

## BOOK REVIEWS

*New 20th-Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, ed. by J.D. Douglas. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991. Pp. xv + 896. \$39.95.

The thirteen volume *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, published in 1886, as the successor in English of the German *Reäencyklopaedie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche* (1853-68), has had a venerable tradition over the years of providing all sorts of helpful information for busy theologians, not just in biblical knowledge, but also in archaeology, history, geography, biography, theology, religion, etc.

In 1955, a two volume supplement, edited by Lefferts A. Loetscher, and entitled, the *Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, was published in order to update the older work with developments which had taken place up to the middle of the twentieth century. More liberal in theological orientation than the older work, it was nevertheless a necessary and useful addition.

This latest volume under review, while an update of the 1955 supplement (even referring to itself as the "Second Edition"), seeks to be somewhat independent of the earlier publications, with new (and in some instances re-written) articles on contemporary issues, places, and persons; though, since it covers pre-twentieth-century developments only where necessary to explain twentieth century events and movements, the reader will still need to have access to the older works if he wishes pre-twentieth century information.

The volume contains some 2,100 articles, beginning with Lyman Abbott (three earlier articles in the 1955 edition being omitted) and ending with a re-written article on *Zwischen den Zeiten*, the influential neo-orthodox theological journal, from 1923-1933, of which Karl Barth was a co-founder and leading contributor.

According to my quick count, there are some 366 contributors, both living and dead, as over against more than 500 in the two volumes of the 1955 edition, which also was 25% larger than this edition, totalling to 1205 pages.

As in the earlier works, no articles are listed with the contributors, so the reader remains in the dark about what, for example, the late Cornelius Van Til, or B.B. Warfield, or John Murray, or Paul Woolley contributed to this volume, unless perhaps reference is thus being made to their biographies? The case is no different with the living contributors either. The reader is told what the field of expertise of Leon Morris or Carl F.H. Henry or Peter Toon, etc., is. But this only serves to identify them. Most of the articles give the name of the contributor, though with shorter articles and biographies we are left to suppose that such have been written by the general editor or one of his six consulting editors.

While the writers seek objectivity (as is usually the case with encyclopedia articles), their overall approach appears to be more evangelical than was true of the 1955 work.

A detailed mention of the articles to be found in this volume cannot be given in a review of this nature. It is hoped that enough information will be given to give the reader a fair idea of its contents.

There are new articles, such as the one on AIDS, which give detailed and useful information. There are articles on all major countries that give geographical, population, and religious data: from Afghanistan to Zanzibar. Not all the books of Scripture have articles. There is one on Acts but none on Zechariah nor even Malachi, though there is one on the Apocrypha and one on the book of Revelation.

Major religions have articles (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, etc.), and so do cults, sects, and Christian denominations (Mormons, Amish, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, etc.). There are people galore, both living and dead, familiar and not so familiar (Jerry Falwell, Father Divine, etc.), but virtually all are or have been a part of the twentieth century, including theologians who are mostly European and American (C.H. Dodd, R. Bultmann, G.E. Ladd, J. Gresham Machen, etc.) perhaps because most theologians are to be found in these areas.

The field of ethics has its fair share of articles (abortion, homosexuality, human rights, luxury, suicide, cremation, etc.). Theologies are presented (Liberation, liberal, twentieth century, crisis, etc.). Popes and even papal encyclicals have articles (*Humani Generis, Non Abbiamo Bisogno*). Articles on para-church organizations are to be found here (Pocket Testament League, World Home Bible League, World Vision International, Youth for Christ, etc.); and social issues are dealt with (race relations, apartheid, slavery-20th century, etc.). There are also lengthy articles on Jesus, Paul, Christology, Church and State, etc.

By now it should be apparent that a strong feature of this volume is its biographies of religious leaders, many of whom are still living, which makes it a veritable religious "who's who."

No production has everything and this volume is no exception. Dominion theology (theonomy) is not mentioned. Nor, surprisingly, is an article on the Reformed Church of America to be found here, though one is present in the 1955 edition. Articles on subjects such as *adiaphora* and *tenebrae* will have to be sought in the earliest edition.

Several inaccuracies have also been detected, e.g., C. Van Til is referred to as a Christian Reformed theologian when actually he was a member of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church; and A. Kuyper did not find a so-called "Reformed Free Church" in 1886. The 1886 Doleantie churches called themselves the "Netherlands Reformed Churches" before their union with the Christian Reformed Churches in 1892, the new denomination becoming the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. These small glitches, however, are perhaps unimportant. On the whole, this volume must be considered a most worthwhile work which is literally packed with useful information. It will be a standard reference work for years to come and well into the twenty-first century.

Raymond O. Zorn

*As Rich as Job*, by C. Bijl. Kampen, Netherlands: Van Den Berg, 1989. Pp. 91. Available through Inheritance Publications, Box 154, Neerlandia, Alberta, Canada, T0G 1R0. \$10.90.

This little book, written by a Reformed minister from the Netherlands, contains a treatment of selected portions of the book of Job. Though it does not pretend to address the whole of the book of Job, it contains thirteen short chapters on a number of key sections of this Old Testament book.

Rev. C. Bijl demonstrates a remarkable ability in this volume to glean insights from the biblical text. He does not pretend to consider all the questions which Job raises pertaining to the suffering of the Lord's people under the hand of their heavenly Father. But he does do an excellent job of treating the book of Job and showing how it illuminates our suffering as believers and provides a comfort which could never be discovered by an analysis of suffering in general. Bijl correctly argues that the Word of the Lord is alone able to comfort us in our suffering; his study of the book of Job confirms it.

There are several motifs which Rev. Bijl traces out in his consideration of the book of Job. He notes, for example, that the book of Job forewarns us against several superficial approaches to the question of suffering and affliction in the lives of the Lord's people. Clearly it forbids the view, espoused by some believers today, that suffering never comes to us in any respect from the hand of our heavenly Father. It also repudiates the corresponding view that God is powerless to prevent circumstances of distress and difficulty in the lives of his children. Similarly, it leaves no place for the teaching that the Lord always wills prosperity for his people and that, should we find ourselves in a circumstance of anguish and affliction, this is due to our lack of faith!

According to Rev. Bijl, the book of Job provides us perspective, wisdom and insight, which should comfort and strengthen us in every circumstance, however difficult. For it shows us how the child of God is able to suffer affliction, while confessing that God is righteous in all that he does. By God's grace we may accept both the good and the adverse from the hand of our heavenly Father, knowing even in the depths of our anguish that our Redeemer lives and that he will not fail to redeem us from our distress.

