding he gains from such "readings," the pastor is to perform the work of "confessing, comprehending, celebrating, communicating, commending, and conforming themselves and others to what is in Christ" (125). Pastor theologians are to build people up in Christ; they are to preach and teach the word of God; they are to counsel; they are to visit the sick; and they are to lead the overall worship of the church. Doing these practical elements of the job cannot be separated from doing theology. Practical ministry tasks are theological in nature.

Vanhoozer and Strachan thus lament a glaring lack of theologians in the church today. Many pastors get away with being good administrators, dynamic speakers, and visionary leaders without taking up the mantle of theology. In this sense, *The Pastor as Public Theologian* is an urgent and important work. While this is true and there are many in today's culture who need to be reminded that the pastor is in fact a theologian, there are also many who need to be reminded that the pastorate is not all academic. There are theologically-minded pastors who need help remembering that theological ministry necessarily involves practical elements. Vanhoozer articulates this perspective in chapter 4, but the overall emphasis of the book is: *be more theologically minded*. Perhaps it would be helpful to have a complementary volume or appendix that challenges the theologically minded pastor to: *be more pastorally minded.*

The Pastor as Public Theologian ends with a series of fifty-five theses that sum up the contents of the book. In addition to the chapters by Vanhoozer and Strachan, there are twelve short contributions by pastor theologians. Each author offers a perspective to help enforce the overall message of the book. The pastors who contribute embody the sort of person Vanhoozer and Strachan describe in this book and double as exemplars of pastor theologians.

The book is laid out nicely and follows a logical progression from a plea, followed by biblical theology, historical theology, systematic theology, and then on to practical theology to support the claim. This approach forms a strong case that the biblical and historical role of the pastor is well-described as Public Theologian. One of the desired outcomes of *The Pastor as Public Theologian* is that individual pastors would be inspired to pursue and maintain theological rigors. This is an achievable result. It is not, however, the only result necessary to reach the sweeping solution desired by Vanhoozer and Strachan. They admit that both the church and the academy at large must also buy into this mindset/restored vision, which is a bigger challenge. One book alone probably will not accomplish such a vast goal. In this way *The Pastor as Public Theologian* is a helpful contribution to the ongoing conversation about the pastor, the church, and the academy in the modern world.

The Pastor as Public Theologian would be a helpful companion to the contemporary pastor with minimal theological education. It presents a convincing case that the pastorate is not all praxis. This can serve as a push for the kind of theological, public ministry that the church desperately needs. *The Pastor as Public Theologian* would also be a helpful resource for churches—especially elders, deacons, and church leaders—to better understand the role of the pastor and adjust expectations and job descriptions accordingly. Lastly, *The Pastor as Public Theologian* can cast a vision for higher education institutions to send their best and brightest to the church as the

ideal context for carrying out a lifetime of intellectual, theological, practical, public ministry.

—Mark R. Kelley

John H. Walton. *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible.* Second Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018. Pp. xvi + 363. $29.99 (paperback).

The great value of this work is Walton's *approach* to parallels between the Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern literature, cultures and religions. Everyone knows there are similarities and, of course, clear distinctions, between the OT and the beliefs of the surrounding peoples. It is commonly said that the OT authors borrowed the ideas, myths and laws of their neighbors and adopted them for their own monotheistic religion, still others do not value the historical locatedness of the OT, and simply ignore what similarities there are. These are two ways to fall of the log on opposite sides. The OT does share some commonalities with the literature of the peoples of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Canaan, and Babylon, but the existence of similarities is no evidence of crass plagiarism. Walton's approach, therefore, is to understand the conceptual world of all people who lived in the ANE world—to try to understand the cognitive environment of how people thought about very basic things like cosmology, humanity, the relationship of the king to the people, the people to the gods, and so forth. If OT authors thought in some common patterns simply by living in a certain place at a certain time, then the parallels between pagan religions and Judaism are more rhetorical and conceptual (think common grace), not a matter of appropriating the religion of others or borrowing their texts, myths, laws or customs. For example, we all understand that the earth revolves around the sun, yet we all speak in culturally accepted metaphors that express an earthly point of view—"the sun *rose* at 7:22 am," "the moon *moves* across the sky," "look at the stars *up* there"—though we live in the twentieth century and understand such statements are not *literally* true from a scientific vantage. This is true of Muslims, Christians, and atheists alike (to name only a few). Sharing such language says nothing of our fundamental beliefs (and certainly nothing of what beliefs might be held in common). The more important issues are, then, *why* does the earth revolve around the sun, why does that *matter*, and what does that *mean*? That is where Muslims, Christians and atheists part ways. Equally, if there were common thought patterns and accompanying rhetoric in the ANE world it would be historically improbable that Israel did not think and speak in similar ways. For example, there are similar laws, (some) similar concepts of temple, similar expressions for the heavens, and so on. This sort of common grace understanding of the world and shared rhetoric explains the commonalities between ANE literature and the OT, and is able to take the latter's historical locatedness seriously.

