

## BOOK REVIEWS

*A Quest for Godliness: the Puritan Vision of the Christian Life*, by James I. Packer. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1990. Pp. 367, including index. \$15.95.

Fans of J.I. Packer, who include a considerable number of conservative Reformed leaders and laymen, were no doubt happy to see another large book from the pen of this Calvinist scion of the Church of England. Along with a title intriguing to serious Christians, memories of his valuable *Knowing God* and other briefer works help serve to found this first reaction to his latest work. The book turns out to be a laudatory discussion and series of extracts from the sixteenth and seventeenth century English Puritans. Packer's thesis is that we late 20th century Christians "need" the Puritans to correct the errors and revive the deadness too often characteristic of our form of Christianity.

Unfortunately, this somewhat overdrawn theme of *A Quest* is introduced by a decidedly overdrawn comparison between these English Puritans and the giant redwood trees of northern California. Doubtless the literature of the Puritans has a great deal to offer in the way of sound exegesis of Scripture and application of the same to life. Nevertheless, simply because the Puritans had a penchant for addressing their own time and situation in great detail, most readers of them will find themselves working through mountains of material to find the gems of insight and exposition buried therein. Thus the valuable lessons they learn and teach from Scripture are often obscured by the timeliness and sheer volume of their writing, along with a style that can only be characterized as, well, Puritan.

Packer's procedure in *A Quest* is to examine and extract Puritan writings on a series of topics chosen to demonstrate his theme. He opens with chapters entitled "Why We Need the Puritans," "Puritanism as a Movement of Revival," and "The Practical Writings of the Puritans." He then proceeds with several chapters each under the headings: "The Puritans and the Bible," "The Puritans and the Gospel," "The Puritans and the Holy Spirit," "The Puritan Christian Life," and "The Puritans in Ministry." Included among his discussions and extracts from Puritan thought are ample historical notes on

particular writers as well as on the movement as a whole. While Packer's topical arrangement is clearly drawn from modern Christian concerns, this treatment does serve to bring Puritan thinking to bear on the life of the church today and does not turn out to be unfair to them.

In our opinion, the great strength and example of the Puritans for modern day Christians lies in their absolute dedication to applying all of Scripture to all of life. If anything is to be learned from these fellow pilgrims on the road to glory it is the centrality of the Bible as a serious foundation for all of Christian faith and life. The witness of the Puritans is the same as that of Isaiah, "to the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

With the less than fatal defects mentioned above in mind, Packer's present work does constitute an excellent introduction to the best that the Puritans have to offer and hopefully will serve to whet many an appetite for further study. The Puritans, along with other historic Christian writers, do continue to deserve careful study which is often amply rewarded, even if they do not quite deserve the adulation our esteemed author is so desirous of bestowing. An editing error is found on the top of page 46 in the repeating of the line at the bottom of page 45. The included index is helpful. We recommend this volume, particularly to those who have little acquaintance with the English Puritan writers.

*Robert E. Grossmann*

*Prophecy: A Gift for Today?*, by Graham Houston. Downers Grove, IL., InterVarsity Press, 1989. Pp. 208. \$9.95.

The writer of this book is minister of Letham St. Mark's Church in Perth, Scotland.

The book is a by-product of almost ten years of study on the New Testament teaching on the Holy Spirit under the guidance of Professor I. Howard Marshall, and consists of ten chapters and two appendices but no indices of any sort.

Houston's thesis soon emerges, for already on p. 14 he declares, "We cannot assume that in every passage where prophecy is referred to we are dealing with the same meaning of the word." Briefly, his contention is that there are two levels of prophecy to be found in Scripture: the authoritative Old Testament prophetic and New Testament apostolic which form the basis of Scripture's canonicity and

which ended at the close of the apostolic age; and a lesser, fallible form, which may be termed "Christian prophecy" and which continues in the church today (160).

In establishing this thesis the writer reveals dependence upon Wayne Grudem and others who have come to this same position. His exegetical path is a serious attempt to understand the teaching of Scripture on the subject but is also similar to the one which Grudem and others have already trodden before him. Agabus is repeatedly cited as a New Testament example of fallible prophecy (pp. 61-62,74,115,135, 151,191), which is a gift of the Spirit and continues but needs to be tested by the church today. Yet honesty should require that, while Houston, Grudem, et al, consider that Agabus' prophecy (Acts 21:11) was mistaken in that "Paul was *not* bound by the Jews but by the Romans, and the Jews did *not* plan to hand over Paul to the Romans but to assassinate him" (62); Paul evidently considered Agabus' prophecy to have been true (even accurate). For in Acts 28:17, he says of his experience (in agreement with Agabus' prophecy), "I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. . .who wanted to release me. . .but the Jews objected. . ."

In other words, what we learn from Agabus' prophecy is that prophecy, while revelational, was not like teaching or preaching which were and are gifts of the Holy Spirit by which to interpret revelation given by the prophets. Prophecy, however, needed to be interpreted. In Agabus' prophecy, we see the differences of interpretation that could be given to it. Paul's friends took it to mean that God was warning Paul not to go to Jerusalem, while Paul correctly interpreted it to mean that God was warning Paul that this is what would befall him in Jerusalem and therefore he was being prepared by God for the experience (to which Paul's friends then concurred, Acts 21:14).

Therefore, while it should be admitted that prophecy is not the same as preaching and teaching, and that it was given to "sons and daughters" in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Acts 2:17), this by no means establishes it as a continuing gift for today.

Ironically, while Houston claims that the gift continues in the church today, he is sensitive to its abuses and helpfully warns against them with repeated caveats. Some examples: he wonders about some prophecy whose "terms are so general that one wonders if they could be described as prophetic in the New Testament sense" (172); he finds objectionable present prophecy being put in the first person which as a result challenges the church's need to test its truth (173); he admits that wisdom and discernment (which could be considered as gifts of the

Spirit in their own right) are classified by him as prophecy (175); he equates guidance (178) and even the ability to detect trends (180) as prophecy; he questions Wimber's "word of knowledge" claim to being prophecy (189); and wonders whether Judaism had and perhaps still has this type of prophecy (190).

From this it is obvious that the book, while challenging the positions of Warfield (*Counterfeit Miracles*) and Gaffin (*Perspectives on Pentecost*) who maintain that prophecy ceased with the close of the apostolic age, raises more questions and caveats than it answers about a continuing and so-called secondary form of prophecy.

This reviewer would suggest that if Houston, Grudem, etc., were simply to consider their secondary prophecy as a form of fallible guidance which needs to be tested by other members of the Christian community, and which Reformed circles have ever recognized as valid, they would be both closer to the data of Scripture and the position of traditional Reformed theology. This, however, most likely would leave the charismatics (and others whom the Reformers referred to as "enthusiasts") out in the cold.