This little book is a gem and I would not hesitate to recommend it highly to anyone interested in a study of the book of Job. I also believe it could prove helpful to any child of God wrestling with God's way in his or her life in a circumstance of affliction.

There is one caveat, however. The translator of this book uses on some occasions "Dutchisms" (for example, "Ik" for "I" on page 46; the table of contents is placed at the end of the book). There is also a number of typographical errors.

*Cornelis P. Venema*

*Calvin's Ecclesiastical Advice*, trans. by Mary Beaty and Benjamin W. Farley. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991. Forward by John H. Leith. Pp. 184, including contents and index. \$15.00.

The publication of *Calvin's Ecclesiastical Advice* places an interesting and important new selection from the pastoral writings of the great Reformer in the hands of English readers. The forty-six brief articles and letters found in this volume are all selected from *Corpus Reformatorum*, v. 38, pt. 1, which was published in 1871. Originals were in French and Latin.

The publication of the present volume grows out of continued interest in John Calvin which has taken the form of a Colloquium on Calvin Studies that has met at Davidson College Presbyterian Church and Davidson College, Davidson, NC, every two years since 1982. Selection of articles to print was accomplished by a committee which included author Elsie McKee, Keith Crim of Westminster Press and John Leith of Union Theological Seminary at Richmond.

Following the order found in CR, these articles are grouped by subject under the following seven chapter headings: 1) Dogmatics and Polemics, 2) On the Changes and Need for Changes in Religion, 3) Concerning the Worship of Images, 4) On Ecclesiastical Discipline, 5) Marriage Questions, 6) Judicial Questions and 7) Miscellanies. While the choice of these categories, and particularly the placement of particular writings within each, may be somewhat of an imposition of a 20th century agenda on the reformer of Geneva, such a systematic presentation makes the writings far more accessible to modern readers. These contents are enhanced by an appendix containing Calvin's "Essay on the Lord's Supper" from *The Form of Prayers*, and a paper denying the validity of the Old Testament law for Christians (particularly the Second Commandment) by inquisitor Matthew Horris. This paper was given to those imprisoned for preaching the gospel at Lyon, France, with transmittal to Calvin in mind. Calvin's answer, found on pages 76-80, is a clear statement of his own, holding to the continuing validity of the moral law, especially of the second commandment's prohibition of worshiping God through images.

In agreement with the purpose of the editors and translators, these treatises demonstrate Calvin's careful application of the theological and ethical principles he so carefully worked out in the *Institutes* and his commentaries on Scripture. The material also serves to reveal the truly pastoral heart which motivated Calvin's approach to persons and situations, a characteristic that is well-supported in the already published volumes of his letters included in the Calvin Translation Society's *Calvin's Selected Works* (reprinted by Baker in 1983).

Not surprisingly, the quality of the articles translated is vintage Calvin, the Calvin who sought always to be biblical and specific, even when addressing scholastic questions. Material covered ranges from a somewhat obscure reasoning about the use of the name of Christ rather than the name of God in most prayer, to concrete cases such as that of a man marrying his deceased wife's sister. There are of course some real jewels, such as his single-page "Brief Admonition on the Lord's Supper," as well as historically interesting briefs against opponents such

as Socinus, Osiander and Menno Simons. In every case Calvin is revealed not as the passionless ideologue of academic legend, but as the very human brother who seeks to find a way of pleasing God in the midst of the trials and temptations of life. His "Letter of Exhortation and Defense, Addressed to a Certain Pontiff," shows a passion for the Reformed faith which nevertheless sought to be understood by his adversaries.

The selection of materials presented provides a good cross-section of the kinds of problems Calvin helped his many admirers face. Indeed, it seems that no problem was too mundane for someone to bring to his attention, nor, it seems, was he loath to give his attention to whatever came across his desk. The result is interesting and instructive reading for any who might be interested either for historical reasons or for present day pastoral needs to seek Calvin's advice. Each of the articles is introduced by a paragraph including what is known about the occasion which brought it forth, as well as cross references to Calvin's other writings on the same subject. The book includes a two-page bibliography, and Scripture reference and general indices.

Robert E. Grossmann

*Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*,  
by David Bebbington. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House. Originally  
published: London, Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989. Pp. 364. \$19.95.

David Bebbington is a senior lecturer in history at the University of Sterling, England. He has written a number of books on the subject of nonconformist (to the Anglican state Church of England) history including *The Nonconformist Conscience Chapel and Politics, 1870-1914* and *Baptists in Scotland: A History*. The subject of this review is a culmination of these and other earlier works in that it is a comprehensive history of evangelicalism in Britain with a second emphasis on the influence of evangelicals on society.

The subject volume of this review is indeed a comprehensive study of evangelicalism in England and Scotland. As such it covers a movement which includes a very broad range of theological and social ideas as well as the figures and institutions that held to them. To avoid the danger of confusion, Mr. Bebbington has carefully defined evangelicalism in his first chapter and then traced the evolution of its central themes from its beginning to the present time. This is a very helpful

approach, one of the few that could have made sense of this diverse movement.

As Mr. Bebbington traces the early history of British evangelicalism it becomes apparent that he is not only very much at home in the details of his material, he is also well aware of theological nuances. For example, the Arminianism of John Wesley is shown to be in stark contrast to the Calvinism of contemporary evangelicals by calling to mind Wesley's views that imputed righteousness is a "legal fiction" and that "a person ceases to be a Christian as soon as he performs a sinful act" (28). In fact, the continuing struggle between British Calvinist evangelicals and their Arminian counterparts is traced well to its present state of uneasy truce. This kind of theological analysis runs throughout the work and makes it an excellent study of the theological issues involved in the evangelical movement throughout the world.

Bebbington's current work covers the broad variety of evangelical interests and movements. Indeed, his definition of evangelicalism includes the characteristic of activism. Studies of various theological ideas such as verbal inspiration, premillennialism, Keswick and related movements, revivalism, the doctrine of assurance, etc., are complemented by consideration of missions and social activism, the latter including the anti-slavery movement, education and philanthropy among the evangelicals. Chapter subjects include: 1) the nature of evangelicalism, 2) early leaders and ideas, 3) controversy in the early 19th century, 4) evangelicals and society in the 19th century, 5) Keswick and its context, 6) separation of conservative and liberal evangelicals in the early twentieth century, 7) the charismatic movement, 8) evangelical resurgence in the later twentieth century, and 9) evangelicalism in a changing Britain.

*Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* is a detailed work seeming to cover every nook and cranny of the movement. This is possible because of the capsule nature of Britain as an island nation. Nevertheless the detail and copious notes are surprising, if typically British. There are 276 pages of text and 77 pages of notes; most of the latter are single line citations of references. What is important in this picture is that the book does not become tedious, as is often the case with such detail. The author manages an interesting and comprehensive style throughout. A detailed index is included.

*Robert E. Grossmann*

*Reforming Fundamentalism*, by George M. Marsden. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987. Pp. 319. \$19.95.

George Marsden, who became one of the recognized historians of American evangelicalism through his earlier *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, in this volume chronicles the movement of an important sector of the evangelical movement in the United States away from its fundamentalist roots. Using Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, CA, as both a central institution and a paradigm for the newly aggressive fundamentalism which followed World War II, Marsden describes its beginning and history which followed a direction quite divergent from the vision of its prominent fundamentalist founders.

While Marsden was clearly enthusiastic about his task in this volume, it is important to note that the book was written at the request of Fuller itself. Thus the author was given complete access to all files and personnel who might shed light on the events and personalities that were important in the Fuller story. As a result this is an unusually candid history in the best sense. Marsden is sympathetic in his treatment of both persons and the institution as a whole; nevertheless, he openly relates and discusses the various disagreements and personality defects, as well as the strengths and successes that mark the stages of Fuller's history. Important insights into the character and theological ideas of Fuller's main actors are found throughout the book, as are sound historical assessments of events such as "Black Saturday," the tragic death of Edward Carnell, and the accession of Charles Fuller's son Daniel to the presidency of the seminary.

The Fuller story is well worth knowing among American Christians, and particularly among those who wish to see themselves as being true to the Bible as God's Word. Some of the more prominent names in American conservative Christianity are intimately connected with the founding and development of Fuller. Harold Ockenga and Billy Graham, Harold Lindsell and Edward Carnell, along with Carl Henry and world famous radio preacher Charles Fuller for whom the seminary was named, were all instrumental in Fuller's history, some in rather surprising ways. For a seminary which sought to be theologically sound without being stuck to the "sectarian" fundamentalism of the past, the founders wrote their own "evangelical" standards whose main tenet was the spreading of the evangelical gospel to all the world.

This reviewer has used *Reforming Fundamentalism* as a text for a course in modern evangelicalism and has found Marsden's insights most helpful in communicating and understanding the variegated segment of

American Christianity which calls itself "evangelical." The movement of Fuller Seminary into neo-evangelicalism, church growth and charismatic enthusiasm was shocking to many of its early fundamentalist supporters. Early professor Harold Lindsell left the seminary and wrote *Battle for the Bible* mostly in reaction to Fuller's move toward neo-evangelicalism. Nevertheless, historically aware Christians will not find these developments all too surprising in view of the human desire for seeking intellectual respectability in the eyes of the world, a desire much in mind among the founders of Fuller Seminary.

All in all this is an excellent and fascinating book, well-written and solidly documented. It contains a number of tables showing changes in opinions about classically fundamentalist teachings among Fuller students of yesterday and today. It also has a useful index. One factual error: Central Theological Seminary, at which Bela Vassady received his B.D., was a seminary of the Reformed Church in the United States, not the Reformed Church in America. This is a minor defect in an excellent work that is must reading for modern conservative pastors and laymen who wish to be well-informed.

*Robert E. Grossmann*

*Jesus and Marx: From Gospel to Ideology*, by Jacques Ellul. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988. Pp. 187. \$12.95.

The author of this book was, until his retirement, Professor of Law, Sociology, and History at the University of Bordeaux. Ellul has produced more than forty books in his native French language in the fields of history, sociology, and theology, and many of them have been translated into English.

The above volume was first written in 1979 and even though it would now appear that Marxism has had its day, if not yet in principle, then certainly as to communist practice with its demise in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (China, Cuba, and North Korea excepted—but for how long?), the translation of this book which was prior to these events has nevertheless been worthwhile. For in it Ellul makes a valuable contribution toward understanding, not only the incompatibility of biblical Christianity and Marxism, but also how the attempts at incorporating the one into the other wind up in failure and in a misrepresentation of Christianity as well.

Joyce Hanks is the translator and in a nine page preface gives a helpful summary of Ellul's thesis, which is that, while efforts over the

years have been made by ideologists to mix Christianity and Marxism, this syncretistic effort has miserably failed because the two are radically different and not to be confused with each other as though they were similar. For example, Ellul "denies that all oppressed people can be equated with God's 'chosen people', and insists that salvation extends beyond liberation through human efforts" (x). Too often, as communism amply demonstrates, the roles of oppressor and oppressed are reversed after a revolution has taken place. Nefarious also is the attempt of liberation theologians to twist biblical data in their attempts to make such teach Marxism, while their efforts merely reveal how obvious they are in seeking to filter Christianity through their Marxist presuppositions.

Ellul for the most part reveals himself to be a capable theologian, though not without this reviewer offering a caveat here and there (e.g., his view that the Old Testament fails to speak of an afterlife, 8; the accounts in Chronicles may not be factual, 165). In the fourth chapter he gives an exegetical study of Matthew 9:2-13, where Jesus heals the paralytic who was lowered from the roof by friends into Jesus' presence in the crowded house below. Ellul trenchantly exposes the illegitimate use liberation theologians make of this text in constructing a merely horizontal theology of service.

There is some repetition to be found in the book's seven chapters, especially where Ellul gives an extended critical review of Fernando Belo's book, *A Materialist Reading of the Gospel of Mark* (chapter 5), and in chapter 6 where he does the same with G. Casalis' book, *Correct Ideas Don't Fall from the Skies: Elements for an Inductive Theology*.