Walton is also quick to point out, however, that within such a shared conceptual and rhetorical environment there are major defining characteristics to the OT that make it quite distinct from ANE religions. These include the teaching on why God

created humanity, the relationship between God and the king and between the king and the people, the very idea of revelation, and the meaning of history to mention only a few. Walton's thesis is that these unique characteristics (among others) are all anchored in the radical idea (by ANE standards) of *covenant*. The idea that a god has entered into covenant with his people is entirely unique in the ANE, and this major distinction drives the other differences: humanity is not made to be a slave in the larger divine order of things; laws are not for preserving social order but express ideals of justice; Yahweh's will is not divined but he speaks through prophets, etc. In the ANE there was no concept of the gods entering into relationship (through a covenant or otherwise) with his people.

One major consequence of this is that ANE religions had no concept that the gods would speak, because the gods do not have a will to express on earth. Walton provides a telling Mesopotamian example from a man who just performed a sacrifice: "I wish I knew that these things were pleasing to one's god!... Who knows the will of the gods in heaven? Who understands the plans of the underworld gods? Where have mortals learnt the way of a god" (*Ludlul bel nemeqi*; quoted on 108)?

How then do people relate to the gods? There is a symbiotic relationship wherein humanity provides for the gods (food and religious rituals), and the gods bless humanity (with children and rain). But again, humanity has no idea what the gods want nor how to appease them. So when something goes wrong in the "Great Symbiosis" no one knows why. The Akkadian *Prayer to Every God* reads: "The wrong which I did, I do not know; the sin which I committed, I do not know; the taboo which I broke, I do not know; the bounds I crossed, I do not know… I am distressed; I am alone; I cannot see. Humanity is deaf and does not know anything.… Whether (a person) does wrong or good, they are ignorant" (286).

But within the confines of a covenant Yahweh speaks clearly to Israel what he expects of them, yet at the same time Yahweh has no *need* of his people.

The same is true with laws. Everyone had laws and some of them look quite similar. But *what is the purpose of laws* is another question altogether. Laws in the ANE cultures were for maintaining social order. Yet in Israel, again, they express the will of the revealing covenantal God who is concerned with moral uprightness.

We could go on with these distinctions. But to be clear, Walton's book is not aimed at pointing out these distinctions (it is not an apologetic work, in other words). The aim is simply to lay out the cognitive world of the ANE in such a period of time in such a geographic context wherein similarities and distinctions to the OT emerge. It is, thus, primarily a study of the ANE conceptual environment inside which the OT authors also lived, and far less a study of the OT. Yet, Walton's thesis, as mentioned, that covenant is the driving wedge that creates all the other distinctions is quite helpful.

The potential downside to this approach, however, is the difficulty in understanding where the commonalities lie, and where is another bona fide distinction. For example, Walton argues that in the ANE, when it comes to cosmology, cosmogony, and historiography, the ancients were more concerned with *function and role* than origins (chs. 4 and 8–10). That is, what the various elements of the universe and events in history *do* is more important than their origins or causes. And so, the same is true in the OT. While I am not an expert in ANE literature to comment one