*Raymond O. Zorn*

*Christianity and the Nature of Science: A Philosophical Investigation* by J. P. Moreland. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989. Pp. 263, including select bibliography. \$14.95.

The issue of the relationship between Christianity and science has been a vexing one, since the origins of modern science in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Some have employed the metaphor of warfare to describe this relationship, noting the hostility which has often characterized modern science's approach to the fundamentals of the historic Christian faith. Others have employed more friendly categories, arguing that modern science is founded upon the tenets of the Christian doctrine of a contingent and ordered creation. More recently, the issue has been compounded by the development of "creation science" and the renewed debate over the compatibility of evolutionary theory with a Christian view of origins and the creation of man in God's image.

This study by J.P. Moreland, which forms a sequel to an earlier general work in the area of apologetics or the defense of the faith, *Scaling the Secular City*, is an important contribution to the discussion of this relationship. Moreland, who is a professor of philosophy and apologetics at the Lakin School of Religion, Liberty University, is

uniquely qualified to address the issue, being thoroughly versed in the areas of the history and philosophy of modern science. Unlike many who have expertise as practicing scientists, but virtually no grasp of the philosophy of science, Moreland is able to canvass the field of modern science from the vantage point of a philosophical investigation of the presuppositions and operating assumptions of scientific study and research.

Though Moreland expresses some appreciation for the approach to the relationship between Christianity and modern science known as the "complementarity view," he rejects it as too facile a solution to the apparent conflicts between them. This view summarily dismisses all conflicts between the Christian faith and science as only apparent, arguing that the two deal with distinct categories and fields of inquiry which can not in principle intersect. The problem with this view, according to Moreland, is that it compartmentalizes the Christian faith and removes the biblical teachings concerning creation, including the creation of man, and the history of redemption from any direct link with the events of history. In this view, God's relationship to the creation tends to be treated in "deistic" terms, his primary causality (direct interventions into the natural world) reduced to secondary causality (indirect use of natural processes) (12). Moreland rightly notes that the biblical accounts of God's acts of creation and providence include events which have direct implications for scientific study and conflict with some of the theories of modern science. This is particularly true in the area of the Scriptural account of the origin and development of human life.

Moreland's major argument is that the pretensions of modern science (scientism) need to be tempered by an acknowledgment of its philosophical underpinnings and assumptions. For too long scientists have naively and illicitly operated with the presupposition that science is a universal and objective medium for ascertaining the "facts," the way things really are. By means of the "scientific method" of gathering, observing and extrapolating from the data available to the scientist, the truth about the natural world is capable of being discovered and theoretically described. In this "positivist" approach, there is little appreciation for the historical development of modern science, the theory-ladenness of all observation and experimentation, and the pre-scientific or philosophical assumptions which govern scientific study.

Moreland develops his argument in three theses. First, he argues that there is "no definition of science, no set of necessary and sufficient conditions for something to count as science, no such thing as *the* scientific method, that can be used to draw a line of demarcation

between science and non-science" (13). Most of the attempts to compartmentalize science and the Christian faith assume such a definition of science and therefore rule out the scientific status of philosophical and theological tenets. The problem is that science itself is incapable of establishing such a line of demarcation between science and non-science. Thus, Moreland concludes that the "idea that science is a rational, truth-seeking discipline and theology is a widespread cultural myth" (101).

Second, Moreland maintains that there are limits inherent to scientific study which compromise its claim to neutrality and objectivity. There are a number of philosophical principles which underlie science, none of which are able to be established on scientific grounds alone (e.g., the existence of the external world, the orderliness and knowability of the external world, the uniformity of nature so important to the principle of induction, the laws of logic and epistemology, the reliability of the senses and the mind, the adequacy of language to describe the world, etc.). There are also conceptual problems and issues which clearly interface with science, but which are not original to scientific study itself. And finally there are limits within science itself. Each of these limits upon science confirms that its methods and findings are themselves significantly dependent upon non- or extra-scientific considerations.

Third, Moreland argues the controversial thesis that "scientific realism," the view which assumes that successful scientific theories are true or approximately true descriptions of the theory-independent world (the way things are), needs to be qualified. Noting the diversity of contradictory theories which have characterized the history of science, Moreland suggests that an "eclectic" view, one which uses a "realist" and "anti-realist" view of science on a case-by-case basis, is the best approach. Though some scientific theories may in fact describe the "way things are," some may be useful only as instruments to aid our control of the natural world. For Moreland some conflicts between science and the Christian faith may result from our assumption that a scientific theory is a true description of reality, when it may only be a useful device for interpreting and controlling a limited range of data. Unfortunately, Moreland offers only two rather general criteria for ascertaining in which case a theory ought to be taken "realistically" or "anti-realistically" (206, 210).

In an interesting concluding chapter, Moreland raises the question whether "creation science" deserves to be treated as genuine science. Within the framework of his previous argument, he addresses the way

many creation scientists have been strongly criticized in the scientific community for allowing theological views to influence their scientific work. Though Moreland does not identify himself directly as a creation scientist, he does want to defend their position against this criticism and express appreciation for their proper recognition that some scientific theories concerning origins, particularly the origin of the human race, are incompatible with the Scriptural accounts of creation.

Moreland recognizes that the creation/evolution debate, dating back to the nineteenth century, "was not simply about scientific evidence or facts. More importantly, it was a philosophical debate between two epistemes regarding the issue of what science was and how it should be practiced. It was also a debate about the broad cultural implications of evolution" (217). He also answers many of the common objections to creation science by showing that they are not cogent or compelling, but express the biases of many contemporary scientists. In Moreland's view, one of the more important elements in the debate between creationists and evolutionists is their different epistemic values. Creationists "believe that the weight of conceptual problems, internal and external, is sufficient against evolutionary theory to warrant embracing creationism as a scientific research program" (245).

Anyone interested in the more recent debate over the relationship between science and the Christian faith should read this book. Though Moreland leaves underdeveloped some of his arguments, especially those concerning the criteria for his "eclectic" approach to realism and anti-realism and his defense of the scientific status of creation science, he provides an impressive and thorough discussion of the philosophy of science. He persuasively undermines the myth of scientism which is such a dominant cultural force in the West and gives those Christians engaged in scientific study occasion to reconsider their often too-easy accommodation to current scientific theories, even when they conflict with Scriptural teaching.

In his introduction, Moreland rightly asserts that "Christians cannot afford to promulgate a dichotomized stereotype of Christianity wherein a believer's life is a private, individualized faith operating in an upper story (to borrow Francis Schaeffer's term) while his secular life is public and involves reason and argument" (11). It is probably naive, however, for him to add that he hopes his study will be useful for church and parachurch educational activities. The material is too technical and the arguments often too arcane for that to prove to be the case.