One of the most interesting chapters of the book is chapter 7 where Ellul's treatment of the subject, "Anarchism and Christianity," is of enduring worth. His thesis here is "that biblical thought leads straight to anarchism, or an 'anti-political position'" (157). This does not mean that Ellul is a nihilistic anarchist in the popular sense of the term, i.e., a proponent of confusion and disorder. Nor even that he avers that such is the teaching of Christianity. What Ellul means is that, since all political power attempts repeatedly to usurp God's place as the only proper authority, this must be recognized by Christians as being the case and therefore the encroachment of political power upon the rightful claims of Christ must be resisted. It is not clear, however, that Ellul's proposal will work on this side of the new heaven and earth. For, while he advocates the transformation of humanity, so that people become capable of "living with others and serving them in freedom" (176)—to which all Christians would certainly agree—he leaves unclear what

governmental organization is to function in the meantime in order that this may in some measure at least take place under the preaching of the gospel by the people of God.

The book is well worth reflective reading.

*Raymond O. Zorn*

*The Basic Ideas of Calvinism*, by H. Henry Meeter. 6th edition, revised by Paul A. Marshall. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990. Pp. 221, including bibliography and index. \$12.95.

Those who cherish the distinctive approach to and understanding of the Christian faith known as Calvinism will welcome this sixth edition of H. Henry Meeter's classic, *The Basic Ideas of Calvinism*. The continuing usefulness of Meeter's study, first published in 1939, is confirmed by Baker Book House's willingness to re-issue it in revised form.

Readers who are acquainted with earlier editions of this book will be pleased to discover that this revision by Paul Marshall, senior member in political theory at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto, has left the original text basically unchanged. The only major revision that Marshall makes is his addition of three chapters (22, 24, 25). As Marshall explains in his Reviser's Preface, these chapters were added to lend a contemporaneousness to Meeter's study, since they address important questions from a Calvinistic standpoint that have emerged since the writing of the first edition. The first of these chapters (chap. 22) considers the responsibility of the Christian in modern warfare with its weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear and biological weapons. Another chapter (chap. 24) analyzes the modern development of "liberation" theology and an appropriate response to it. The last additional chapter (chap. 25) is more comprehensive and deals with a subject of perennial importance, the hope Christians may have as they await the consummation of God's redemptive work in history. These chapters were reviewed for inclusion in this new edition by the executive committee of the H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies which, together with the Basic Historic Calvinism Committee, sponsored the publication of this volume. Adding to the usefulness of this sixth edition, a new bibliography has also been contributed by Peter De Klerk, theological librarian emeritus of Calvin Seminary.

Following the format of earlier editions, this study is divided into two parts, the first dealing with "The Theological Ideas of Calvinism," and the second dealing with the "Political Ideas of Calvinism." It is evident from the relative scope of these two parts that Meeter is most interested in the latter, the political ideas of Calvinism. Meeter is primarily concerned to articulate the nature and scope of Calvinism, primarily as a "world-and-life view" rather than merely a confessional church tradition. Calvinism has given birth to a perspective which is life-embracing and not restricted to the reformation and renewal of the institutional church.

Several features of Meeter's survey of the theological ideas of Calvinism are noteworthy. Meeter argues in his first chapter that the "fundamental principle" of Calvinism is its doctrine of God, particularly the sovereignty of God. The Calvinist subscribes to an organic system of thought whose pre-eminent and root idea is the supremacy of God as Lawgiver and Ruler over the whole of his creation. Not one aspect of life—truth, science, art, politics, society, family, church—is to be separated from its immediate relationship to God, who is to be served and glorified by the creature in all that he does.

After articulating this fundamental principle of Calvinism, Meeter argues that the Calvinist finds in the Bible, inscripturated special revelation, the ultimate standard and measure by which to interpret properly the creation and the life of the creature. Though God reveals himself by two means—through nature and through the Bible—the latter is the principal source and basis for all true knowledge of God and his will. For the Calvinist, the "Bible alone" is the canon by which to measure all truth and claims to knowledge.

In subsequent chapters in the first part of his study, Meeter considers the nature and role of faith in responding to the Word of God, various theological tenets of Calvinism (the good creation of all things, the fall into sin and total depravity of man, the sovereign grace of God in redemption), the doctrine of common grace and human culture. Because of the brevity of his treatment of these issues, Meeter leaves a number of questions unanswered, particularly in his treatment of the doctrine of common grace.

By far the more substantial portion of his study addresses the political ideas of Calvinism. Here Meeter shows himself to be deeply indebted to the reforming contributions, not only of John Calvin, but also of Abraham Kuyper and the "neo-Calvinist" movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the Netherlands. In a clear, concise and well-balanced way, he addresses such issues as: politics in

the Bible, the origin and function of the state, the task and authority of government, the sovereignty of the social spheres, the relation of church and state, international law, the Bible and war, etc.

Without commenting further on the content and argument of Meeter's study, there are a few general observations that may be made about this sixth edition. First, this revised edition, as suggested above, will serve usefully to introduce the general reader to Calvinism, especially the world-and-life view and political ideas of Calvinism. Second, the format of Meeter's study (the chapters were originally published as popular articles for the monthly, *The Young Calvinist*) does not lend itself to a sustained consideration of many of the topics he considers. Consequently, the study is more useful as a kind of "primer" in Calvinism, than as a comprehensive treatment of the various subjects addressed. Third, the datedness of Meeter's study is evident in his frequent appeal to a number of ideas of Dutch "neo-Calvinism" (common grace, sovereignty of the social spheres, etc.) which have been disputed in more recent discussions among Calvinists in North America. For example, Meeter's confident affirmation of common grace lacks minimally an adequate disclaimer about the antithesis between faith and unbelief. His insistence upon the "sovereignty" of each sphere of human society under the direct authority of God also does not find an adequate counter-weight in an emphasis upon the "universality" or inter-relatedness of these spheres.

In addition to these observations, I would also note that the inclusion of three chapters by Marshall remains something of an "intrusion" into Meeter's study. It would have been better to leave the original alone. Though Marshall makes a valiant attempt to follow the style of Meeter's chapters, his chapters are, in substance and perspective, somewhat alien to the original project. They also prompt the question, Why these additional subjects and not others? One could, for example, make a case for a chapter on "Christian reconstruction" or "theonomy," even were it highly critical of this approach, as being better fitted to the subjects Meeter addresses in the second part of his study.

These comments notwithstanding, however, students of Calvinism can only welcome the re-issuing of this fine study of Calvinism.

Cornelis P. Venema

*The Fountainhead of Federalism: Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenantal Tradition*, by Charles S. McCoy and J. Wayne Baker; with a translation of *De testamento seu foedere Dei unico et aiterno*, 1534, by Heinrich

Bullinger. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press. Pp. 180.  
\$24.95.