way or another on what non-Israelite thinkers believed, it does strike me that Walton's method does not give a clear way to adjudicate when there is another commonality or another distinction. Could not the issue of origins and historiography also be altered by the grounding principle of covenant? If covenant changes the context inside of which all else is understood, why not cosmology, cosmogony and historiography? In fact, covenant is an historically embedded concept, and covenant making is a very real historical event, wrapped in the very act of salvation in history. So would not the OT understanding of history, and therefore also origins of history, be different than others in the ANE without a concept of divine covenants? Moreover, Walton points out how intermingled theology and cosmology were in the ANE, such that "creation" accounts are also theogonies, myths to explain the origins of the gods. "Since the forces of nature are expressions and manifestations of the attributes of deities, cosmogony and theogony become intertwined as the natural world comes into being along with the gods who embody the various elements of the cosmos" (48). Thus the cosmos is filled with divine presence, explaining all too well how function and role of the created order would be paramount in their minds. But since *the OT has no theogony* (Yahweh is the uncreated Creator) and *demurs pantheism* (Yahweh is holy) then, again, would that not alter concepts of creation, origins, function and role? It seems these too could be areas of distinction not commonalities.

All the same, this book is very helpful for conceptually inhabiting the ANE world. Walton's conclusions about the OT based on his perceived similarities and differences are mainly in his other books. For simply understanding the ANE cognitive environment and a helpful approach to parallels, this work should certainly be consulted. I would also take this opportunity to direct readers as well to John D. Currid's *Against the Gods: The Polemical Theology of the Old Testament* (Crossway, 2013) and John N. Oswalt's *The Bible among the Myths: Unique Revelation of Just Ancient Literature* (Zondervan, 2009) for a methodologically diverse study of the ANE world.

— Nicholas G. Piotrowski

Christopher Watkin. *Jacques Derrida (Great Thinkers*). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017. Pp. xxx + 148. $14.99 (paperback).

This is a remarkable book. Truly. If one had contended before I read this book that someone could produce a clear and competent outline of the major features of the thought of so complex a figure as French post-modernist Jacques Derrida in such a brief space, I would have greeted such a claim with incredulity. Not only has Watkin admirably done so, but he's done far more than this: to add to the first part of the book, which contains an amazing précis of Derrida's philosophy, he has written a second part that is a Van Tilian analysis of Derrida, a frankly breathtaking task that subjects Derrida to a presuppositional examination that engages his thought in the most fruitful biblical way that I've ever encountered.

The first part of the work, on "Derrida's Thought," covers three main areas: Derrida's theory of deconstruction; his ethics and politics; and, finally, his theology. With respect to the first, the thought of post-modernism is purposefully obscure, and thus quite hard to pin-down and express, being notoriously mercurial (and its proponents glorying in it!). Deconstructionism teaches us to be suspicious of authorial intent, to resist its power play, especially the logocentrism of the written word, and the phonocentrism of the spoken word, there being nothing outside the text (all is a hermeneutical spiral), thus *différance*: "For Derrida, the mode of existence of everything that exists…things exist[ing] as always different from themselves and deferred with respect to themselves" (129). Deconstructionism, however, is not just a method, or another way of reading a text. For Derrida, deconstruction is what happens when he reads a text.

It's easy to assume that Derrida, with respect to ethics and poltics, because he constantly deconstructs, espouses relativism and remains politcally uncommitted. Derrida seeks to dodge the relativist claim by his notion of incommensurability. Constructed as one wills, ethics and politics for Derrida emerges in a range between progressive and revolutionary. As for theology. Derrida interestingly says not that he is an atheist but "I might rigthly pass for an atheist" (43). He employs not merely a *via negativa* but the God of ontotheology, after Heidegger and ultimately Aristotle, in which God is the totality of being, a concept and not a person. Finally, he asserts a messianicty without messianism, keeping "the structure of the to-come and the openness to the future of Jewish, Christian, and Marxist messianisms, while refusing to designate what or who it is that will come, other than saying that it will confound our expectations" (131).

What is one to make of all this purposefully evasive, dodgy talk? That Watkin makes what he does of it in the second half of the book is little short of astounding, in which he gives a Reformed assessment of Derrida's thought. Watkin deals with what he thinks are a number of Reformed misunderstandings of Derrida, including John Frame's critique of Derrida's ethics as relativistic and subjectivistic. In fact, an important point of convergence occurs in Van Til's teaching on epistemological self-consciousness. Chapter 4 fleshes this all out nicely for the readers.