*Cornelis P. Venema*

*Gerechtigkeit Schafft Zukunft: Friedenspolitik und Schöpfungsethik in einer bedrohten Welt*, by Jürgen Moltmann. Munich, Germany, Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1989. Pp. 129. DM 12.

This paperback is another of a growing number of books and monographs by one of Germany's leading theologians. As the sub-title indicates, this little volume is a plea for social justice, political peace without the threat of nuclear warfare, and ecological conservation in the endangered world of our day. Politically, Moltmann feels that the principles of the Sermon on the Mount ought to be employed, as long-term peaceful solutions are sought by nations rather than the continued employment of the balance of terror by means of the threat of assured mutual destruction by nuclear warfare from which civilization and even mankind itself would hardly survive. Socially, nations should increasingly learn that this earth is a habitat with limited resources and that mankind can only successfully continue to exist as those resources are justly shared in a recognition and practice of brotherly solidarity rather than competitive strife which serves only for the advantage of the one over against the other. In the execution of its task, the church should adopt the motto, "Think globally - work locally" (69).

Ecologically, mankind should stop striving to master nature and attempting to be like God, and seek rather to promote the welfare of nature in increasing harmony with it. Moltmann suggests that the divine sabbath rest, rather than work, is man's goal and, in fact, the goal of creation as a whole. He concludes by positing the model of balance and harmony that was the practice for centuries by old China whose emperors ruled by virtue of the mandate of heaven. Chinese communism, with its western values, is an alien and (hopefully) temporary phenomenon.

While there is much of value in the book for the possible improvement of politics, society and ecology, there are also unresolved theological tensions and distortions of actual realities. Some examples: are 50% of U.S.A. prison inmates such because of being disadvantaged by previous unemployment, as Moltmann suggests (13), or was their previous unemployment but a symptom of their general malaise? Again, was President Reagan an exponent of the politics of Armageddon (30) or was he actually simply reflecting his faith in the end given by biblical eschatology itself? Again, does Moltmann, in advocating the promotion of animal rights in order to protect them from "aggressive mankind" (92), also impractically believe that people should all become vegetarians, which would be the consistent result of his view?

More serious is Moltmann's rejection of a sovereign God. For, according to him, how else account for Auschwitz and other historical tragedies? Consequently, he advocates a limited, suffering God, lovingly bound up in man's affairs and whose "hope" like ours must be that, somehow, man will not succeed in destroying himself (49). Moltmann of course has voiced this panentheistic notion of God (79) before in his book, *The Crucified God*. This leads him to speak of the cosmic Christ and of a universalistic redemption of all creation, "otherwise Christ is not the Christ of God" (88). In all of this there is no mention of biblical data such as unrepentant Christ rejection by reprobate sinners, the retributive wrath of God in ultimate judgment and the consequence of eternal perdition (hell). It is not surprising, therefore, that Moltmann also sees a reflection of biblical sabbath teaching in Chinese Taoism (127).

The book is a good example of the pioneering spirit of radical German theology. Some things are worth serious consideration. Others fall short when measured by biblical criteria.

*Raymond O. Zorn*

*Saved by Grace*, by Anthony A. Hoekema. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989. Pp. xiii + 277, including bibliography and indexes. \$22.95.

Readers who are acquainted with the previous writings of Anthony A. Hoekema will welcome this third in a series of doctrinal studies. This study, which considers the subject of soteriology or the application of the saving work of Christ through the Holy Spirit, follows upon an earlier study of eschatology, *The Bible and the Future*, and anthropology, *Created in God's Image*. In a manner consistent with his earlier works, Hoekema provides a comprehensive and readable summary of his subject from a classically reformed and evangelical perspective.

Hoekema presents in his opening chapters a general orientation to the study of soteriology, an orientation in which he addresses such questions as the propriety and usefulness of the *ordo salutis*, the role of the Holy Spirit in the "application" of Christ's saving benefits, and the central significance of the believer's "union with Christ" in the work of salvation. In his opening chapter, he acknowledges that his theological standpoint is reformed and that this entails a commitment to a number of distinctive, biblical emphases. These are: the decisiveness of the sovereign grace of God in the salvation of the sinner; the origin of

God's saving work in His eternal decree of election; the particularity or definiteness of the saving work of God in its provision and application; the efficacy and irrevocability of God's work of grace; and the pre-eminence of the Holy Spirit as the one who ministers Christ's saving work to and in us. Hoekema hastens to add, in connection with this insistence upon the sovereign grace of God in the work of salvation, that this grace does not obliterate or remove the obligation to respond in faith and repentance to the work of the Spirit. In reformed theology, salvation is both God's work and our task, however "paradoxical" this may appear to us.

In his discussion of the *ordo salutis*, Hoekema adopts a mediating position. In classical reformed theology the *ordo salutis* has been understood as a systematic formulation of the various aspects (in their interrelations) of the application of salvation by the Holy Spirit. On the one hand Hoekema rejects the position of John Murray who argued for the deduction of a definite *ordo salutis* from Scriptural givens and logical considerations. And on the other hand, he is not content with G. C. Berkouwer's suggestion that we need only speak of the "way of salvation" in the correlation between the Word and faith. Hoekema suggests that we think of the *ordo salutis* as a description of the one work of God's saving grace which is comprised of a variety of aspects. These aspects, which together form various facets of a singular work of salvation, are not to be distinguished chronologically (as though the one came before the other in temporal succession) but conceptually or theologically. We should think in terms of a "process of salvation" with distinct parts which bear a particular relation to one another either as punctiliar acts (e.g., justification) or progressive processes (e.g., sanctification). In his articulation of this position, Hoekema also rejects those more recent forms of an *ordo salutis* which incorporate a "second blessing" or post-conversion second stage participation in the fullness of the Spirit. Here he has in mind soteriologies which are at home in a Wesleyan ("Christian perfection" or "entire sanctification"), a pentecostal ("baptism in the spirit"), or some evangelical ("carnal" versus "spiritual" Christian) contexts.

After dealing with the knotty issue of the nature and propriety of the *ordo salutis*, Hoekema addresses the equally difficult question of the role of the Holy Spirit in the process of our salvation. Noting the Westminster Confession of Faith's affirmation that the Spirit is "the only efficient agent in the application of redemption" (Westminster Confession, ix, 3), Hoekema argues that the Spirit's role is to make us

one with Christ. It is by the Spirit's working through the Word that we are joined with Christ and partake of all His benefits.

Somewhat surprisingly, however, Hoekema treats the questions of the "gifts of the Spirit" and the "healing ministry of the church" in his chapter on the role of the Holy Spirit before dealing with the subject of the believer's union with Christ.

Those who have read Hoekema's earlier studies, *Holy Spirit Baptism* and *What About Tongue Speaking?*, will not be surprised by his discussion of these questions. Hoekema assumes the classical and predominant position of reformed theology that some of the gifts of the Spirit which were operative in the apostolic epoch are no longer a regular and normative feature of the life of the church today. Those gifts which were given to authenticate the message of Christ and His apostles in the foundational period of the establishment of the New Testament church (for example, tongues, prophesying, miracles of healing) are no longer needed for the edification and well-being of the church, built as it is upon the foundation laid once-for-all by the apostles.