If for no other reason, this book is valuable for its translation of Heinrich Bullinger's *A Brief Exposition of the One and Eternal Testament or Covenant of God*. Heinrich Bullinger was Zwingli's successor at Zurich and in the end turned out to be the reformer who was more broadly involved in the Swiss Reformation than any other. As authors McCoy and Baker point out, "He was responsible to a large extent for the First Helvetic Confession (1536)," and "he was the author of the Second Helvetic Confession (1566)" (17). It is indeed amazing that with all the translations of Reformation works which have been made available in English, they have not included Bullinger's seminal work on the covenant. McCoy and Baker have, however, added much to the service of providing this work in English; they have also related the historical background for and development which grew out of Bullinger's work.

The fundamental thesis of the explanatory part of *Fountainhead of Federalism* is that Heinrich Bullinger in the subject treatise laid the foundations not only for later covenant theology among Reformed theologians, but also the foundations for the federal or covenant idea which lies behind western political and social theory and practice, including the Constitution of the United States. This is not only an interesting thesis; it threatens to explain a great deal of what has not often been realized in recent secular thought, namely, that political federalism has Christian roots.

McCoy and Baker hold that Bullinger's idea of a single eternal testament or covenant of God with man is present in some of his earlier letters and treatises on baptism and other issues beginning in 1525, but that it was after a dispute between the Reformed and Anabaptists at Zofingen in 1532 that he worked out his ideas more carefully and put them together in *The Covenant*, first published in 1534. They also point out that most of the ideas found in later covenant theology were present in Bullinger's treatise and that Bullinger himself applied them to the political sphere.

A listing of the chapter headings will serve to introduce the contents of this work as well as any summary we might give. Part one of the book contains five chapters: 1) Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenantal Tradition, 2) The Development of the Federal Theological Tradition, 3) Federal Political Theory: Mornay and Althusius, 4) The Zenith of

Federal Theology: Johannes Cocceius, and 5) Federalism and the U.S. Constitution of 1787. Part two is the translation of Bullinger's treatise.

While this work is brief, it not only presents the material described above, but it raises many issues which will produce fruitful study on the part of interested scholars. It is in our minds a book so important that it ought to find a place on the shelves of every Reformed pastor. It contains a subject and author index, and one of scripture references.

*Robert E. Grossmann*

*The Study of Theology: From Biblical Interpretation to Contemporary Formulation*, by Richard A. Muller. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991. Vol. 7 of *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*, Moises Silva, Series Editor. Pp. xvii + 237, including annotated bibliography and indexes. \$13.00.

In this volume, one of a series addressed to the basic problems in the interpretation of the Bible today, Richard Muller tackles the difficult introductory questions which pertain to the peculiar object, methods and curricular division of the study of theology. Recognizing the crisis which contemporary theology faces in establishing its scientific status and distinctive methods, and as well the perceived gulf between academic theological study and the work of the ministry, Muller seeks to provide a comprehensive account of theological study which will answer to this crisis and bridge this gulf.

Though Muller's specialty is in the area of historical theology, especially developments in post-Reformation orthodoxy, he demonstrates a considerable grasp of the literature relating to theological introduction in this study and sets forth an interesting resolution of the problems plaguing the study of theology today.

In an opening chapter on "The Study of Theology: Issues and Problems," Muller notes that the older approach to theological encyclopedia which assumed the unity of theology's object (God as he has revealed himself to us) and of theology's cognitive foundation (the *principium cognoscendi* in the Word of God) has come under considerable criticism. There is no consensus any longer on the object of theological study or the media of the knowledge of God. Accordingly, theological study is threatened with fragmentation and disintegration. The old fourfold division of the theological curriculum—biblical, historical, systematic and practical—no longer serves to give focused expression to different approaches to the one object of theological study

and the one source of the knowledge of the truth concerning that object. Whereas formerly theological education was a unitary whole which served both theoretical and practical objectives, preparing the aspirant for the ministry in both the areas of academics and spirituality, today's theological curriculum often exhibits a marked breakdown between the "theoretic" and "practical" divisions. For example, who has not heard the lament of the contemporary seminary student that his study is too academic and unrelated to the work of the ministry? Or that the practical dimensions of theological study are not well-founded in a theology of the Word of God and the ministry?

Muller, after having set forth the issues and problems faced by theological encyclopedia today, embarks upon the ambitious task of providing a unified view of the field of theology. He attempts to show the necessary diversity of theological study by providing a modified version of the older fourfold division of theological study. And he also seeks to show the indispensability and interrelatedness of each of these theological disciplines in the movement from the biblical word to its contemporary proclamation.

According to Muller, theological study begins with the foundational disciplines of biblical studies and historical studies. These divisions of the theological curriculum constitute the foundation and framework within which the contours of the Christian faith are to be understood and defined. All theological study must be rooted in an exegesis of the biblical texts and an awareness of the history of the church's appropriation of the biblical message in her creeds, confessions and theological traditions.

However, such foundational disciplines must be joined subsequently by the "theological disciplines" of systematic and practical theology. Though theology begins with a study of the biblical text and its historical appropriation, it must move to a consideration of the contemporary relevance of the biblical and ecclesiastical tradition to the modern context. After having ascertained the biblical and historical form of the gospel, the theologian must articulate systematically the sum of Scriptural teaching, not only in the framework of past historical and hermeneutical contexts, but also in the framework of the particular historical context into which the gospel must penetrate in the present. This latter task is the peculiar work of systematic theology, in its exposition of the whole of Christian teaching, and also of practical theology, in its attention to the contemporary proclamation of this teaching.

The term Muller employs to describe this movement from biblical and historical to systematic and practical theology is "contextualization." As he describes it,

Contextualization is nothing other than the "presentizing" conclusion of the hermeneutical task, the completion of the hermeneutical circle in our own persons and in the context of present-day existence. The more successful the exercise in addressing both the meaning of the original text or doctrine and drawing it forward toward a contemporary significance that respects the intention of the original formulator but also serves the religious needs of the present, the more the hermeneutical circle has led to a broadening of the interpreter's religious and spiritual horizon in and through the "fusion" of her horizon with that of the text or doctrine (211).

What Muller envisions as theology's task is the "fusing" of the horizon of the biblical text, appropriated in the line of the church's history and confession, with the contemporary situation in such a way as to demonstrate the "significance" of the gospel for the present. The fourfold division of theological study describes the circumference of this "hermeneutical circle," in which the theologian moves from the biblical text through its historical appropriation to its contextualized expression in addressing the modern world. Each of these steps has to be respected for its peculiar role and place, without being isolated from the other or being shortcircuited in theological study.