Chapter 5, on Derrida and Van Til in the light of John 1:1-18, is worth the price of the book alone. This reviewer urges all interested parties to procure this book post haste and study this groundbreaking chapter. This chapter is more than fifty pages and comprises the bulk of the book. I don't know how to describe a part without going into significant detail. Suffice it to say that what Watkin does here is show how in a variety of areas of Derrida's thought, one can employ Van Til to diagonalize Derrida's thought, overcoming false dichotomies and relating what is otherwise thought unrelatable: modernism and postmodernism, law and justice, the one and the many, and abstract generality and concrete particularlity.

This approach also deals with idolatrous claims about God's presence, Derrida's account of the gift, God's revelation, union with Christ, and justification. This is a tour-de-force that puts Derrida in a light that I've never seen him and suggests an unmined wealth that can be adriotly used elsewhere in dealing with other postmodernists and difficult philosophies by the use of a thoroughgoing relevational

epistemology. This reviewer heartily commends this book to all interested in engaging Derrida and his fellows and hopes for more in this series in this vein. If others take a like approach this could demonstrate a utility hitherto untapped in Van Tilian apologetics. This is a model of the apologist as a practitioner *sauviter in modo, fortiter in re.*

—Alan D. Strange

David F. Wells. *The Courage to Be Protestant: Reformation Faith in Today's World*. Second Edition. Grand Rapids, MI. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2017. Pp. xiv + 218. $22.00 (paperback).

In *The Courage to Be Protestant*, David F. Wells exposes the postmodern project as built upon the shifting sand of the autonomous self. He issues a clarion call for the evangelical church to stand against (certainly not upon) this foundation and instead build its house upon the only lasting foundation: the rock of the revelation of God in Scripture. This would require the church to recover the doctrines of the Reformation, which, far from being irrelevant, concretely answer the postmodern problem. Wells further observes that the emergence of the autonomous self paralleled a perceived cosmological change: man no longer viewed himself as existing in a *moral world* in which he found an objective reference and standard outside of himself, but in a *psychological* or *therapeutic world* in which subjectivity reigns and the self is liberated from all external constraints, whether God, the past, or religious authority. The evangelical movement has not remained unaffected by the spirit of the age, but has in many ways submitted itself to its dictates under the false guise of relevancy and reaching the culture.

So what is the church to do? "It is time for us to recover our lost universe. What we need to do is to think, once again, with an entirely different set of connections. The connections are not primarily in reference to self, but to God. The connections that have to be reforged in the moral world we *actually* inhabit rather than the artificial world of appearances we have manufactured. It is about making connections into the world of *reality* that endures rather than the one that does not" (134). Herein is the comfort of the true gospel: no matter how disillusioned the world becomes in its therapeutic world and no matter how forceful the world pushes the autonomous self, it will always be, at bottom, a fantasy that will never correspond with reality. Man cannot refashion after his own imaginings the world God has created. The church must call postmoderns back to reality, to turn from self to God in faith and repentance. This is nothing less than the Great Commission: Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.

In the opening chapter, Wells surveys the history of the evangelical movement from the end of the Second World War to the present. The major weakness that has eroded evangelicalism over the span of seven generations has been "the decline in the role that biblical doctrine once played" (3). This decline, he argues, arose from a "diminished interest in the Word of God in the life of the church" (4). This is evident

not so much in the forthright rejection of the Word, but deafness to its call not to be conformed to this world. The Word came to be heard not as challenging, but as "endorsing our way of life today, our cultural expectations, and our priorities" (4). Scripture was smuggled out of the moral world and into the new psychological world so that Christianity became "increasingly reduced to private, internal, therapeutic experience" (15). Consequently, the doctrinal foundation of postwar evangelicalism—which had agreed upon the essentials of the authority of inspired Scripture and the centrality and necessity of Christ's substitutionary atonement—was compromised and soon crumbled. Out of the debris arose new experiments in how to "do church," such as the *marketing movement* made infamous by Willow Creek that capitulated to consumerist modernity and the subsequent *emergent movement* that sought to recover the personal and relational dimensions in a postmodern form that elevated experience at the expense of objective doctrinal truth. Both were built upon sand and their collapse was inevitable. "Once the truth of Scripture lost its hold on the practice of evangelical faith, that faith lost its direction in the culture" (19). Wells calls the church away from the binding authority of culture (*sola cultura*) to that of the Word of God (*sola Scriptura*).