In a very good, albeit too brief, section, Hoekema deals with the related issue of the healing ministry of the church. Here he displays that combination of balance in handling the biblical givens and fairness in treating the position of those with whom he differs, that is characteristic of his work generally. He concludes that healing should be a part of the normal concern of the church in answer to prayer, that this ministry does not exclude but includes the use of the medical professions, and that the healing for which we pray and which the Lord provides is much wider than physical healing. Nowhere, Hoekema rightly notes, has the Lord promised His children that He will heal all their physical infirmities in every circumstance, provided they simply ask this of Him in faith.

In the remainder of this chapter on the role of the Holy Spirit, Hoekema also discusses the neo-pentecostal doctrine of baptism with the Spirit and the fullness of the Spirit. Though he acknowledges the continued and sometimes special working of the Spirit in the life of the believer subsequent to conversion, he rejects any doctrine of a qualitatively new and subsequent working of the Spirit after conversion which is given to some, though not all, believers.

Hoekema's chapter on the believer's union with Christ sets the stage for the remainder of his study, which treats in succession various aspects of the *ordo salutis* (in the order: the gospel call, effectual calling, regeneration, conversion, repentance, faith, justification, sanctification, perseverance). Developing his earlier assertion that the chief work of

the Spirit in the application of salvation has to do with our union with Christ, Hoekema traces various aspects of this union, beginning with its roots in God's eternal and gracious election, moving to its basis in the saving work of Christ done "on behalf of and for" His people, and finally issuing in our actual union with Christ in regeneration, faith, sanctification, etc. All of these various aspects of the *ordo salutis*, according to Hoekema, are so many different ways of describing the implications of our union with Christ. In our union with Christ by the Spirit we are given new life from the dead (regeneration), a new status (justification), a new direction (conversion), a new holiness (sanctification), and a new persistence (perseverance).

The bulk of Hoekema's study consists of a balanced consideration of each of these various aspects of the *ordo salutis*. Throughout he endeavors to develop a viewpoint which is biblical and therefore reformed by the standard of the historic reformed confessions. He is not interested in novelty for its own sake or for striking out on radically new pathways for the sake of enjoying the reputation of being a "trendsetter" or a "creative" theologian. His position is usually marked by careful exegesis, attention to the church's confession, fairness to those with whom he disagrees, and an alertness to contemporary discussions and options.

If Hoekema is to be faulted at any point, it might be for his brevity in dealing with some controversial aspects of the *ordo salutis*. Though he provides, as I have noted, some discussion of the questions raised by pentecostalism and neo-pentecostalism, the importance of these questions probably warranted his giving them greater and more sustained consideration. He also, in his treatment of faith, gives insufficient attention to the issue of the "assurance of faith" and the difference that appears to obtain on this issue between the Heidelberg Catechism (Lord's Day 7) and the Westminster Confession.

Despite these small deficiencies, this book evidences those qualities which marked Anthony Hoekema in all of his theological work. In their "foreword: in memoriam," Hoekema's wife and son note that the manuscript for this book was completed just before his seventy-fifth birthday, only a few months before his death. Their words express well my evaluation of this, his last book—"he is remembered by students and parishioners alike. . . For his clarity of mind, his precision of expression, his warm personal interest in all whose lives touched his. . . ." *Saved by Grace* is not only a fitting conclusion to Hoekema's life's work but also a fitting confession of his faith.

*Cornelis P. Venema*

*Two hundred Years of Theology: Report of a Personal Journey*, by Hendrikus Berkhof. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989. Pp. 316. \$24.95.

The author of this survey of theology of the past two centuries has for many years, until his retirement, been professor of dogmatical and biblical theology at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands. This volume was originally written in the German language, for it is obviously the German theological world that Berkhof originally wished to reach by means of this book, which was first published in 1985, but has now been made available to the English speaking public with this competent translation by John Vriend.

As with other books that he has written, Berkhof once again shows his scholarly competence as he presents a survey of modern theological thought since the time of the Enlightenment and which involves an analysis of the theological positions of more than thirty-five theologians and philosophers from Europe and America. In so doing, Berkhof makes his work as much a history of modern philosophy as it is of theology.

From the title the reader may wonder what the connection is between Berkhof's survey and his so-called "personal journey"? The answer to this question already becomes clear in the second paragraph of his Introduction where he tells the reader, "Ever and again and with increasing intensity I asked myself how, generally speaking, the gospel and modern thought can coexist" (xi). Berkhof feels that, ever since Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) "destroyed the harmony which existed between knowledge of the world and knowledge of God, theology, if it is to exist at all, has had to enter upon a new way of doing its work. . ." (xiii).

The question becomes, since Kant epitomized the Enlightenment with his saying, "Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity" (xii), "how in this world can one still be a Christian and with conviction show to others the way to the gospel?" (xviii). Later he adds, "This is the culture (Western culture estranged from the gospel) for which the Christian church would like to reinterpret the gospel so as to make it a vital option again" (300).

With his theological presuppositions thus already clearly revealed, Berkhof appropriately begins his book with the first chapter being, "Kant's Four Steps in Theology", and points out how Kant, in his efforts to save both God and the Enlightenment, and by separating the noumenal from the phenomenal, established a postulatory deism (in the

noumenal realm) or an inspiratory pantheism (in the phenomenal realm) (16). Modern theology has been interacting with this Kantian legacy ever since.

In seventeen successive chapters thereafter, Berkhof delineates the reactions and interactions of theologians and philosophers with Kant's thought. A brief review of these men and their positions as Berkhof sets them forth is worth our attention.

In His treatment of "Fichte at the Crossroads," Berkhof points out how Fichte, in reaction to Kant, was caught in the dilemma between atheism on the one hand or pantheistic idealism on the other, and chose the latter. "Schleiermacher's Direction" was to remain firmly within the boundaries of experience, while basing religion upon the feeling of absolute dependence upon God. Hegel's pantheistic idealism created, in his successors, the reactions of atheism (dialectical materialism) or theological mediation between Schleiermacher's romanticism and Hegel's rationalism (A. Ritschl). Kierkegaard, also reacting against Hegelianism, introduced subjective dialecticism and the (individualistic) existential leap of faith (77).