There is a great deal more that could be said by way of explicating Muller's argument and position. However, perhaps this is enough to whet the reader's appetite to read what is certainly a comprehensive and significant attempt to address the issue of theological encyclopedia.

Though I appreciate the depth of Muller's treatment of the present question of theological encyclopedia and his defense of a modified version of the older fourfold division of the theological curriculum, I am not prepared to endorse his approach. The chief problem that I have with the position Muller defends is that it appears to reduce theology to being the "science of the Christian religion" in its historical development and unfolding. Though Muller grants to biblical studies a foundational role in the study of theology, he identifies theological study as a whole with the hermeneutical task of "contextualizing" the Word of God in forms which are addressed to the new contexts facing contemporary theology. In so doing, he makes a number of assertions which veer off in the direction of what I would term "historicism" or

the reduction of the object of theological study to the diversity of "contextualizations" which have characterized different times and places in the history of theology. In this approach, it is never possible or legitimate to identify the Scriptural Word, and certainly no confessional summary of this Word, as being identical with the truth. The truth of the gospel must always be contextualized (as it has already been contextualized in the biblical traditions themselves), lest the hermeneutical circle be prematurely closed.

There are several examples of this "historicistic" tendency in Muller's study.

First, Muller argues that "[F]or a right understanding of the religion of ancient Israel [sic], the Old Testament must be studied separately" (71); "The Old Testament can be of genuine service to Christianity only if it is studied critically as a pre-Christian and, therefore, to a certain extent, non-Christian body of literature" (73). It is difficult to square this approach to the text of the Old Testament with the Christian confession of the unity and authority of the biblical canon.

Second, he suggests that the biblical writings themselves reflect such a diversity of contextualizations that they often teach quite different things. We ought, for example, to recognize that the New Testament teaches "at least two church orders," a "more charismatic" order and a "more institutional" order (104). These different orders answer to different circumstances and contexts to which the biblical writings were addressed.

Third, in considering whether a distinctively Christian method should be employed in the interpretation of the biblical traditions, Muller makes the rather remarkable statement that "Historical method is historical method." The historian/theologian approaches the history of Israel's and then the church's religion in terms of the common standards of historical research recognized among historians generally.

And fourth, Muller frequently cautions against using the confessional statements of earlier Christian history as though they were able to function also today as continuingly relevant, albeit secondary, norms for the interpretation of the Scriptures. To do so would be to ignore their "historical conditioning" and limited usefulness to the time for which they were significant "contextualizations" of the gospel.

For this reason, Muller's study should be read with care and discernment. It provides a good analysis of the crisis contemporary theology faces in providing an account of its object and methods. It falls short, however, in providing a resolution of this crisis. In my view, the

resolution of this crisis lies in a recovery of the historic Reformed view of the normativity and supremacy of Scripture and the continued usefulness of the church's confessions in their summary of Scriptural teaching in theology. I suspect that Muller would term this a "rechristianization" of an outdated form of theology, no longer relevant to the present. However, I am convinced that it holds greater promise than the relativism to which his approach will inevitably lead.

Cornelis P. Venema

*Scandalum Infirorum et Communio Sanctorum: The Relation between Christian Liberty and Neighbor Love in the Church*, by Nelson D. Kloosterman. Neerlandia, Alberta, Canada: Inheritance Publications, 1991. Pp. 154. \$11.90.

The author of this doctoral dissertation is the Associate Professor of Ethics and New Testament at Mid-America Reformed Seminary in Orange City, Iowa.

As the title indicates, the subject that Prof. Kloosterman develops is the offense of the weak by the strong in the context of the church. The sub-title, therefore, is fittingly: *The Relation between Christian Liberty and Neighbor Love in the Church*.

The book consists of three chapters, plus an epilogue, summary of the book's contents both in English and in Dutch (the doctorate was obtained at the Theological College of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands [liberated] in Kampen, The Netherlands), and a ten page bibliography.

As is usually the case for doctoral dissertations, the author has provided the reader with a summary of the book's contents which, however, should not be a substitute but rather a spur for the reading of the whole book.

Professor Kloosterman concentrates upon the exegesis of two particularly relevant passages for his thesis: 1 Corinthians 8-10 and Romans 14-15. The former deals with the propriety of "the strong" eating food that had previously been sacrificed to idols and in doing so giving offense to "the weak"; while the latter devolves about the attitude of the "strong" and the "weak" toward the use of or abstinence from the use of certain foods. "Where the practice of the strong might provide a negative example to the weak, love requires from the strong a voluntary accommodation and renunciation of 'rights' for the sake of the weak" (130).

Moreover, this should not be regarded (as some do) as though this is permitting the weak to prevail over the strong. Rather, it should be regarded (as the Apostle Paul does) as a matter of the strong serving the weak in the household of faith—or when appropriate, even the unbelieving neighbor, so that no barrier, whether legitimate or otherwise, may be put in his path that would keep him from coming to Christ.

Professor Kloosterman then develops this thesis further by citing the views of four theologians, Thomas Aquinas, John Calvin, Gisbert Voetius, and Carl F.H. Henry, and follows this by evaluating their positions in the light of four questions he poses: 1) what is the nature of weakness; 2) what is the process involved in the offense of the weak; 3) what is the arena where this offense is given; and 4) what is the theological context for it? In order to add concreteness and liveliness to the study, the author gives five examples of alleged offense to the weak which he later analyzes in order to arrive at a proper conclusion in connection with the so-called "offense."

In developing his thesis, he also takes into consideration such things as the "adiaphora," or things indifferent, which he correctly maintains cannot be used to justify the liberty of the strong if these things become an occasion of offense to the weak. Moreover, he points out the difference between the offense of "little ones" (which is culpable) and "Pharisaical offense," or offense taken which is motivated by malice (and which is not culpable by the "offender"). For, as Calvin puts it, "We shall so temper the use of our freedom as to allow for the ignorance of our weak brothers, but for the rigor of the Pharisees, not at all!" (52).