Wells concludes the chapter by noting the parallel between the needed repairs today and what Protestant Reformers faced five hundred years ago. He begins with four differences. First, Luther inhabited a religious world, while today secularism has expelled religion from the public sphere and confined it to private life. Second, in the sixteenth century the reality of sin, which belongs to a moral world, was not in dispute as it is in today's psychological world. In the past there was right and wrong, but today "we are comfortable or not, psychologically healthy or not, dysfunctional or not, but we are never sinners" (25). Third, the concept of salvation has migrated out of the religious world and into the therapeutic world. "It is no longer about right standing with God. Now it is about right standing with ourselves. And that is all it is about. It is about self-fulfillment, self-esteem, self-realization, and self-expression" (25). Fourth, Luther was able to identify his enemy as the power and teaching of the Catholic Church, but today the enemy is illusive and amorphous. The factors that shape the present culture are constantly changing: massive urbanization that creates anonymous cities, globalization that spawns profound relativism, capitalism that encourages a consumer mentality, technology that expands our natural powers but evacuates God from the world, and rationalization that idealizes human techniques.

There are also substantial similarities. First, there is no confidence that Scripture is sufficient in and of itself to direct and sustain the Christian life. The Catholic Church supplemented Scripture with tradition and a magisterium, while postmoderns look to "psychology, cultural savvy, and business techniques to do the same kind of thing for us" (29). Second, while the Catholic church reduced the effect of sin to a sickness and postmoderns have gone further in rejecting any and all moral absolutes, neither conforms to Scripture, which teaches that man is dead in his sins. "[T]hen as now, dead people had to be given life. … God's grace accomplished this transition then, and the same grace is accomplishing it today" (31). Third, the sufficiency of the death and resurrection of Christ had to be recovered in the Reformation as it does today. For

neither Rome nor postmoderns can say with the apostle Paul, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).

In chapter 2, Wells excavates the foundation of postmodernity: the autonomous self. This is the wholly free self severed from the outside world and loosed from all external constraints. It is embodied in the person who "rejects all orthodoxies on principle, and for whom the sole purpose in life is realizing the full potential of their individual sense. All morality, mystery, and meaning are to be found in the self, not in God" (35). One problem with this is that "in the absence of what is [objectively] true, all that remains are power and manipulation" (64).

Chapter 3 explores two contrasting ways of thinking about God. "The one comes from Scripture and the other comes from our culture" (67). All people have an internal sense that God exists and a moral sense written on the fabric of their nature. For this reason, they are always in need of a center. We cannot change the center, but we can lose the "ability to see it, to recognize it, to bow before it, to reorder our lives in light of it, to do what we should do as people who live in the presence of this center, this Other, this triune, holy-loving God of the Bible" (69). In his sin, man as sought all of these things around a different center: the self. Yet the self has not thrived as the center. In fact, the consequence of this humanism has been the disintegration of the self. Why? "The self that has been made to bear the weight of being the center of all reality, the source of all our meaning, mystery, and morality, inevitably becomes empty and fragile. When God dies to us, we die to ourselves" (84).

In addition, the constantly changing postmodern culture demands a constantly changing self—it is perpetually uprooted and homeless. Postmodern man remakes and projects himself a million times over as he seeks to answer the question, *Who am I?* "This question lies behind the many answers that we hear in contemporary anthropologies today: 'I am my genes,' 'I am my past,' 'I am my sexual orientation,' 'I am my body,' 'I am what I do,' 'I am what I have,' 'I am what I know,' and many others likes these. The emptiness of the self is signaled in every one of these identifications" (86). The way forward is to recover a Reformed worldview that believes in what Wells refers to as the "outside God." Evangelicalism has fashioned faith in terms of the "inside God" who aids man in his private life in terms of self-realization and self-esteem. The church must find again the outside God who has revealed himself in Scripture and tells man who he is as made in his image. This "will reach into our lives, wrench them around, lift our vision, fill our hearts, makes us courageous for what is right, and over time leave behind its beautiful residue of Christ-like character" (103).