Berkhof next has chapters on "The Anglican Pendulum" and "Coming up from Behind in the Netherlands." In the former he presents Coleridge whom he regards as the English Schleiermacher, Maurice as the forerunner of Barth, and the influence of Newman's switch to Roman Catholicism. In the latter he deals with such liberal (ethical) theologians as Scholten, Opzoomer, Pierson, Hoekstra, Chantepie de la Saussaye and Gunning, while also giving mention to the "Neo-Confessional" alternative represented by Kuyper and Bavinck, and which briefly triumphed in the theology of the latter (his four volume *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*), but whose weakness, according to Berkhof, lay in a faith submission to the authority of scriptural truths rather than in a personal encounter with God through the person of Christ (114).

Berkhof gives Martin Kahler a chapter and considers him a conservative even though Kahler's "conservatism," in Kahler's own words, did without "the ballast of verbal inspiration and legalistic biblicism" (134).

Berkhof then devotes a chapter to Herrmann and Troeltsch, the former being the teacher of both Barth and Bultmann. While Barth reacted against Herrmann's immanentistic Modernism with the alternative of transcendent dialecticism; Bultmann re-fashioned it, with the help of Heidegger's existential philosophy, into a religious faith within the scientific image of the world (172). Berkhof doesn't mention

J. Gresham Machen, but he too had Herrmann as a teacher, and his reaction against the latter's theology established him in what Berkhof no doubt would have referred to as "dead orthodoxy" and to be rejected in the same way as Dutch Neo-Confessionalism.

Berkhof is basically a Barthian and one of his longer chapters is on Barth and his Neo-Orthodox theology. Interestingly, he feels that, though Barth opposed Schleiermacher's immanentism, there is more continuity between his theology and Schleiermacher's than he cares to admit (204).

Berkhof also devotes more than a dozen pages to the Dutch theologian, H.M. Kuitert, who as Berkouwer's successor in theology at the Free University, Berkhof considers a post-Barthian and who, once again in the mold of Schleiermacher, has returned to man as the "anthropological floor" for his theology (220) in contrast to Barth who thinks from the top down (219).

In his chapter on modern Roman Catholic theology, Berkhof presents the views of three theologians, Maurice Blondel, Henri De Lubac, and the most notable, Karl Rahner, whose anonymous Christianity (250), with its claim that non-Christian religions contain elements given to men as a gratuitous gift of God on account of Christ (249), has earned him a notoriety of sorts. Even Berkhof concludes in his evaluation of Rahner, "All that is natural is so consistently elevated into the sphere of the supernatural that it can only create the impression of a grand naturalization of the supernatural" (255).

Berkhof's chapter on North American theology is perceptive as he points out that its three successive spiritual foundations have been: 1) Puritan Calvinism; 2) Methodist revivalism; and 3) Enlightenment deism (257). In Jonathan Edwards' theology, he maintains that the three formed a synthesis. But the social gospel ultimately came to dominate the American scene, aided by Bushnell, Rauschenbusch, Gladden, and eventually the Niebuhr brothers, Reinhold and Richard, though these last two theologians were Neo-Orthodox rather than theological liberals as the others were.

Berkhof devotes a separate chapter to Paul Tillich's correlation theology which he surprisingly regards as important, though most would consider it obscure if not vague. Some would even consider Tillich's "ground of being" ontology as pantheistic if not atheistic and ultimately responsible for the short-lived "God is dead" movement.

Berkhof's final chapter (18) is in the nature of an evaluation of the road modern theology has traveled, and here we learn that he regards Schleiermacher and Barth as the two greatest theologians in this period

(307). Berkhof comes to no firm conclusion (as we would expect of a presentation of a pilgrim journey) than to re-affirm that the quest of theology, which is to make the Gospel relevant for the particular age in which it finds itself, must continue; and he ventures the (prophetic?) prognosis that Western theology must expect to lose its predominance, perhaps to Buenos Aires, Lagos, Bangalore, or Tokyo (312).

Berkhof's mastery of his subject matter and his grasp of detail will impress the reader of this book. But if he is a Reformed reader, he will be left with a sense of profound dissatisfaction, for he will find in Berkhof little or no regard for biblical orthodoxy, unless it is at the place where he gives some attention to the "neo-confessionalism" of Kuyper and Bavinck. And therein lies the great weakness of the book. For while Berkhof is correct in seeing the impact that Kant has made upon theology with his epistemology of human autonomy and theology's need ever to see that it speaks relevantly to the age in which it finds itself; one however is left with the impression that Christianity is hardly any longer about "the great deeds of God" (Acts 2:11). Instead of its being a divine deposit to be guarded, defended, and proclaimed (2 Tim. 1:14) as a "faith once for all committed unto the saints (Jude 3), it has now, since the Enlightenment, apparently become a religion which must adapt (compromise) itself to the naturalistic thinking of modern man, entrenched as he is in the sophisticated unbelief of human autonomy in which he has been confirmed by imbibing at the poisoned fount of Kantian philosophy.

Though Berkhof speaks of the weakness of any theology which has no more ultimate authority than man's "anthropological floor" in that its ceiling can never reach God, he seems to be unwilling to see that all modern theology, having adopted the presuppositions of Kantian epistemology, thereafter works from this anthropological floor, whether it be Schleiermacherian immanentism or Barthian transcendence. Such theologizing, for all of its searching and efforts at adaptation in order to be relevant, is doomed to repeated failure—and even worse, futility—for it can no more successfully reach to the true God than a man can pull himself out of a deep hole by tugging at his bootstraps. All it can come up with, as it continues to work with Kant's epistemology, is "a postulatory deism or an inspiratory pantheism."

Unless God has given lost mankind His Word about what He has objectively done for the salvation of a new humanity by means of the redemptive activity of Christ, we remain as those most to be pitied, searching for and believing in something that really isn't so. But will liberal theologians realize the futility of all of their man-made

theologies and return to "the foolishness of the Gospel" (I Cor. 1:18) as man's only real hope? Berkhof's book, despite its erudition, leaves the reader with little encouragement for thinking so.

*Raymond O. Zorn*

*Calvin, Geneva and the Reformation: A Study of Calvin as Social Reformer, Churchman, Pastor, and Theologian*, by Ronald S. Wallace. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988. Pp. viii + 310, including indexes. \$29.95.

Ronald S. Wallace, professor emeritus of Columbia Theological Seminary, Georgia, provides in this study an interesting account of John Calvin's contributions as a social reformer, churchman, pastor and theologian. Though he initially intended to write a biography on Calvin, this work, as he acknowledges in his "Foreword," is more on the order of a series of essays describing various aspects of Calvin's ministry and its impact during the period of the Reformation. Wallace does not offer this study, therefore, so much as an exhaustive account of the life and work of Calvin as an impressionistic sketch of the distinctives of his ministry in his diverse roles as churchman, social reformer and theologian. What we find in this study are the gleanings of Wallace's study in the life of Calvin, together with some commentary as to the significance of the life and ministry of Calvin for the church today.