Nor does the author believe that the weak are culpable for being weak, for such may be strong in other instances. "Weak" and 'strong' are metaphorical terms whose meaning should be determined *per casum* (131). Hence, the added necessity of mutual forbearance and service in love for the purpose of the edification of the church as the communion of saints. An interesting observation which he makes in this connection is that, while the weak *may* (not necessarily *must*, for he maintains that Scripture is silent about this, 131) be instructed so as to outgrow their weakness, the strong should continue to exercise forbearance in much the same way as allowance is made for physical infirmity and the time needed for restoration (or growth) to health and maturity (79).

He next goes on to identify five stages in the process of offending the weak, the crucial one being where the "strong" act in such a manner as is contrary to the scruples of the weak and which, if the

latter acts in imitation of the strong, results in what becomes sin for him because he no longer acts in faith. Hence, the strong must recognize this and in love refrain from using their liberty unto their neighbor's hurt.

In chapter 3, Professor Kloosterman applies the exegetical work he has done with the Romans and Corinthian passages. He points out that liberty and love, popularly regarded as competitors (i.e., one may have the one but only at the expense of the other), are rather to be seen as collaborators working together for the brother's welfare in the body of Christ. "The existence of the weak is, then, a summons to employ Christian liberty for the edification of the church. . .unto completion, perfection, and maturity. . .the goal and manifestation of *communio sanctorum*." This is to say, liberty serving love realizes the law of Christ in bearing one another's burdens. Christian liberty, hence, "must be employed, according to Romans 14:17, in service to righteousness, peace and Spirit-induced joy—which are nothing but the redemptive benefits of Christ's work, and the reigning blessings of his coming kingdom" (134).

In this book Professor Kloosterman succeeds in taking his readers on a hike over territory in Scripture that is less than well-traversed, let alone properly understood. As they read this book, readers will be given a greater appreciation of the important fact that "all of Christ's followers—no matter what their moral ability—must travel together, rest together, and arrive together" (127).

The book, while written with footnotes and sometimes technical language (including Hebrew, Greek, Dutch, German, and Latin—as the title already indicates), has few spelling mistakes. This reviewer only found such on pages 18 (the vowel pointing of the Hebrew name for God), 21 ("takes" is plural when it should be singular), and 129 (the preposition "to" is missing from the sentence in the sixth line from the top of the page).

*Raymond O. Zorn*

*Through No Fault of Their Own?: The Fate of Those Who Have Never Heard*, ed. by William V. Crockett and James G. Sigountos. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991. Pp. 278, including bibliography and index. \$9.57.

Recently, an intramural debate has arisen within the broad field of evangelicalism over a number of questions relating to the final destiny

of those who have not heard the gospel or have not responded in faith and repentance when the gospel has been preached to them. Some evangelical theologians have adopted a position known as "annihilationism" (Clark Pinnock, John R.W. Stott), teaching that those who are not saved will ultimately be annihilated or destroyed. For these evangelical theologians, the doctrine of hell as a place of eternal, conscious torment is incompatible with what the Bible teaches of God's justice and goodness. Some evangelicals have also taught a "larger hope" doctrine, in which it is asserted that some who have never heard the gospel but who have properly responded to the knowledge of God available to them through general revelation will also be saved. This doctrine is similar to the well-known position of the Roman Catholic theologian, Karl Rahner, who spoke of "anonymous Christians," that is, those who unknowingly or by "implicit faith" are truly members of the universal body of Christ. Others have even suggested that those who have not had opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel in this life, will be given a "second probation" before their destiny is fixed in the life to come. Fueled by the growing attraction of "universalism," the doctrine that all (or almost all) will finally be saved, the ferment within evangelicalism on the subject of the final state and destiny of those who have not heard the gospel is increasing.

In this volume, *Through No Fault of Their Own: The Fate of Those Who Have Never Heard*, a variety of evangelical theologians address these developments. In particular, as the title of this volume intimates, they address the issue of the fate of those who have never heard the gospel. The question posed in various ways is, Are all those who are given no opportunity in this life to hear and to respond to the gospel destined to spend eternity, cut off from God's favor and under his wrath in hell?

The format of the volume is as follows: a preface, commenting on the contributions of the various authors and the state of the question among evangelicals, by a dean of evangelical theologians, Kenneth S. Kantzer; part 1, dealing with theological questions; part 2, treating a number of important biblical passages bearing upon the question of the destiny of those who have not heard the gospel; part 3, addressing missiological issues; and part 4, some concluding remarks.

In part 1, Millard J. Erickson introduces the discussion by dealing with "The State of the Question." After summarizing the main tenets of historic evangelicalism (all humans are sinners and under condemnation; salvation is only through Christ and his atoning work; belief is

necessary to obtain salvation; adherents of other religions are spiritually lost; physical death terminates any opportunity to exercise saving faith; at the final judgment, some will enter an everlasting joy in God's presence, others will experience hell), Erickson notes several factors that have contributed to universalistic views today. Universalism is of four kinds: the first holds that there is a variety of ways to be saved; the second, though teaching that Christianity is true and salvation is only through Christ, affirms that more persons may actually be saved than those who personally believe in Christ; the third position teaches that only through faith in Christ is there salvation, but all will finally believe (either through the success of the missionary enterprise, through a gospel presentation granted unbelievers after death, or through the final restoration of all things); and the fourth view, annihilationism that says all will be saved or cease to exist.

A follow-up chapter, "Is Special Revelation Necessary for Salvation?", authored by David K. Clark, notes that evangelicals are divided into two camps. The first, the traditional Reformed camp, argues that all are without excuse and culpable by nature before God. Those who will be saved are those only who are given faith by God through the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The second, the "implicit-faith" view, as Clark terms it, holds that some will be saved through natural revelation. Though this view insists that all are saved only through Christ, it suggests that some who respond appropriately to the knowledge of God given them through general revelation will be saved, though they have not had opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel given through special revelation.

Timothy R. Phillips, in a chapter on "Hell: A Christological Reflection," defends the historic view that we can not be optimistic about the salvation of those who have not heard the gospel. According to Phillips, the biblical data overwhelmingly teaches that all men are lost, apart from the proclamation of and a believing response to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The destiny of those who do not hear and believe the gospel is a state of eternal torment in hell.

The last chapter in this first section of this volume, "Will God Change His Mind?: Eternal Hell and the Ninevites," by Jerry L. Walls, considers the possibility that God would, after threatening his judgment, change his mind and grant mercy to those who subsequently repent. Walls, in an argument that is not very cogent, concludes that such a possibility is inconsistent with God's omniscience (God knows in advance who will believe and not believe) and requires the unacceptable conclusion that God has deceived us in his Word. Since God has

declared in his Word what the fate of the unbelieving will be, it will not do to suggest that, in the end, he will change his mind and save all men.