In chapter 4 Wells argues that "what has made the psychological developments that have come into bloom in the self movement so powerful is that they have coincided with some deep cultural shifts that are outside the self. Indeed, the self movement has been the internal counterpart to the external changes that were happening as the world modernized. "Our internal life, with its disconnects, loss of roots, moral ambivalence, and psychological confusion, is really just a mirror of the external world we inhabit with all its change, anonymity, ruthless competition, and loss of transcendence" (111). The transition from a moral world to a psychological

world has brought about four fundamental changes, which together tell the story of the emergence of the autonomous self.

The first shift is from *virtues*, which are objective norms in a moral world that are enduring for all people, in all places, and in all times, to *values*, which represent the moral talk of a relativistic world. The second shift is from *character*, which is good or bad, to *personality*, which is attractive, forceful, or magnetic. "Here was a move out of the older moral world, where internal moral intentions are important, to a different world. This is a psychological world. This often entails a shift from what is important *in itself* to what is important only as it appears to others" (117). The third shift is from *nature*, which is something common to all human beings (e.g., the image of God), to *self*, which is unique to each individual. One effect of this was the rise in personal rights and the decline in personal responsibility. "As we left behind the moral world, as we entered the world of the individual self, rights proliferated and responsibilities disappeared. … Private choice has a privileged position, and anything that limits that choice is a violation of individual freedom. It becomes an act of self-violation, an assault, a mutilation. These personal rights are then often hitched up to the language of the civil rights movement" (128). The fourth and final shift is from *guilt*, which is what we are in a moral world before God on a vertical level, to *shame*, which is what we feel subjectively in a psychological world before other people on a horizontal level. Accordingly, salvation has to do with becoming (or feeling) entirely shameless. Sin is no longer a moral breach, but a disease or emotional deficit, and the self is believed to contain its own healing mechanisms. In light of these shifts, Wells argues that the church needs to recover the forgotten moral world. "We live in the postmodern world not just as postmoderns, consumed by the present age, but as those who are of eternity and whose eyes are on the 'age to come.' We live not simply as those born again, but as those who belong in *God's* world, those who are learning to think their thoughts after him" (142).

In chapter 5, Wells observes that the West has brought upon itself a strange contradiction, which he labels the "American paradox." On the one hand, it has "built an outward world of great magnificence." On the other hand, this new world is "inhospitable to the human spirit." He continues, "[I]n this world, this artificial world, we have all become psychological vagrants. We are the homeless. We have no place to stay" (145). It is this paradox that Wells credits for the rise of spirituality in the West, which he explores in this chapter along with its biblical alternative. Postmodern spirituality is "private, not public, individualistic, not absolute. It is about what I perceive, about what works for me, not about what anyone else should believe" (152). What is needed is a proper spirituality that this from above, not one that begins from below. "One starts with God and reaches into sinful life whereas the other starts in human consciousness and tries to reach 'above' to make connections in the divine" (145). The spirituality from "above" lives in a moral world, while the spirituality from "below" lives in a psychological world. The latter is "*lethal* to biblical Christianity. That is why the biggest enigma we face today is the fact that its chief enablers are evangelical churches, especially those who are seeker-sensitive or emergent who, for different reasons, are selling spirituality disconnected from biblical truth" (147). True spirituality in which heaven juts into the life of the believer, a life that is hidden with

Christ in God, has been lost to the inner voice that is impotent and deceptive. "In the earthly kind of spirituality, *we* speak because there is no one who has spoken to us. … In the biblical spirituality, by contrast, there is address. We are summoned by the Word of God. We stand before the God of that Word. *He* speaks" (160-61).