Consistent with his stated purpose, Wallace divides his study into three parts. After a brief biography and sketch of Calvin's early life and ministry, he deals in part one with "the reformer and his city." In the second part, the "churchman and pastor," Wallace deals with Calvin's ministry in the church of Geneva and to the churches of the Reformation. In the third and final part, he provides a synopsis of Calvin's theology.

In the opening chapters Wallace provides a short sketch of Calvin's life, including a treatment of his early training in the law and humanism at Orleans and Bourges, France. Though quite brief, Wallace does cover the basic influences which played a role in Calvin's early formation and interest in the Protestant Reformation. An interesting aspect of this sketch is Wallace's treatment of the question of the date and suddenness of Calvin's conversion. He argues that Calvin's reference to a "sudden conversion" in the preface to his Psalm's commentary must be taken seriously. Though some scholars have suggested that this

conversion was a lengthy process which only reached its culmination at the point to which Calvin refers in this commentary, Wallace argues that it is more likely that it should be taken directly as a reference to a significant, decisive change that occurred circa, 1533 or 1534. Though he admits that this conversion was the product of a number of antecedent developments in Calvin's pilgrimage, he (in my judgment, correctly) rejects the position of those who minimize the "suddenness" of Calvin's conversion to the cause of reformation.

After these opening chapters on Calvin's early life and call to the ministry in Geneva, the first major section of Wallace's study considers Calvin's labor and influence in Geneva. In this section Wallace describes the way in which Calvin approached the reformation of the whole of life under the direction of the Word of God. Like his contemporaries, but perhaps even more consistently, Calvin pursued the vision of a "Christian commonwealth," a society in which all aspects of life are informed by the perspective of God as Creator and Redeemer. In his treatment of some of the difficult questions in studies of Calvin's social ethics, Wallace tends to take a moderate and judicious position. On the subject of church-state relations, for example, he avoids the simplistic extremes of interpreting Calvin to have subordinated the state to the church or, conversely, the church to the state. He also provides a balanced treatment of Calvin's view of the economy, one which demonstrates how anachronistic it would be to describe Calvin as a "capitalist" or a "socialist" in his approach to the economy.

Particularly helpful in this section of his study is Wallace's discussion of Calvin's role in the burning of Servetus. Wallace provides a good account of the historical context within which to interpret Calvin's involvement in this well-known event. He does not attempt to exonerate Calvin of all blame' but neither does he join the mob of those who hastily identify this incident with Calvin's name and treat it as a kind of *cause celebre* which serves to confirm all the alleged deficiencies of Calvin's character.

In the second and most interesting section of his study, Wallace treats Calvin's work as a churchman and pastor. Here he is especially interested in Calvin's ministry as a reformer of the church in Geneva and a influential force in the development of the Reformation in Western Europe of the middle sixteenth century. In this section Wallace traces out Calvin's labors as a preacher, a church administrator, an ecumenist, and pastor. He does an excellent job of drawing together a wealth of material from Calvin's sermons and especially his letters to develop his portrait of Calvin as churchman and reformer. The most

fascinating chapter deals with Calvin's pastoral counsel and care. Wallace notes the pastoral quality of Calvin's preaching and provides a number of characteristic passages from Calvin's letters to believers who were faced with a variety of difficult circumstances. These passages reveal a pastoral heart and interest that is striking not only for its consistency with Calvin's view of the ministry of the word but also for the way it belies the common caricature of Calvin as a cold and aloof figure.

The last and shortest section of the study deals with Calvin's theology. According to Wallace Calvin was a theologian of the Word of God whose chief aim was to present a faithful and systematic account of what it reveals to us concerning God and ourselves. In doing so Calvin sought to counter the scholastic tradition which separated theology or the knowledge of God from the obedience of faith. For Calvin faith and obedience are inseparable, and the knowledge of faith is only given within the context of worship and service. Calvin also resisted the tendency to separate the knowledge of God and ourselves, so that the knowledge of God became merely an intellectual curiosity un-inspired by love for God and humble submission to His Word.

Though Wallace provides a generally accurate account of Calvin's life and thought, the chief flaw in his study comes to expression most clearly in this last section. And that is his tendency to allow his own theological commitment to intrude into his exposition of Calvin's thought. Though it is unavoidable that a writer express his convictions and engage in either direct or indirect commentary on the views he is expounding, Wallace does this at times in a way that is obtrusive and even anachronistic. For example, when commenting on Calvin's Christology, he suggests, somewhat gratuitously and anachronistically, that Calvin's Christology bears similarity to what contemporary writers would term a "functional" rather than an "essential" Christology.

Furthermore, in his exposition of Calvin's understanding of the atonement, providence and predestination, Wallace cannot restrain himself from making a number of "Barthian" comments about the deficiencies of Calvin's viewpoint. These comments will leave some readers wondering whether Calvin shouldn't be excused for not having benefitted from the profounder and more penetrating (less speculative!, so Wallace suggests) insights of his twentieth century interpreter, Karl Barth! The problem at this juncture is not Wallace's theological prejudice; it is his tendency to render hasty unsubstantiated, and sometimes anachronistic judgments *before he has adequately expounded Calvin's position*. Frequently, in his criticism of Calvin's position,

Wallace simply assumes that the contemporary reader will agree with him, though he provides no account of the rationale for his own alternative position.

This flaw in the fabric of Wallace's study, however, should not prevent the discerning reader from benefitting from his contribution. Though one might wonder whether anything new could be said about Calvin, Wallace manages to provide a study that will take its place among a number of helpful studies of Calvin's life and thought. For the reader who is looking for a general, uncomplicated introduction to Calvin, this book would be a good place to start.

*Cornelis P. Venema*

*Body, Soul and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism—Dualism Debate*, by J. W. Cooper. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989. Pp. 262. \$16.95.

The author of this book is Associate Professor of Philosophical Theology at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

He has written upon a subject which, far from being merely academic, should be of vital interest to everyone. For, what happens to us when we die, and specifically, what is our condition between our death and the judgment which Scripture tells us will take place at Christ's return? Do we continue to live in a diminished way without our bodies in the intermediate state between death and the resurrection? Or, is our death a complete cessation of life until our bodily resurrection? A third possibility would be to experience an immediate resurrection (of sorts) after we die.

Cooper discusses these possibilities in detail as they arise in connection with what the Bible teaches about the nature of man. Does man "come apart" at death so that the conscious personal part continues to exist while the organism disintegrates? This "anthropological dualism" has been the traditional view of Christians over the centuries and it considers human beings to be "an ontic duality of body and soul" (2). Challenging this view, however, has been the more modern holistic view of monism which denies that man is a duality and even asserts that this is also the actual teaching of Scripture which was later corrupted by pagan Greek thinking being taken over by Christian theology. It is obvious that, if this latter view is true, it has far-reaching consequences on views of the after-life.

Professor Cooper gives a thorough presentation of the subject and fairly presents the differing views and their consequences, all the while interacting with the biblical data from the standpoints of theology, philosophy, and science.