In the most important section of this volume, several authors tackle various Scripture passages which are relevant to the question of the fate of those who do not hear the gospel. R. Bryan Widbin, in a chapter on "Salvation for People Outside Israel's Covenant?", points out that, in the Old Testament, there are some cases where God reaches people outside the boundaries of Israel (e.g.: Melchizedek, Jethro, Abimelech and Job). In a chapter on "The Mission of Israel to the Nations," John N. Oswalt treats the prophetic conception of Israel's mission to the nations. Frederick W. Schmidt, in a chapter on "Jesus and the Salvation of the Gentiles," argues that Jesus shared the "particularism" of his contemporaries and offers no comfort to "unitive pluralism," or the view that every religion must maintain its uniqueness and contribute to the refinement of other faiths. In the following chapter, "Acts 4:12—No Other Name under Heaven," Clark H. Pinnock attempts to refute the historic exegesis of this passage. According to Pinnock, this text does not require the conclusion that those who have not heard the gospel in its fullness can not be saved; the scope of this text is restricted to those who come within the orbit of the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Darrell L. Bock, in a chapter entitled, "Athenians Who Have Never Heard," treats Paul's sermon to the Athenians in Acts 17 and concludes that people cannot be saved, unless they respond in faith and repentance to the preaching of the gospel. In a similar vein, Áfda Besançon Spencer, in a chapter on "Romans 1: Finding God in Creation," maintains that special revelation is indispensable to a saving knowledge of God. Douglas Moo, in a chapter on "Romans 2: Saved Apart from the Gospel," defends the historic exegesis of this passage, maintaining that it is impossible for anyone to be saved by obeying the law of God. Scot McKnight writes a chapter on "Eternal Consequences or Eternal Consciousness?", in which he defends the thesis that the Scriptures teach a doctrine of eternal, conscious torment for the unbelieving. William V. Crockett then concludes this part of the volume with a chapter "Will God Save Everyone in the End?", in which he answers in the negative.

The third part of the volume, addressing missiological issues, considers the implications for Christian missions of the Scriptures' teaching concerning the destiny of those who have not heard the gospel. In a chapter on "Do All Roads Lead to Heaven?: An Examination of Unitive Pluralism," Timothy D. Westergren notes that we should not succumb to the charge of "intolerance" by relinquishing our Christian

conviction that salvation comes only through faith in Jesus Christ. Charles Van Engen follows with a chapter on "The Effect of Universalism on Mission Effort," arguing for what he terms universalism as "universality," not religious pluralism. Harvie M. Conn, in a chapter "Do Other Religions Save?," maintains that only through Jesus Christ can people be saved, though this does not absolve us of the responsibility to develop a "satisfactory theology of missions." In the next chapter, "Eternity in Their Hearts?," Tite Tiénou criticizes the thesis of Don Richardson's *Eternity in Their Hearts*, that other religions are the product of general revelation and pave the way for the acceptance of special revelation. The next chapter, "Is Hell a Proper Motivation for Mission," by John D. Ellenberger, cautiously concludes that the conviction of the "lostness" of peoples of other religions should motivate us to mission work. James G. Sigountos concludes this part of the volume in a chapter, "Did Early Christians Believe Pagan Religions Could Save?," in which he argues vigorously in the negative.

The last, and briefest, part of the volume includes two essays, one by Carl F. H. Henry on the question, "Is It Fair?," and one by William V. Crockett and James G. Sigountos, "Are the 'Heathen' Really Lost?" The essay by Henry is one of the best contributions in the volume. Henry debunks the false and unbiblical assumption that God's justice or fairness could be measured by a standard of our deserving, and that there is something unfair about God's judgment of those who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. Though Henry's treatment of general revelation leaves some loose threads hanging, he rightly points out the importance of the apostle Paul's argument in Romans 1 that all are without excuse. As Henry understands this passage, "[A]ll are judged by what they do with the light they have, and none is without light" (255). The assumption that some should perish "through no fault of their own" must be exposed as an unbiblical assumption.

Though this volume provides an illuminating, and even at times fascinating, window upon present-day discussions among evangelicals on the final state of those who have not heard the gospel, it is overall a disappointing volume. Not only are the contributions of widely-varying quality (the chapters by Erickson, Bock, Moo, McKnight, Sigountos and Henry are especially good; those of Walls, Schmidt, Pinnock, and Van Engen are not very good), but there is also a disturbing lack of consensus among the authors on the question at issue.

It is not this lack of consensus alone which is so disturbing. It is the way several of the authors approach and employ the Scriptures in their arguments that is most disturbing. To take but one significant example,

the chapter by Clark H. Pinnock is disappointing for the cavalier manner in which he treats Acts 4:12. Pinnock wrongly assumes that the exegesis of this text is possible without regard to its immediate context in the book of Acts or its larger context within the New Testament and the progressive unfolding of God's redemptive purpose and will. When treated within this context, there is no basis—other than Pinnock's argument from silence that, because this text does not explicitly refer to those who do not hear the gospel of Jesus' name, it cannot be relevant to their circumstance—for the conclusion Pinnock draws. Pinnock allows his own position to skew his reading of this text and ignores the relevant biblical context for its interpretation. He also allows extra-biblical considerations (is it just that those who do not hear the gospel should be condemned?) to govern the exegesis of particular texts.

The disturbing feature of this volume is that the divergence within evangelicalism that it reflects reveals a divergence over the authority and interpretation of Scripture in theological and confessional matters. Increasingly—so this volume indicates—there is a tendency among some evangelicals to argue their case not only on the basis of flimsy exegesis, but also on the basis of other sources and considerations. If the biblical teaching concerning hell and the fate of those who perish without hearing the gospel seems unpalatable to modern tastes, or if this teaching is thought incompatible with the love and justice of God, then it must be jettisoned and a new position adopted. One can only see in this the influence of a rationalist and critical view of Scripture in what is increasingly a divided camp of evangelicals.

One last comment. It is strange that the authors of this volume nowhere treat in any detail the "biblical universalism" position of Neal Punt. Only Pinnock mentions Punt's contribution to the discussion, and that in a footnote, together with several others who are said to hold a more "inclusivist" position. This failure to discuss Punt's view is inexcusable.

*Cornelis P. Venema*