Having begun the book with a brief historical survey of the evangelical movement, the final chapter is a wake-up call to return to its doctrinal roots in the Protestant Reformation. The church is irrelevant unless it stands against the culture and people find in it something different than businessmen and psychologists. "Churches that actually do influence the culture—here is the paradox—are those that distance themselves from it in their internal life. … If the church is to be truly successful, it must be unlike anything else we find in life" (191). Such a church will bear three marks: the Word of God is preached, the sacraments are rightly administered, and discipline is practiced. Preaching, for one, must demonstrate the sufficiency of Scripture for God's redemptive work and for our life in this world. The biblical text must be rightly divided and the people need to be addressed in their world and needs. "What we really need is a way to understand our lives. We need to understand how to live in God's world on his terms. We need not only comfort but also a *worldview*. … It *ought* to be a preacher's goal to be able, bit by bit, Sunday by Sunday, to show what it means to have God's Word in *this* world" (199). In many ways this book will aid preachers to do just that.

This is a timely volume for our day in which objective truth has been eviscerated and all we have been left with are autonomous selves vying for power and control in a therapeutic world. May the church, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, be found faithful in carrying out its prophetic mission to the world, calling all people everywhere to repent and believe. May the church not be found shaking hands with the spirit of the age, but wrestling against it in the whole armor of God. The gates of hell shall not prevail. *Semper reformanda*.

—Daniel J. Ragusa

Tom Wolfe, *The Kingdom of Speech*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 2016. Pp. 185. $15.99 (paperback).

Tom Wolfe, along with Marilynne Robinson (reviewed also in these pages), is not the type typically reviewed in this journal. Wolfe, who died in May 2018 at the age of 88, was widely heralded, and reviled, as one of the architects of the New Journalism, a style of reportage that employed literary techniques. Several works in this mold made Wolfe's reputation: *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby* (1965), *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (1968), *The Right Stuff* (1979), and many in-between and afterwards. He has also written significant novels including *The Bonfire of the Vanities* (1987) and *I Am Charlotte Simmons* (2004), the last of which is the most searing indictment of the modern university that I've ever read, showing its dark underbelly of illicit sexuality and nihilism. *Charlotte Simmons* stands in marked

contrast to the gentle good-natured embrace of Robinson of the academy and the humanities, instead exposing the (albeit fictional) secularized Ivy League institution for the immoral incubator that it is.

Among the intellectual class, the university is held as sacrosanct (certainly Robinson regards it that way), but Wolfe gleefully, and mercilessly, skewers it. Another sacred cow of the intelligentsia that Wolfe fearlessly takes on is Darwin's theory of evolution. That is the subject of the present book and Wolfe exposes an important lacunae in neo-Darwinism: the striking failure to account for articulate speech in man. Speech as much as, if not more than, anything else, separates man from the "lower creation": how such developed remains an unanswered question by Darwinism to this day. This failure of an unguided evolution to account for the development of language is no small thing, being of such significance as to call the neo-Darwinian model into question.

DNA shows that man has much in common with the rest of creation, but Christians confess that man alone is created in the image and likeness of God. Even though fallen, and having lost the narrower image and effaced the broader one, man remains in the image of God in the broader sense and continues in such to possess, as P.E. Hughes noted, personality, spirituality, rationality, morality, authority, and creativity. No small part of the human possession of rationality manifests itself in man's speech. Scientists have been trying, especially since the development of the linguistic theories of Noam Chomsky—then a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania in the early 1950s, and later, famously, at MIT—to understand how the mechanism of evolution has arrived at the kingdom of speech, a kingdom inhabited by no other creatures in kingdom *Animalia*.

Chomsky, better known by many in later years as a leading public intellectual and fashionable far-left critic of Western, and especially American, foreign, economic, social and other policies, made his bones in language theory. As has happened since Darwinism came to dominate the life sciences, scientific work has proceeded to flesh out and validate the Darwinian paradigm, as Kuhn describes in his *Structure of Scientific Revolution*. Whatever has happened in controverted areas, e.g., the development of the vertebrate eye, in which unguided evolution appears quite inadequate, it is especially the case respecting the development of articulate speech, even in the aftermath of the seminal work of Chomsky. More than sixty years have passed since Chomsky's great work on transformational grammar, with all of its implications for the origin and development of speech, and neither Chomsky nor his pupils have advanced our understanding of how an unguided evolution explains the mechanism of human speech.