His own position, unambiguously stated and defended throughout the book is that "human persons—psychophysical unities during life—are dichotomized at death, but nonetheless are held in existence by God" (214). "The main pillar on which our case for dualism rests is the claim that New Testament eschatology teaches a sequence of an intermediate state and resurrection" (210).

Cooper goes on to show that, far from being "irremediably naive and anachronistic" (222), this view is the actual teaching of Scripture. Even so-called monistic or holistic views, unless they be wholly materialistic, wind up with some form of dualism for the after-life.

Cooper does a good job in reviewing the scriptural and philosophical objections to dualism, discussing such things along the way as: an alleged immediate resurrection at death (2 Cor. 5), the experience of time or its opposite, timelessness, in eternity, the charge that anthropological dualism encourages axiological and functional dualism, etc. As he does this, he gives the views of scientists and philosophers as well as theologians such as Dooyeweerd and Pope John Paul II.

The book, however, has some weaknesses. Aside from certain aspects which are technical and speculative, especially where philosophical and scientific views are concerned, Cooper seems to miss the thrust of Paul's use of *ependusasthai* (to put on over), mentioned twice in 2 Cor. 5 (vv. 2, 4), and which, as the two prepositions in the word make clear, points to Paul's desire not to experience the naked state of being an unclothed spirit during the intermediate state after his death and before receiving his resurrection body at Christ's return. Rather, he expresses the hope that his mortal body might be "clothed upon" with the resurrection body which he would receive if he were still living at Christ's return (cf. 1 Thess. 4:17, Phil. 3:21). Obviously this truth rules out the view of an immediate resurrection at death before the return of Christ, a view increasingly held to by some New Testament scholars (F.F. Bruce, etc., 155) who incorrectly allege that Paul modified his earlier view in this way.

While Cooper feels that the New Testament reflects some aspects of the development found in inter-testamental eschatology (98 - which may be questioned), he is correct in stating that the New Testament continues to reflect the holistic emphasis of Hebrew anthropology with

perhaps the additional meaning that soul and spirit can now also refer to the discarnate person after death (102).

A surprising omission, it seems, is Cooper's lack of any references to the creationist-traducianist debate about the origin of the soul. Surely if a person continues to exist after death, it would seem that the origin of this immaterial aspect about man would at be worth a mention.

On the whole, however, Professor Cooper is to be commended for a clear and forceful presentation of a holistic dualism which re-affirms both the biblical teaching of the subject and the respectability of its defense in the light of modern knowledge about it. For nothing less is at stake than a correct understanding of man's continued existence after death, whether in weal or in woe.

*Raymond O. Zorn*

*John Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life*, by John H. Leith. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989. Pp. 230, including bibliography. \$16.95.

The publication of this book took place on the occasion of Professor Leith's retirement from teaching at Union Theological Seminary at Richmond, Virginia. Originally written as a doctoral dissertation at Yale Divinity School in 1949, it has been published now in only slightly revised form with some changes to reflect current language usage.

In the preface to this study, Leith acknowledges that his interest in Calvin's theology arose out of the conviction that Calvin offers an alternative to both fundamentalism and liberalism. In his judgment, Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* continue to be "one of the clearest and most persuasive statements of Christian faith ever written" (15). Leith identifies the center of Calvin's theology with the "personal" relationship of humanity to God and God to humanity, though he criticizes Calvin for allowing "the Bible, the law, the ecclesiastical structure, or theological speculation, as for example about predestination, to become substitutes for the divine presence" (17). Consequently, he aims not only to provide an exposition of Calvin's doctrine of the Christian life, but to evaluate critically Calvin's theology from the vantage point of this presumed center of his theological thought.

In an introductory chapter, Leith attempts to locate his study in the context of previous Calvin research. He notes that this research has yielded a sometimes bewildering array of different interpretations of

Calvin's theology. Some have interpreted Calvin simply as a precursor of later Reformed orthodoxy. Others have interpreted Calvin as though the central principle of his theological writing were the abstract notion of the absolute sovereignty of God, in which the doctrine of predestination looms larger than life. With the development of neo-orthodoxy in the early part of the twentieth century, however, many returned to Calvin's theology and concluded that, despite some legalistic and speculative tendencies, Calvin anticipated the Christocentric emphasis of Karl Barth and the dialectical theologians. Still others have despaired of ascertaining any unifying thread in Calvin's theology, and have variously attributed this to his alleged "biblicism" or his "dialectical rationalism."

Leith treats Calvin's doctrine of the Christian life as a window upon Calvin's whole theological program and hopes to resolve some of these continuing differences of interpretation by means of this study. As he puts it in his introduction, "the real need in the field of Calvin research is a critical study which will indicate the relevance of this theology to the contemporary theological revival but which, at the same time, will critically appraise its actual sixteenth-century content and form" (24).

Leith begins his exposition of Calvin's doctrine of the Christian life by noting the central theme of the "glory of God" in Calvin's theology. All of life, according to Calvin, is lived *coram Deo*, before the face of God, and issues either in praise to Him or in disobedience. The norms for a life lived in praise of God's glory are the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, the law of God and the Bible. In connection with his exposition of these three norms, Leith, while acknowledging that Calvin treated them as fully coherent, argues that Calvin was tempted at times by "legalism," divorcing the law's obligation from the revelation of God's grace in Christ, and by "biblicism," treating the Bible as though it were a legal text or codebook of prescriptions for Christian living. Calvin sometimes treated, Leith maintains, "the law and the Bible. . . as a substitute for the living Lordship of Jesus Christ and the personal confrontation of God" (65).

In a subsequent chapter, "The Christian Life in Relation to Justification by Faith Alone," Leith provides an excellent summary of Calvin's correlation of the Christian life with the basic gospel theme of salvation alone. Because we are justified by grace alone through faith alone, Christian obedience should always be characterized as a free response to the grace of God in Christ, not a slavish obedience offered to obtain favor with God. Furthermore, Calvin resisted the temptation to divorce Christian obedience from the grace of God by insisting that

Christ works "two things" in the gospel, free justification and the renewal of the sinner through the inward working of the Holy Spirit. These two gifts of God's grace in Christ, justification and sanctification, may neither be separated (as though one could be justified without simultaneously being sanctified by the Spirit of holiness) nor confused (as though justification were in part founded upon an inherent righteousness, and not the righteousness of Christ imputed to us).

After this chapter on the Christian life in relation to justification, Leith considers Calvin's doctrines of providence and predestination in terms of their significance for the Christian life. Calvin understands God's providence in such a way that it becomes the secure foundation within which the Christian believer lives out his life in the assurance that his heavenly Father will work all things together for good. Though there are speculative traces in his doctrine of providence, in the main this doctrine is developed in warm, personal terms, providing the believer comfort in the present, whatever his circumstance, be it happy or adverse, and a good confidence for the future. The believer may live in the assurance that, under the providence of his heavenly Father, nothing will frustrate or prevent the establishing of His church and kingdom.

It is in the area of Calvin's exposition of the doctrine of predestination, however, that Leith finds significant fault with Calvin's teaching. Though he acknowledges that Calvin sought to preserve human responsibility within the framework of this doctrine and to relate it intimately to the revelation of God's mercy in Christ, he finds that Calvin often slides over into a determinism which undermines the personal relationship between God and the creature. Here, according to Leith, we need to distinguish Calvin's good intentions from his unhelpful and even speculative formulations of a doctrine of double predestination.

Leith concludes his study of Calvin's doctrine of the Christian life with two chapters, the first dealing with the Christian life in relation to history and trans-history, and the second dealing with the Christian life in relation to the church and human society. According to Leith, Calvin kept in proper balance the significance and value of the present Christian life and the expectation for the future fulfillment of God's saving purpose at the consummation of history. However, in his doctrine of the Christian life in relation to the church and the state, Calvin again lapsed into legalism in his understanding of church discipline and the prerogative of the civil magistrate to enforce the requirements of God's law upon the whole civil community. Though

Leith readily acknowledges that the church and the civil order are the proper arenas within which the Christian life is prosecuted, he finds that here again Calvin oscillates between his basic emphasis upon the human person in relation to God and an incipient legalism which jeopardizes this relationship.

Within the framework of his exposition of these various facets of Calvin's doctrine of the Christian life, Leith returns at the conclusion of his study to the question posed in his introduction—does Calvin's theology have anything to offer a contemporary restatement of the Christian gospel? Leith's answer to this question, consistent with his critical exposition and summary of Calvin's position, is qualified. Whereas he finds Calvin's central emphasis upon humanity's relationship to God in Christ a continually valid one, he also finds elements in Calvin's theology which are no longer useful and which have contributed to an unacceptable fundamentalism. These elements are such things as Calvin's "biblicism," his "implicit confidence in the competence of reason to theologize on the basis of the biblical materials" (219), and a "static and impersonal notion of truth" (220). The reason many interpreters have variously understood Calvin's theology and his contributions to subsequent Reformed theology is Calvin's own ambiguity and the incoherence of many of his emphases. Calvin's theology is fertile soil not only for neo-orthodoxy's Christocentricism but also for fundamentalism's biblicism.

Leith's study has some usefulness as an exposition of Calvin's doctrine of the Christian life, but it suffers from his imposition upon Calvin's theology of a theological framework which it rightly resists. There is in Leith's framework of interpretation an irreconcilable tension between what he terms a "personal relationship" to God in Christ and the constraints of biblical authority and teaching. Repeatedly, Leith criticizes Calvin in this study for compromising his fundamentally correct emphasis upon the Christian's living relationship with God by his emphasis upon whole-hearted submission to biblical teaching, wherever such teaching leads, and the requirements of obedience to God's law. Leith works with a principle of what might be termed "Christian personalism," and uses this as a measure to evaluate Calvin's theology. The problem with this approach is that Calvin's biblical insight prevented his admission of any such tension, for example, between love for God and obedience to his revealed will, or between a living relationship with God in Christ and the discipline of the church.

Consequently, this study has to be read discerningly. Though it often leads the reader into Calvin's doctrine of the Christian life, Leith's superimposition of his own theological agenda sometimes leads the reader astray.

There are two small points that should also be mentioned. At least twice Leith retains the phrase "fee simple." This seems to be an archaism which does not comport well with his own intention to bring the study into conformity with current language usage. Also, the footnote references to the *Corpus Reformatorum* do not give the source, whether it be a commentary, letter, etc., nor are the Latin quotations always translated. The general reader would have been better served, were the source identified more specifically and translations uniformly given.

*Cornelis P. Venema*

*Are Gay Rights Right?: Making Sense of the Controversy*, by Roger J. Magnuson. Portland, Oregon, Multnomah Press, 1990. Pp. 149. \$7.95.

Until this generation, homosexuality was considered an abhorrent form of deviant sexual behavior against which the laws of society afforded a measure of protection. All of this, it seems, belongs to the past as "Gays" seek and increasingly get legislation, not only tolerant of but granting them rights beyond those of other minority groups. And they are not beyond the employment of organized coercion, intimidation, and misrepresentation in order to accomplish their dubious goals.

The author of this book is a trial lawyer in Minneapolis. His book is an effective expose of the "gay rights" movement, and its information has been used by legislatures in the United States and as far away as New Zealand to reverse or reject "gay rights" bills, and to check the initiatives of homosexual efforts to gain respectability and acceptance in society.

What, then, is the issue? As Magnuson points out, "What gay rights laws ask for is a special privilege for homosexuals not generally available to other groups, such as those who commit incest, adultery, bestiality, pedophilia or, for that matter, any other criminal or antisocial behavior" (31).

That sodomy is not only unnatural but dangerous to the practising individual and to society generally should not be over-looked. Before the advent of AIDS in 1981 and its spread to 70% of homosexuals (53), 78% of homosexuals, because of their anal and oral sex practices, have

practices, have been affected with diseases such as urethritis, hepatitis, herpes, venereal warts and intestinal parasites. Although homosexuals represent 5% or less of the U.S. population, they are responsible for half of the nation's cases of syphilis and gonorrhea (48). Under the circumstances, one wonders to what extent homosexual blood donors have contaminated blood banks with diseased blood?

Contrary to the notions of some, homosexuals are not born that way. Not only do psychiatrists say this but there is also "substantial evidence that homosexuals can change wherever there is a willingness to do so" (57).

"A concern for homosexuals as people, therefore, will lead, paradoxically, to withholding social acceptance of their behavior" (62). The biblical view of homosexuality is quite simply, that it is an abomination, regarded as a perversion demanding social condemnation and inviting divine judgment (witness Sodom and Gomorrah, together with the divine judgment of Rom. 1:26-27).

It is therefore a sin about which the victim needs to repent, "not only as a sign of obedience to God. . .but also for the good of his own life and future" (123).

Some will undoubtedly label Magnuson's views as hostile to the homosexual, especially when even some evangelicals such as Lewis Smedes of Fuller Theological Seminary are willing to accept homosexuality as an alternate life-style and recommend "optimum homosexual morality, that is, a permanent, non-exploitative relationship between homosexuals who can manage neither change nor celibacy" (118).

Magnuson, however, not only has the Bible as God's Word on his side, but good common sense as well. As he says in conclusion, "By enacting laws against such behavior in the form of anti-sodomy provisions, society protects parents and children from sodomites, protects potential and incipient homosexuals from themselves, and protects itself from extinction. Furthermore, it teaches all who will listen that sodomy is antithetical to a healthy life-style" (137).

*Raymond O. Zorn*