Chomsky and company have, more or less, recently acknowledged this lack of forward progress in the last sixty years. That scientists are no closer to understanding or explaining the mysteries of articulate speech in man is not something that the evolutionary model predicts or expects. If the mechanism of unguided evolution and the progression of natural selection ought by now to have shed clear light on the development of the incomparable capacity for articulate speech and has not done so, perhaps scientists might reason that speech, as something that distinguishes man from other creatures, is a gift, implying a giver, inadequately understood and explained on

any other terms. Indeed, it is a gift, reflecting our creation in the image of him who was the Word in the beginning, distinct from God and of the same substance with God (John 1:1).

—Alan D. Strange

Davis Young, *For Me to Live is Christ: The Life of Edward J. Young*. Willow Grove, PA: The Committee for the Historian of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 2017. Pp. xvi + 349. $10.00 (hardcover).

E.J. Young was professor of Old Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary (Philadelphia, PA) from around the time of his being ordained as a minister in the OPC (1936) until his death at the age of fifty-nine in 1968. Young was successor, as one of the leading Reformed Hebraists of his day, to his renowned predecessors at Westminster, Robert Dick Wilson and Oswald Allis, who were earlier friends of J. Gresham Machen in the founding of the seminary. As for Wilson, who claimed not to have shirked the difficult questions and to have had facility in forty-five languages, Young was a worthy heir: he too did not shirk the difficult questions (posed, for example, by the question of the authorship of Isaiah or the composition date for Daniel) and had mastery of around two dozen languages, both ancient (particularly Semitic ones) and modern.

Young produced works of lasting value: *Old Testament Introduction* (1949), *The Prophecy of Daniel* (1949), *My Servants the Prophets* (1952), *The Authority of the Old Testament* (1953), *Thy Word is Truth* (1957), *The Book of Isaiah* (Bible commentary, 1965-1972), *Genesis 3* (1966), etc. His work on Isaiah remains seminal, as is his defense of the historicity of the opening chapters of Genesis (particularly of the historical Adam and the fall) and of the prophetic character of Daniel over against the liberal claim that it was composed after the events occurred, being *vaticinium ex eventu*. As for the nature of the Genesis days, Young disagreed with the non-chronological view of his younger colleague Meredith Kline (and his framework hypothesis), seeing the days instead as chronological, though regarding the length as indeterminate (Young regarded the earlier days in the sequence as perhaps shorter than twenty-four hours and the fifth and, especially, the sixth as significantly longer).

The biographer, Davis Young, a son of E.J. and now Professor Emeritus of Geology at Calvin College, clearly had great affection and respect for his father. He depicts him as a dedicated scholar/teacher/churchman and also an affectionate and devoted husband and father. Though a West Coast boy (from the San Francisco Bay), Young married Lillian Riggs, a girl from the Philadelphia area, where they lived throughout his career and the rearing of their family. Lillian, when young (before she was Young) suffered the loss of her fiancée in an auto accident and her first husband of three months in a hunting accident. Though she had Dr. Young much longer than those earlier beaus, his death of a massive heart attack at 59 was another shock, particularly as she lived on until 1991.

Dr. Young served well the church that he came to love so dearly, the OPC (after his brief ministerial tenure in the PCUSA). Young was an amateur musician, a cellist, and played a significant role in the committee that composed the first edition of the Trinity Hymnal (1961). He spent a great deal of time on this as well as service on the denomination's Committee on Christian Education (for which he regularly wrote) and special committees of the church. Young moderated the General Assembly of the OPC in 1956 when it met in Littleton, Colorado.

Other colleagues of Dr. Young, like Cornelius Van Til and John Murray, have been more heralded, but Young takes a back seat to no one in a quiet, loving, humble, and yet scholarly and full-throated defense of the Christian faith, particularly in the attacks of its liberal and atheist detractors. More could be said here about the details of his life—his love of travel with family, service in the church, indefatigable pursuit of scholarship—but one should consult this volume for such. This is an encouraging read, presenting not a faultless saint, but a truly godly man who gave his life in the service of Christ and his church so that all of us might that much more glorify God and enjoy him forever.

—Alan D. Strange